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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 21 November 1986, at 10 a.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. CHOUDHURY	(Bangladesh)
later:	Mr. MATTURI (Vice-President)	(Sierra Leone)

- Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: Letter from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences [8] (continued)
- Question of Palestine [35]
 - (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
 - (b) Report of the Secretary-General

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 8 (continued)

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES (A/41/595/Add.3)

The PRESIDENT: I invite members to turn their attention to document A/41/595/Add.3 which contains a letter dated 19 November 1986 addressed to me by the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences. As members are aware, the Assembly, in paragraph 34 of its decision 34/401, decided that no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the General Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

As indicated in the letter I have just mentioned, the Committee on Conferences has recommended that the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories should be authorized to meet during the current session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the General Assembly adopts that recommendation?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 35

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/41/35)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENE /41/215)

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly has before it the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (document A/41/35) and the report of the Secretary-General (document A/41/215).

(The President)

Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate be closed today, at 5 p.m. May I consider that the General Assembly agrees to that proposal?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names as soon as possible.

I now call on Mr. Massamba Sarré of Senegal, who will speak in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Mr. SARRE (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (interpretation from French): Last year, when we were celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, a large number of Heads of State and Government representing all parts of the world, solemnly reaffirmed here, from the rostrum of the General Assembly, the fact that they supported the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and their determination to seek peaceful solutions to the unresolved conflicts of our day, among which is foremost the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East and its underlying cause, the question of Palestine. The designation of 1986 as the International Year of Peace provided Governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and others with an opportunity to satisfy the common aspiration of all peoples for peace and to act in a creative and systematic way to achieve the goals of the United Nations.

Unfortunately, although the overwhelming majority of the international community wishes to see an end to the ever present tragedy of the Palestinian people and the pointless bloodshed in the Middle East, the efforts made to resolve this particularly complex problem have reached a dangerous deadlock, particularly during the course of the past year.

(Mr. Sarré, Chairman, Committee on
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Rights of the Palestinian People)

Over the last three years the General Assembly has, by large majorities, requested the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine in 1983. Those guidelines, which the General Assembly endorsed in resolution 35/58 C, deserve to be reiterated, to avoid any confusion with other approaches, which must take the Conference on Palestine into account to have any validity. Those guidelines include the attainment of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine; the right of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences held on the Middle East, and the need to put an end to Israel's occupation of the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

The General Assembly invited all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - because of the moral and political influence of those two Powers on the maintenance of international peace and security - and other concerned States to participate on an equal footing and with equal rights in the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

The Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, having proposed the idea, unreservedly supported the convening of this international Conference, as the only proposal that could ensure for all parties

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concerned the opportunity of participating fully in the negotiations and that would make it feasible to reach a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East.

The Committee is firmly convinced that only the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, which has been asked to facilitate the organization of the Conference, can provide an acceptable legal and political framework acceptable to the great majority of the international community that will make it possible for negotiations to proceed with full respect for internationally recognized principles and with an equal footing for all parties concerned.

Only an international conference organized under the aegis of the United Nations will make it possible to go beyond the narrow strategic interests and the purely national concerns of various States and arrive at a comprehensive just and lasting peace. Agreements concluded at such a conference would thus enjoy universal legitimacy and could be guaranteed and applied equitably in a manner acceptable to all parties.

In that context the Committee has continued, in accordance with the mandate given it by the General Assembly, most recently in resolution 40/96 A, to give absolute priority to the convening of this conference in its work programme for 1986.

It is gratifying to note that despite the financial crisis of the United Nations and the consequent economy measures which have been requested of all committees and commissions, the Committee was able to adjust its timetable and to combine certain meetings so as to be able to carry out practically the whole of its work programme within the constraints of the resources allocated by the General

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Assembly at its resumed fortieth session. You will find a brief description of the regional and international meetings organized by the Committee in the report which you have before you, which will be presented in detail by the Rapporteur. Only a regional symposium for non-governmental organizations in Latin America had to be deferred until 1987 because of the financial crisis, but the Committee has every hope that it will be able to host that important meeting in the course of next year.

It is essential that the Committee, which has been asked by the General Assembly to spare no effort in promoting the implementation of its recommendations, should be able to continue to organize regional seminars, symposiums and meetings for non-governmental organizations and meetings of journalists to the maximum extent possible. The Committee is firmly convinced that in order to arrive at a peaceful solution to the Palestinian question it is essential to educate and mobilize international public opinion in support of the just cause of the Palestinian people and the strict implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

The Committee was encouraged once again this year by the increased awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and the overwhelming consensus in support of its recommendations and those of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine at the various meetings organized under its auspices, particularly the recommendation that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East should be convened, a proposal which received the unanimous support of those who participated in all those meetings.

As you will see in the report, the Committee this year organized seminars in Istanbul, New York and Nairobi which were attended by members of parliaments,

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university dons, experts and other shapers of public opinion, as well as government observers and others. The conclusions and recommendations adopted at those seminars have been published as Committee documents and are being distributed.

The participants in the seminars without exception approved the recommendation that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East be held in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the General Assembly, and they appeal to those who have up to now opposed that idea to reconsider their position and to join the other nations in that undertaking. Likewise, they have asked the United Nations Secretary-General, to whom we should like to pay a tribute for his unrelenting efforts to bring about a settlement of the problem, to make further efforts to attempt to break the deadlock and have made a general appeal to all the parties concerned to redouble their political and diplomatic efforts to arrive at a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Middle East conflict.

As the General Assembly requested, the Committee has also strengthened its co-operation with non-governmental organizations that help to make international public opinion about the realities of the question of Palestine better informed and to create a climate which is more favourable to the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

Regional symposiums for non-governmental organizations were held in Vienna and New York and an international meeting was also held in Vienna with the participation of a considerable number of non-governmental organizations, some of which came from Israel and the occupied territories.

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The Committee also sponsored preparatory planning meetings of the co-ordinating committees of the non-governmental organizations set up by the international non-governmental organizations and the non-governmental organizations of North America. We are pleased to announce that a co-ordinating committee has also been set up by the non-governmental organizations of the African region after this year's symposium.

The Committee greatly appreciates the efforts of the non-governmental organizations that have displayed interest in the question of Palestine and was heartened by the adoption at the various meetings of important declarations in which non-governmental organizations reaffirmed their vigorous support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, and pledged themselves to intensify their activities directed to their movements, their Governments and public opinion in their countries. The Committee has published those declarations as part of its documentation because of their importance for the promotion of its objectives.

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Other activities of the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information are set out in detail in the Committee's report, and I shall not describe them now. I wish simply to emphasize the considerable efforts made by the Committee to achieve its priority aim - the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

Unfortunately, despite the Committee's work and the support of public opinion for that goal, the holding of that international conference, it has not yet been possible to reach agreement on the matter. In its report the Committee expresses its regret that there has so far been no change in the attitudes of Israel and the United States to the convening of the conference, and it expresses its hope that a positive change will occur as soon as possible. In this connection, the Committee noted with appreciation that the Secretary-General intends to continue his efforts, in the light of resolution 40/96 D.

At the same time, the Committee wishes to re-emphasize that the Security Council - because consensus could not be reached - has still not acted in accordance with its recommendations, which have been endorsed by the General Assembly on a number of occasions. The Committee remains convinced that the chances of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East would be considerably enhanced if the Security Council adopted concrete measures to follow up those recommendations.

It cannot be said too often that those recommendations are based on sound, internationally recognized principles and are expressly designed to make it possible for the Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable rights, without which there can be no peaceful solution to the question of Palestine, which is at the heart of the Israeli-Arab conflict in the Middle East. Consequently, the

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Committee once again annexed its recommendations and those of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held in Geneva in 1983, to its report, since it believes that it is now up to the Security Council to follow up those two series of recommendations.

The Committee intends to continue to put the convening of the International Peace Conference at the very centre of its programme of work for next year, and it will spare no effort to increase awareness of the importance of that conference, through contacts with Governments and non-governmental organizations.

Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly should once again request both Israel and the United States to reconsider their position on the convening of the conference as the sole means of attaining peace. We believe that all countries will spare no effort to ensure that the conference takes place and that they will renew the Secretary-General's mandate so as to make it possible for him to maintain his contacts in order to prepare for the conference, in consultation with the Security Council.

The tragic events in the region during the past year show clearly that it is now more urgently necessary than ever that the United Nations discharge its moral and even its political responsibility towards the Palestinian people and that it increase its efforts to end its suffering and bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. In our report we give information about the deteriorating situation in the occupied territories, and we decided to bring strongly to the attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council Israeli policies and practices in the area, since they are clearly a violation of international law and have serious repercussions not only on the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, but also on peace and security in the whole region.

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As a matter of urgency, I have drawn the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council to the grave events affecting the Palestinians in the occupied territories and in the refugee camps, and a request has been made that the proper steps be taken in accordance with United Nations resolutions to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and to guarantee the safety of the Palestinian refugees in those camps.

The Committee believes that the developments and events described in the report as well as the tension and violence that continue to be rife in the region will worsen in the coming year if no tangible progress is made towards a comprehensive, just and lasting solution in accordance with United Nations resolutions. We vigorously reaffirm that it is the duty of the United Nations, and in particular of those who have so far opposed the recommendations of the General Assembly, to make a fresh, concerted, collective effort to find such a solution and end the unacceptable situation of the Palestinian people.

As the Secretary-General emphasized in his report (A/41/768),

"The attainment of a just and lasting peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict in the Middle East continues to be elusive ...

"Meanwhile, the situation in the region continues to be highly volatile ...

"It is therefore vitally important that the international community should not lose sight of the dangers inherent in this state of affairs."

(A/41/768, paras. 33-35)

That is an appeal to our conscience. We are asked to rise above passion, misunderstandings and prejudices. It is in this way and in this way alone that we can achieve a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and thus of the Middle East. I am convinced that with a little more political will on the part

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of the parties concerned, together with the support of the great Powers, the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace is more than a possibility. We should therefore without further delay end this International Year of Peace by launching comprehensive negotiations to bring about peace in the Middle East.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on Mr. George Agius of Malta, Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian Peoples to present the report of that Committee (A/41/35).

Mr. Agius (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, presented the report of that Committee (A/41/35) and then spoke as follows:

Mr. AGIUS (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People: It is an honour for me to present to the Assembly the 1986 report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Before going into the substance of the report, I wish to make some remarks on the procedure followed by the Committee this year. In response to the request made by the Chairman of the Committee on Information, and in view of the Organization's continuing financial crisis, the Committee this year made a considerable effort to meet the deadline and length restrictions imposed by the Assembly. The report, which, as in the past, was endorsed unanimously by Committee members and observers, was accordingly submitted earlier than usual and in a somewhat shortened version. Non-essential parts of the text were condensed, and the reports of seminars and non-governmental organization symposiums were not annexed to the body of the report. Those reports have been made available as documents of the Committee under the symbol A/AC.183/1986/1-6. I hope these changes will facilitate consideration of the Committee's annual report by the Assembly.

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During the past year the Committee has again done all in its power to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly, namely, to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine, as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights, and to promote the implementation of its recommendations for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

In the report the Committee has once again expressed its regret that its recommendations, although endorsed by the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority each year, have still not been acted on or implemented by the Security Council owing to the attitude of a permanent member. In its programme of work for 1986 the Committee continued to give priority to the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, which, in its view, would facilitate the search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Committee has, further, expressed the hope that a positive change in the attitude of the United States and Israel towards the proposed Conference will be forthcoming.

In its review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine, contained in paragraphs 16 to 29 of the report, the Committee has expressed its growing concern that the situation of Palestinians in occupied territories and in the refugee camps has continued to deteriorate, as evidenced in reports received from a variety of sources, such as Governments, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, individual experts and the media.

The information reviewed by the Committee leaves no doubt that Israel has persisted in its policy of gradual de facto annexation of the occupied Palestinian

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territories, accompanied by measures designed to suppress all forms of resistance and of political, social, cultural and economic expression by the Palestinian people, as well as in acts of violence and provocation by Israeli troops and armed Jewish settlers. Of grave concern also are reports that the occupying authorities continue to strengthen their economic control over the occupied Palestinian territories and to transform them into a dependent entity whose socio-economic development is geared to the benefit of Israel and not of the Palestinians.

The Committee decided to bring the policies and practices described in the report forcefully to the attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council, as they are in clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and have serious implications not only for the achievement of Palestinian rights but also for peace and security in the region and international efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement.

As in the past, in urgent cases the Chairman of the Committee has on several occasions drawn the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council to such developments and urged appropriate action in accordance with United Nations resolutions. In this connection, the Chairman has repeatedly protested at action taken against Palestinian activists in the occupied territories by the Israeli authorities, such as administrative detention for up to six months without trial, deportation, travel restrictions, increased censorship and other measures. The Chairman also expressed the Committee's grave concern at reports regarding attacks against Palestinians in the refugee camps of Sabra, Shatila and Burj el-Barajneh. The Chairman has repeated that the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, has a clear responsibility to ensure the physical safety of the Palestinians and to bring about the exercise of their inalienable

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rights. A brief summary of the Chairman's letters is contained in paragraphs 30 to 41 of the report.

Since last year's report, the Security Council has met on three occasions on matters related to the Committee's mandate. These developments are covered in paragraphs 42 to 63 of the report. The Council had to deal with the act of aggression by Israel against the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Tunisia, which caused great loss of human life and considerable property damage. That action was vigorously condemned by the Council in resolution 573 (1985). The Council also met at the request of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to consider the Middle East problem, including the Palestine question. The Security Council was also seized of the serious threat to international peace and security resulting from Israeli acts of profanation committed against the sanctuary of Haram al Sharif in Jerusalem. Regrettably, a draft resolution deploring such acts and reaffirming United Nations resolutions on Jerusalem was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member. On these occasions, the Committee, through its Chairman, repeatedly appealed to the Council to take action on the Committee's recommendations and on the proposal for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as the most appropriate measures for bringing about a peaceful settlement of the Palestine question.

As I have already mentioned, in its programme of work for 1986 the Committee again gave utmost priority to the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and pursued that goal in all its activities during the year. The efforts of the Committee in this sense are covered in paragraphs 64 to 101 of the report.

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Committee representatives participated in 12 international conferences and meetings organized by United Nations organs and intergovernmental organizations, and on those occasions continued to stress the urgent need for implementation of United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine. The Committee followed with great interest the relevant resolutions and decisions adopted by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations, and was greatly encouraged by the universal consensus expressed in these forums in support of its recommendations, in particular the recommendation concerning the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

In pursuit of its objective of further expanding co-operation with non-governmental organizations active on the question of Palestine, the Committee sponsored two preparatory planning meetings of non-governmental organizations, two regional symposiums, in Europe and North America, and one international meeting of non-governmental organizations during 1986. Only one symposium, the one planned for the Latin American region, had to be deferred to 1987 because of the financial crisis. The Committee was greatly encouraged that, in the various declarations adopted at those meetings, the participating non-governmental organizations reaffirmed their full support for the proposed International Peace Conference, agreed on common objectives and strategies for their future work and established co-ordinating structures to carry this out. I would like to stress in this connection that the meetings, as in the past, were attended by large numbers of non-governmental organizations, including several from the occupied territories and Israel itself.

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The topic of the International Peace Conference was also given prominence in the seminars organized by the Committee, with the participation of parliamentarians, academic experts, governmental and intergovernmental observers, and others. This year seminars have been held in the European, African and North American regions. I am pleased to report that the participants in the seminar unanimously reaffirmed the need to convene the Conference and appealed to those States Members of the United Nations which did not support the efforts to ensure the attainment by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights to reconsider their position on the solution of this problem. They also recommended intensification of political and diplomatic efforts by all concerned towards this goal.

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There is no doubt that the programme of seminars and non-governmental symposiums and meetings has continued to play an important role in furthering public understanding of the Palestine question and in promoting support for the recommendations of the Committee. As indicated in the final section of the report, the Committee intends to continue the process of evaluating the progress achieved and the experience gained in its various activities, with the goal of achieving optimum effectiveness and impact in carrying out its mandate.

Before concluding, I should like to take this opportunity to express the Committee's appreciation for the continued strong support of the Secretary-General and his staff for the work of the Committee. In the year under review, the Division for Palestinian Rights, in addition to its other responsibilities, has continued its programme of research and publications, and has this year published a very useful new study, Approaches for the Practical Attainment of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. For its part, the Department of Public Information has continued its information campaign, as mandated by the General Assembly. Its work is covered in paragraphs 102 to 111 of the report.

The message conveyed by the Committee's report to the Assembly is that the situation with regard to the question of Palestine presents both great obstacles and great opportunities for the international community. There is no doubt, in reviewing the information presented here, that we are now at a critical stage in this complex problem which has defied a solution for so long. The Committee has continued to warn that violence and tension will continue to grow in the region so long as the Palestinian people is prevented from exercising its inalienable rights. With each passing year, the Committee has had to report to the Assembly

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that the situation had continued to deteriorate, seriously endangering international peace and security, and that its recommendations remained unimplemented.

At the same time, however, understanding of, and support for, the just cause of the Palestinian people has continued to increase, and so have efforts at all levels to promote a just, comprehensive and lasting solution. In the hope that these efforts will finally bear fruit, the Committee has once again reiterated its original recommendations, along with those adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, which members will find in Annex I and II of the report. As indicated in paragraphs 112 to 120 of the report, the Committee intends to continue to make the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East the focal point of its work programme for 1987 and to do everything possible to increase awareness of the importance of that Conference at all levels. Once again, the Committee urges a renewed, concentrated and collective effort to find a just solution, under United Nations auspices, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, and to end the unacceptable plight of the Palestinian people.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 September 1974.

Mr. KADDOUMI (Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. President, on behalf of our people and as its sole and legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), let me at the outset express to you our sincere congratulations upon your election to the presidency of this session. We are linked to your country by the strongest bonds

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of brotherhood and friendship, and I am certain that both your competence and experience will contribute effectively to the success of the work of this session. I cannot but commend your predecessor, Mr. Jaime de Piniés, for the creative efforts he made during his presidency of the fortieth session.

I cannot fail to thank profusely the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his continued efforts for justice, peace and progress, to congratulate him on his reappointment as Secretary-General for another term, and to wish him good health, good luck, and success.

I extend our sincere thanks to the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to its Chairman, Mr. Massamba Sarré, representative of the friendly Republic of Senegal.

One year has elapsed since our meeting which was dedicated to the observance of the fortieth anniversary of this international Organization. As usual, we have expressed through our overall contributions and statements our strong desire for the maintenance of world peace and the development of international co-operation in order to repel the demon of war and to contain the flashpoints of war the world over. We ask ourselves: has there been any tangible progress in the international situation? Have the advocates of war responded to the appeals of the world conscience and the wishes of the international community?

The reality which forces itself upon us a year later, though bitter and biting, is this: if the international scene has truly witnessed movement towards the noble goals and legitimate aspirations of mankind, that movement did not go beyond sweet and promising words and has not been embodied in agreements, programmes, and practical plans to contain the focal points of tension, to put out their fires, to deter the aggressors and isolate them.

(Mr. Kaddoumi, PLO)

Everybody now knows that our Palestinian people under Zionist occupation suffers from the application of the iron-fist policy and all that that involves in terms of assassination, liquidation, confiscation, demolition, expulsion, deportation and arbitrary arrests, in addition to the continuing building of settlements. This is accurately and faithfully reflected in the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories.

The driving forces and goals of this policy are the expulsion of the Palestinian people, the annexation of their land and the liquidation of their cause. All this is manifested by Israel's pursuit of the Palestine Liberation Organization both within and outside the occupied homeland and in its opposition to the support, solidarity and adherence the Organization receives from our people. Thus, in a desperate and blatant effort to contain the influence of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the occupying Power has appointed three mayors to replace those who were elected and has endeavoured to impose dubious schemes, which have already been rejected by our people, such as autonomy, civil administration and power-sharing, in a deliberate attempt to obliterate the independent Palestinian national character and to ignore the obvious facts.

We must also refer to the continued Israeli acts of aggression against our people in the refugee camps in Lebanon, which have caused more death and destruction. These attacks occur simultaneously with and complement those launched against the camps by other parties with the aim of uprooting our people from their refugee camps and creating the desired demographic changes. We must mention further, other crimes committed by Israel against our people and cadres, such as the Israeli Mossad's assassination of one of our comrades by an explosive charge in Athens on 21 October. That act reaffirms Israel's history in the field of

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international terrorism, a history which has culminated in the accession to the premiership of the terrorist Shamir, who master-minded numerous terrorist operations in his capacity as chief of military operations of the terrorist Stern Gang. Those operations included the assassination of Lord Moyne, the British Resident Minister of State in Cairo, on 6 November 1944 and the assassination of the United Nations Mediator, Count Bernadotte, in 1948.

We stress further that the other side of the Zionist establishment, represented by the Labour Party, does not differ in essence and policies from that of Shamir and the Likud.

In these circumstances, when we hear reports about development plans for the occupied Palestinian territories, it should be emphasized that although there can be no possibility, as a general principle, of achieving true development under Israeli occupation, at the same time we welcome and appreciate any assistance extended to the Palestinian people through the United Nations and friendly channels to bolster its steadfastness and improve its living conditions.

The United Nations adopted in 1960 the important and historic resolution 1514 (XV) regarding the right of peoples to self-determination. That resolution constituted an affirmation of the United Nations Charter and the necessity to liquidate colonialism. It has made this international Organization the focus of the attention and interest, hopes and aspirations, of the peoples of the third world in particular and of the world in general, all of whom hope that this Organization will extend a helping hand to the oppressed people still struggling under the yoke of foreign domination in order to free themselves and exercise their right of self-determination.

Are not we in Palestine, Namibia and South Africa and in the various national liberation movements entitled to ask how long this resolution will continue to hang

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in the air? When will it find its way to the light of day in order to do away with the injustice, oppression and pillage from which our people suffer and to enable the collective will of the peoples of the world find expression in reality and implementation?

A quarter of a century has passed since the adoption of that resolution. That is a long time, in which there has been suffering, sacrifices, denial of the most basic human rights and the confiscation of an entire homeland during which the General Assembly, the Security Council and other organs of the Organization have adopted hundreds of resolutions supporting the rights of, among others, the peoples of Palestine and Namibia. The wall continues to stand and the persistent United States veto continues to ensure that paralysis is the only lasting phenomenon.

(Mr. Kaddoumi, PLO)

Our people firmly adhere to their legitimate and recognized right to resist the forces of occupation in self-defence and in defence of their homeland; their enemies and other hostile forces have left them with no other course than to persevere along this road. Although our people continue to adhere to this right, we have not isolated ourselves from all the international initiatives being taken to reach a just settlement of the conflict. Rather, we have supported these efforts and called for these initiatives to be given practical effect.

We have, therefore, welcomed the call for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, to be attended on an equal footing by all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization and the permanent members of the Security Council. The Conference should be based on international legitimacy and all relevant resolutions of the United Nations and should take place within its framework. That is the path we consider valid in order to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East through the realization of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people.

Moreover, we also supported the idea of setting up a preparatory committee for the Conference within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of its permanent members, in order to begin work towards convening the Conference with the objective of finding the appropriate machinery and the required momentum. We should state that, to our deep regret, we confront a recalcitrant position of rejection by the United States of America and Israel, a position which reflects their rejection of genuine peace and their persistent attempts to subjugate the region and to liquidate the Palestine question by proposing partial and separate solutions that ignore the rights of the Palestinian people. We believe that it is the duty of the international community to exercise continued pressure to undertake this historic task. We further believe that the Arab Group, particularly the

(Mr. Kaddoumi, PLO)

should take a strong and united position in order to find the means necessary to achieve the parties directly concerned in the conflict, required balance in the area with a view to reaching a just peace through the International Conference, a peace based on the resolutions of the Arab summit meetings and the Arab peace plan adopted at Fez.

We are fully aware that the establishment of the United Nations constituted the expression of the idealistic spirit that emerged from the painful experiences that the world underwent during the inter-war period, as well as from the miseries that humanity suffered during the Second World War. We further state that the United Nations has shown a great capacity to be flexible in adjusting to changes in the international order and to contribute effectively to bringing about those changes and determining the course they would take.

With a profound awareness of the successes of this Organization, we call upon it to remain faithful to its mission and to hold fast to its goals and ideals, so that it can put an end to the oppression from which the peoples continue to suffer under the heavy burden of the forces of racism and fascism and in order to remove the burden of occupation from a homeland entirely occupied, as is the case in Palestine, South Africa and Namibia. This role encounters obstacles raised by the position of the United States of America, which ignores the will of the overwhelming majority of the peoples and States of the world and which supports the régimes of aggression in Israel and South Africa.

This role further continues despite the campaign launched by the United States of America against the international Organization itself and its specialized agencies. In this connection, we believe also in the strategic role of the United Nations in preserving international peace and security, a role in which the foremost task is nuclear disarmament and the limitation of arms. We therefore followed with great interest the Reykjavik summit meeting and the consequences it

(Mr. Kaddoumi, PLO)

might have for the future of mankind. We believe that the results of that summit meeting did not live up to the hopes placed in it, for the United States of America insisted once again on being an obstacle to international progress.

We recognize the imbalance created by the Iraq-Iran war in the region and on the international scene. This war has increased tension and added confusion to the international efforts to find a just solution to the central issue in the region, namely, the question of Palestine. Our sorrow and regret grow as this war between two countries bound by religion and history continues into its seventh year, causing massive destruction in both human and economic terms.

The time has come for this war to come to an end. Needless to say, this horrible war, which has caused bloodshed, has wasted capabilities and potentialities, and which threatens to spread to other States of the Arab Gulf, constitutes a burden on future generations. It should be brought to an end now.

(Mr. Kaddoumi, PLO)

We appeal to Iran to respond to all the peace efforts, initiatives and good offices and to comply with the resolution recently adopted by the Security Council and accepted by our brother Iraq, which calls for the immediate cessation of military operations and the initiation of a search for a peaceful settlement of this conflict.

Our Palestinian people, whose existence spans thousands of years and who have experienced the movement of history, learning in the process its lessons and examples, fully recognize that no oppressive Power can triumph over justice; no oppressive Power can defeat a people struggling for its freedom and right to survive. We are anxious that those that have not learned the lessons of history should recognize this fact and not persist stupidly in rejecting even-handed international initiatives to resolve the problems of the peoples of the world. They should not pursue their hypocritical, intelligence-oriented policies, not declaring what they hide and not practising what they preach.

Does not what we saw and heard from the President of the United States of America, Mr. Ronald Reagan, a few days ago and what we have seen and heard over the years from Israeli leaders constitute glaring evidence of the futility of such policies and the absurdity of ignoring the just and inalienable rights of the peoples of this earth, foremost among them our people, who have remained steadfast for decades?

Resort to intelligence warfare rather than declared wars, which have proved incapable of defeating people, will only meet with failure, as it has this time, revealing lies, deception and lack of credibility, as is the case now with regard to the present United States Administration and its permanent stooge, the Government of Israel.

(Mr. Kaddoumi, PLO)

Some Zionist leaders have stated that the older generations of the Palestinian people will die and the following generations will forget Palestine. But we say to them that no Palestinian has died before planting Palestine in the conscience of his children and grandchildren, therefore he died reassured. Some of us have died, others live on, but the majority are on the way to armed struggle for the attainment of our legitimate national rights and Revolution until victory.

Mr. BADAWI (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): We are assembled here today, a little more than a year after our Organization celebrated its fortieth anniversary, to consider once again the question of Palestine, which is the core and the crux of the conflict in the Middle East. That celebration was marked by the clear emphasis placed by the overwhelming majority of States Members of the Organization on the historical responsibility borne by the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine, and therefore on the urgent need for the United Nations, representing the will of its Member States, to seek seriously and with determination a final, just solution to this problem, which has let violence loose in the Middle East. That problem has led to agony and suffering for all the peoples of the region, and above all, of course, the Palestinian people, who have been displaced from their land and deprived of stability and the rights that others enjoy, through no fault of their own and having committed no sin.

Among the important elements that were becoming clear were signs that the parties directly concerned in the conflict had started to move in such a way as to give the impression that they were preparing themselves and preparing their positions to take part in negotiations aiming at a just and final settlement of the dispute.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

Therefore there was evidence of shifts in position in terms of the acceptance of the ideas put forward as a framework for the negotiations. That was made clear in the statement of the Prime Minister of Israel to the General Assembly on 21 October 1985, when he affirmed his country's readiness to participate in an international forum to allow negotiations to take place between the parties. That was also the case in the movements of the other Arab parties with the achievement of the Jordanian-Palestinian accord which my country welcomed. Egypt has believed and continues to believe that that accord is a realistic basis for governing the relations between those two Arab parties not only during the stage of negotiations but also in the future.

The Arab States have also continued to advocate the peace proposals which had been put forward at Fez in 1982, which were reaffirmed in the Casablanca summit of 1985.

The evidence of those shifts were no secret to all parties and powers interested in giving impetus to, or preparing for, the effort of settlement. Therefore the 1985 report of the Secretary-General included a reference to the effect that his contacts in recent weeks with the leaders of the parties concerned made it clear that they fully recognized the urgent need to achieve an agreed settlement and that they also recognized the dangers inherent in postponing such a settlement for the region and other parts of the world. The Secretary-General went on to say in that report that there had been some indications of flexibility concerning the negotiating process. Therefore he was convinced that it was possible to reach a procedural formula through which the parties could initiate the negotiating process if a serious effort were made on the part of all parties concerned and with the support of other Governments capable of giving assistance in that regard.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

Proceeding from those facts, it was estimated then that 1986 would undoubtedly see a strong boost to the efforts to reach a peace settlement, which would satisfy the hopes of the Palestinian people, restore stability to the whole Middle East region, and enable all the peoples of the region to live in peace, a peace through which they could achieve all their hopes of development and progress.

What we have seen instead is an extended period of stalemate in the efforts for a settlement, a period characterized by a return to confrontation and extremism, by an attempt to introduce certain matters which in fact are nothing but the results of the continued deterioration of the situation in the Middle East and the lack of a just solution to the Palestinian question.

The new year started with a fierce attack carried out by extremist elements in Israel who attempted to encroach upon the Islamic shrines in Jerusalem. That was accompanied by continued settlement policies and their expansion in the occupied Arab territories. Those territories continue to be subjected to all forms of practices and pressures aimed at breaking the will of their Arab inhabitants, forcing them to abandon their land and leaving it to the new settlers, or to live silently under foreign occupation, which weighs heavily on their legitimate hopes to enjoy freedom and independence like the rest of the peoples of the world.

The international community was clearly unanimous in exposing, denouncing and condemning those practices in the occupied territories. The latest occasion during which an opportunity was accorded many representatives to express their condemnation in that regard is the introduction of the report of the special Committee to investigate Israeli practices which affect the human rights of the population of the occupied Arab territories before the Special Political Committee of the General Assembly last week.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

The stalemate in the peace efforts means in reality a return to confrontation and to the continuation of the conflict. It also carries the seeds of the deterioration of the situation in a manner that would threaten all arrangements that had been prepared for a long time with a view to continuing along the path to a settlement.

My Foreign Minister, speaking before the General Assembly on 28 September 1986, referred to this when he said that one of the most disturbing aspects of the situation was the inertia that had beset the peace process in recent years, since it portended the possibility of a relapse.

In the same vein, the Secretary-General referred to that fact in his Report on the work of the Organization in 1986, where he stated:

"... despite efforts from many sides to advance the search for just and lasting settlement, there is at present an alarming absence of a generally acceptable and active negotiating process. Experience shows all too clearly that such a stalemate encourages resort to extremism and risks the recurrence of wider violence." (A/41/L, p. 3)

As it has always done in the past, Egypt has continued to strive during recent months to give an impetus to the efforts for a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question and to attempt to achieve an agreement between the parties concerned with a view to the initiation of serious negotiations towards that aim. My country has believed and continues to believe that the essential elements for securing the success of any effort towards that settlement are within our grasp.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

The responsibilities borne by Egypt since the eruption of the conflict make it imperative for it to continue to defend the interests of its Arab nation on the one hand and to act for the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people on the other. Therefore, we have approached our brothers in both Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, to restore the spirit of understanding between them on the basis of a common endeavour in accordance with the 11 February 1985 accord, which, as we have said before, constitutes a solid basis for movement by those two parties directly concerned with the question of Palestine.

On that basis, too, Egypt has had contacts with the Israeli side to impress upon it not only the need to move and not allow the situation to deteriorate into confrontation, but also to accept the concept of the settlement accepted by the international community and the framework within which that settlement can be brought about. Egypt has also continued on the same basis to have consultations with other parties which are concerned with the Middle East and are influential there, whether Arab or non-Arab, with particular emphasis on the two super-Powers, in view of their special role and their special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Egypt is convinced that the efforts to achieve a settlement and the initiation of negotiations to that end must be coupled with shifts in many of the positions adopted by the parties concerned as well as in their relations with one another. In that context, we wish to reaffirm the following facts.

First, there is a need for Israel to act according to the demands of the situation - that is, to accept that a just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the conflict in Palestine will be achieved only when Israel ends its settlement policies and grants the Palestinians their legitimate right to self-determination. In addition to being illegal, the continuing settlement policy is a great obstacle

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

to peace. All peace-loving Israeli forces that wish to see a settlement in the region must oppose that policy. The situation also dictates that Israel should implement in the West Bank and Gaza the confidence-building measures for which Egypt has called for many years. We are confident that those measures are essential to convince the Palestinian people of the good will of the other party. The cessation of all the illegal practices referred to in many of the reports of international bodies and agencies would be a first step in that direction. Another important step that Israel could take to accelerate an improvement of the situation in the occupied territories would be to hold new elections giving the Palestinian people complete freedom to choose the mayors of their municipalities and villages in the West Bank and Gaza.

Secondly, all the Arab parties must strive to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people, so that we may collectively succeed in raising the ability of those in the occupied territories to resist the pressures of occupation. Another objective that must be supported by the whole international community is the preparation of the Palestinian territories for progress towards social, economic and political reconstruction after the occupation nightmare is over. Because of its occupation of the Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza for almost 20 years, Israel bears international and legal responsibilities that it must acknowledge and shoulder. It must realize that the future of good-neighbourly relations and stability in the Middle East must be based on equal relations in all fields between the two parties that have been engaged in a long conflict on the land of Palestine.

Thirdly, the Arab States must increase pressure for a settlement and for the initiation of negotiations on it. In the present circumstances the Arabs have a responsibility to put forward and reaffirm orientation towards peace as a strategic

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

Arab option. All Arab parties must strive to end their differences on the approach to a settlement and to end the rivalries for influence, because of their negative effect on the united Arab front that is indispensable to a just and comprehensive settlement. There is a danger of the occupied territories being swallowed up. We must strive to end this grave deterioration in the situation and take serious steps to enable the Palestinians to exercise their legitimate national rights, above all the right of self-determination. Therefore, reactivation of the Jordanian-Palestinian accord and co-operation based on it are urgently necessary to secure the Arab goal of a just settlement of the Palestinian question.

Fourthly, it is very important that the efforts to settle the question of Palestine should enjoy the support of all the other Powers concerned, which should feel the importance - indeed, the necessity - of achieving that settlement if the Middle East is to know tranquillity. Therefore, Egypt hopes that all those parties will co-operate. Naturally, foremost among them are the two super-Powers, which we hope will co-operate to facilitate and foster the negotiating process. Europe, too, can have an important impact. We are confident that the role of the European countries, both members and non-members of the European Community, will not be confined to supporting the efforts to reach a settlement, but that they will take the initiative of giving it an impetus, in view of the common interests linking Europe and the region through the Mediterranean.

My country is striving to achieve in the Middle East a just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on specific principles that the international community has unanimously endorsed. The first is that Israel should withdraw from all the Arab territories occupied after 5 June 1967, whether in the West Bank, Gaza or the Golan Heights. The second is that the Palestinians should be given the opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination and the right to establish their own State on the land of Palestine.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

The third is the right of all peoples and States in the Middle East to live in peace, security and good-neighbourliness.

The road to initiate the negotiating process, in the view of my country, goes through the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties concerned. Egypt's initiatives during the past year were aimed at putting forward the idea of the Conference, on the one hand, and preparing for it on the other. We sincerely hope that our efforts will be crowned with success at the end. Egypt will continue its efforts undeterred by difficulties or obstacles so as to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, a peace that would restore rights to those entitled to them, a peace that would enable all to live together in the Middle East in security and as good neighbours.

The Middle East has suffered for too long and it is high time that the suffering was ended and the opportunity given to all its peoples to employ their creative talents so as to achieve prosperity, progress and development for their societies.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): The problem of Palestine in the United Nations is a historic responsibility whose rights the international community is demanded to redress after those rights were let down by the international community of 1947, which represented but a few nations. Scores of peoples were colonized then. The years passed and every people captive who were colonized then became free later, raising their voice in support of righteousness in the manner they perceived it to be, instead of the falsehood that their captors had uttered on their behalf. The problem of Palestine became the problem of rights, principles and commitments, and the problem of freedom and human rights. It is accorded the support of the largest international majority, which represents today the total world conscience.

(Mr. Shinabi, Saudi Arabia)

The problem of Palestine, to the United Nations, is a historic responsibility which the international community expects the United Nations to shoulder in order to redress the wrongs of 1947. At that time, the majority of the international Organization's membership, which represented but a minority of the world's nations, had failed to do their duty towards Palestine. Scores of peoples were captive then. Now that the years have passed and every captive people have become free, the peoples of the world raise their voices in support of rights which their captors had trampled in their name. Thus, the problem of Palestine has become an issue of right over wrong, principles and commitments, in short, an issue of freedom and human rights. This explains the support it receives from the majority of the international community which stands for the conscience of man.

This conscience of man seems to be an affront to Zionism. Zionism, having devoured a land, uprooted its people, dispersed them and took those who refused to leave captive in their own country and subjected them to all forms of terrorism, racial discrimination and segregation in order to force them to leave, now wants the world conscience to accept this takeover by immigrants driven by greed of another people's country and legalize the assumption of settlers from other countries of the rights of citizenship in a land that is not theirs.

The forces of Zionism and their supporters, therefore, are offended by the discussion of the problem of Palestine in the United Nations. This discussion irks them because it unveils the conspiracy into which they trapped the United Nations in 1947. We wish to say to Zionism and its supporters that the problem will remain before the United Nations until a just solution is found and an end put to racial discrimination on the soil of Palestine. The problem is there and will not go away until the Palestinian rights are restored and peace returns to the land of peace. The Zionists know that they have made one of the gravest mistakes in history. They know that they are guilty of one of the most heinous crimes against humanity.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

They are impatient to arrive, in the shortest possible time, at what they believe to be the quickest way to realize the Zionist dream of taking over Palestine and the surrounding lands and destroy the Arab people in those lands. They know that every Palestinian generation that was born, or will be born, after the calamity of 1947, is even more committed than the preceding generation to the struggle for Arab rights, regardless of the passage of time, and no matter how great the sacrifices. Zionism and Israel know that they are fighting the very current of history, and that failure will catch up with them before they reach the goals they are striving after. They are gambling with the lives of people in a way that is bound to bring down the wrath of God and man.

The Zionists know that, But do they try to prevent the impending disaster by reaching a just solution that would spare the lives of Arabs and Jews alike? No. They are determined to abort every peace initiative, as experience has shown over the past 40 years and to this very day, everyone who became involved in the events of the past years knows that quite well and therefore understands how the minds of the ruling junta in Israel work. Everyone who has dealt with them has become convinced that those people want nothing but a pax Israeliana, whereby Israel would take over the land, subjugate the people, impose its will on the whole region, and its hegemony over countries which have natural resources that it covets and is intent upon taking by force of arms as it did when it invaded Lebanon in 1982. Under your very eyes and ears, Israel tried to impose its hegemony on that Arab country through a "peace" that would have enabled it to dominate a defeated capitulator. That attempt was thwarted only by the strength of the Lebanese people's belief in their independence and sovereignty.

That is why Israel rejected the Fez peace proposal, although it represented a great Arab sacrifice which was made for the sake of peace and an end to bloodshed.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

Israel rejected that initiative because it has never wanted the just peace you have in mind. What it wants is a Zionist-Israeli peace that would ensure its dominance of the region, a dream they will never achieve.

The general picture of the problem of Palestine now, as we have it before us in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people, shows clearly, by name, numbers and location, the practices of the Zionist authorities which break every law. It shows how the Arabs are treated in their own land as aliens; how they are denied civil and human rights, as if they were the illegal immigrants; how they are terrorized by the Israeli police; how the most repugnant measures of inhuman injustice are imposed on them; and how the Jewish settlers, under the eyes of the authorities, commit the most heinous crimes against them. Recall the episode of the two young Arabs who were killed under torture by the Chief of the Israeli Secret Police and his assistants, on order from their Prime Minister whose past record is well known. Later, those who committed the crime were granted immunity from prosecution. This is a tale that is still within living memory.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

Those that defend Zionist racial discrimination in its most repugnant form should go as individuals to Palestine, in the same way as some have been to South Africa. There they would see for themselves the most horrifying practices of racial discrimination there. There they would see for themselves how a human being is stripped of every human right just because he is Arab; how his land is confiscated; how he is expelled from his village; how his house is demolished for the most trivial of reasons or on suspicion, simply because he is Arab. All these things those defenders of Zionism can see for themselves: how people with deep roots in their homeland are being fragmented into small groups and then hunted by the agents of the authorities and harassed by Zionist terrorist gangs that carry out their terrorist practices with impunity under the protection of the police. The actions of the gangs of Rabbi Kahane and his like are well documented and there for members to see in media reports. Those latter-day Zionists are engaged in a revival of the gangs which spearheaded the establishment of Israel and were led by its present rulers.

Let the defenders of Zionism go to Palestine to see for themselves how a once thriving people, namely, the Arab Palestinian people is being transformed into a nation of refugees who live in camps in their own country and are constantly under attack by marauding Zionist gangs.

The Committee states in its report that the grave situation in the Middle East will continue to worsen so long as the Palestinian people is denied its inalienable right to self-determination, independence and national sovereignty, and its right of return to its homeland and as long as the Palestinian and other Arab territories remain under occupation.

If this cannot be called a grievous situation of racial discrimination, it must have a more ominous appellation that will convey the extremes of the denial of all spiritual and human values.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

The core of the Palestinian problem is the problem of Al Quds; Al Quds, the first of the two Kiblas that Muslims have turned their faces to in their prayers since the revelation of the divine message to Muhammad, the Messenger of God.

The Zionists are bent on erasing the religious Muslim and Christian character of Al Quds, the Holy City of 1 billion Muslims, more than 1 billion Christians and 15 million Jews, in order to make it an exclusively Jewish city. Their first attempt is to destroy the Holy Mosque. All their acts testify to this malicious intention. We must draw the attention of the world to this and warn the Zionists and their supporters of the consequences of such an adventure, which would provoke the Islamic world to a man in a way that would stun Israel and its supporters. Any attempt to douse the fire that would erupt from the destruction or takeover of the Mosque of Al Quds would certainly fail.

The Palestinian people is the focal point of any peace on the soil of Palestine. The Palestinian people is the major, most important and fundamental fact in the Palestine problem. Zionism denies this because it wants to deny the very existence of the Palestinian people, the owner of the land, so as to be able to make their fraudulent claim that this is "a land without people". The full rights of the Palestinian people, which the Zionists today are trying to deny and would like to obliterate remain at the root of any possible solution of the problem of Palestine. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It has the support of the Arab Palestinian people. As a matter of fact, the support it enjoys is far greater than the parliamentary majority by which many Governments represented here have been returned. We know this, and Israel knows it. No denial of the role of the organization by Israel or any other party can change this fact. Such denials are merely attempts to thwart any genuine peace initiative. We must ask the following question: does Israel, the enemy of the Palestinian people, which usurped its land

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

and rights, want to elect the representatives of its victims? This farce must come to an end and the friends of Israel should stop playing along with it.

We have brought the problem of Palestine to the United Nations to redress the wrongs which have resulted from the Partition conspiracy and restore the rights of the Palestinian people. Members have been witnesses, ever since 1947, to a series of criminal acts which have been and continue to be committed by the Zionists in Palestine. If the support Israel receives from certain States encourages it to indulge in its excesses and affords it some temporary immunity from punishment, let it read the history of wars and terrorist invasions, whose traces and those of their perpetrators time has eradicated. History has often seen régimes based on terror, but it has never recorded the continued existence of a single régime that was set up and maintained by terror.

The information reviewed by the Committee leaves no room for doubt that Israel still persists in the policy of the confiscation of lands owned by Arabs and expansion of its settlements programme in the occupied land. Israel still threatens the remaining Arab lands by creeping annexation, with the ultimate aim of incorporating them economically and administratively in the Israeli system and thus creating the conditions that would make the expulsion of the Palestinian population from their land a virtual certainty.

The Palestinian Arab people, I repeat, is the major and most important fact in the Palestinian problem. Its existence is a fact both on the soil of Palestine and in the international arena. Its full rights are at the very heart of the problem and it is the key to its solution. Since Israel wants to deny this, it has condemned itself to playing a terrorist role and made of that role the very basis of its presence on Arab land. The life of the oppressor is short, no matter how long he stays. Since it has chosen war on Arab land, Israel is bound sooner or later to lose the final battle confronting a vast array of Arab and Muslim nations.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

The Committee states in its report that no solution to the Middle East problem can be envisaged which does not take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people can be restored only by the return of the Palestinian people to their homeland and properties and the exercise of their right to self-determination, independence and national sovereignty.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

The Committee has also reaffirmed to us that the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other participants, is indispensable to any effort relating to peace in the Middle East. This essential fact is clear.

The safest route to a solution of the Palestine problem is the peace process proposed by the Arabs in the Fez Plan of 1982, which represents the most extensive sacrifices the Arabs have been able to make to solve the problem, sacrifices offered despite the illegitimacy of Israel's claims and all the acts it has committed. When Israel refuses even that offer, then it must realize that time is not on its side. To take advantage of a military opportunity that is temporarily favourable to it, and against the momentum of history, is not the way to establish a State which can survive and become part of history. Israel is thus squandering an opportunity that may never arise again. It has become clear now to every reasonable person that the Arab and Muslim nation is, for the first time since it confronted Israeli technological superiority 50 years ago, catching up with that superiority at a fast pace. It will surely not be long before its natural superiority, supported by the impact of a growing population, is demonstrated, which will in turn impose a peaceful and just settlement, irrespective of whether it is acceptable to Zionism or not.

Our position in the Kingdom is firm and clear. We pledge full support to the Palestinian people and are fully committed to the restoration of its full and inalienable national rights, its absolute right to self-determination, and to the establishment of its own State on its national soil, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative. That is the stand of every Arab and Muslim and of every fair-minded person. It has always been the stand taken by the Kingdom, which remains fully committed to it. We are convinced beyond any shadow of doubt that the only road to a just peace is one that

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

will secure the national Palestinian rights. There can be no just peace without the realization of the full rights of the Palestinian people, who own the land; and no peace can be established or can endure except a just peace.

Mr. ABULHASSAN (Kuwait) (intrepretation from Arabic): The question of Palestine is at the top of the list of cases of injustice done to man in this century, an injustice which befell the peaceful Palestinian people in the land of its forbears. Any one attempting to deal with this question in the General Assembly of the United Nations faces a problem: from what perspective is this question to be reviewed? Are we to look at the question from the standpoint of the principles of the United Nations Charter or of international law, or of human rights, or perhaps of the many international resolutions on the question? The problem arises from the fact that this issue and the fact that it is persisting without a solution are a flagrant violation of all those principles and instruments.

It is even more perplexing to realize that the United Nations, within whose walls we are meeting today, is the main party responsible for this question. It was the United Nations that adopted the first international unjust resolution to be passed against any people on earth. Unfortunately, the United Nations has been unable since then to restore the rights concerned to their legitimate owners or to lift up the sufferers of this injustice. Indeed, a completely different course has been followed, in clear violation of all the basic principles on which this Organization was founded.

The issue became even more exacerbated when Israel - after the international will had been united for some time, and had been expressed in a series of international resolutions based on the restoration of rights to their legitimate owners - Israel the usurper, the aggressor, left the main stream. Supported by

(Mr. Abulhassan, Kuwait)

Powers allied to it, it challenged the international will, and rejected and refused to implement those United Nations resolutions which were directed to seeking a solution to the question of Palestine.

Israel did not stop there. It did not stop at expelling Palestinians from their land, dispersing them, pillaging their wealth and expropriating their properties. It went further, and is practising against the legitimate inhabitants who remain, in the land of Palestine all kinds of oppression, torture and acts of barbarism through its forces of occupation, beginning with the policy of the iron fist, house arrests, expulsions, the fabrication of trumped-up charges, the expropriation of land, the building of settlements, the demolition of homes, the cutting off of land owners from their water resources, and culminating in the policies of collective punishment, the practice of firing on demonstrators, including young people and the frequent imposition of curfews.

Kuwait, while strongly condemning these inhuman practices, believes that the States which continue to pay lip service to support for human rights should really raise their voices, not only to denounce those policies but also, indeed, to exert pressures so that those policies may be brought to an end, for those States do have influence on Israel because of the special relationships that bind them together.

The United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices, in its latest report to the General Assembly has stated that the Israeli policies in the Arab and Palestinian occupied territories have led to an escalation of violence.

A reading of the provisions of the articles of the Hague Charter of 1907, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, can lead to only one conclusion about Israel: that Israel is the single entity that is the gravest threat to fundamental humanitarian values and the gravest threat to the most simple and fundamental human rights.

(Mr. Abulhassan, Kuwait)

But events have not stopped there. Israel continues to build settler colonies on the West Bank and in the Gaza district. The latest statistics show that the lands which have been expropriated by Israel in the occupied West Bank from 1967 until now represent half the lands of the West Bank. That clearly shows that Zionist settlement is a means, an objective and a foundation of the Zionist entity at the expense of the Arab community which has been there throughout ancient and modern times.

Kuwait warns the international community from this rostrum that the dangers inherent in this colonial settlement, condoned by influential Western States, is not a passing threat. It carries the seeds of the gravest consequences for the future of the region and for international peace and security.

(Mr. Abulhassan, Kuwait)

The Zionist settler master-plan is based on isolating vital Arab population centres and disintegrating the demographic integrity of the occupied Arab territories, as well as their division into small geographical and administrative regions in order to isolate them. It is based on feeding the spirit of hatred against Arabs. It is based on encouraging the feeling of superiority and arrogance of extremist settlers, who are allowed to carry weapons, something, of course, prohibited to Arab inhabitants.

A minority of the States members of this international community continue to insist on contravening the principles and noble values which they themselves struggled for at different times in their history. We do not believe that there is a better example of this contradiction than their objection to legitimate Palestinian resistance. While those States venerated, and continue to venerate, resistance movements against nazism and fascism in Europe, we find them at the same time denying the Palestinian people this sacred right - a people whose land was usurped, a people who are seeking to put an end to the abhorrent Israeli occupation, a people who are seeking to regain their legitimate rights. In the eyes of that minority of States, the Palestinian people does not have the right to fight for its dignity, nor is it allowed to fight for the freedom and independence of its land.

The Prime Minister of France, Mr. Jacques Chirac, in a recent interview with the newspaper Washington Post said:

"Israelis are angry when a bomb explodes at the Wailing Wall. However, it seems that they forget that what the Arabs see is that Israelis are bombarding Palestinian camps. They are killing and wounding all sorts of innocent people."

I merely refer to this quotation, because in it a leader of a major European Power refutes the claims of the Israeli propaganda machine on terrorism and Arabs

(Mr. Abulhassan, Kuwait)

and their attempts to show the legitimate Palestinian resistance in a terrorist mould, as well as their attempts to distort the reality of the Arab homeland in general.

What must be asserted and reasserted until rights are restored to those who are legally entitled to them is that no solution whatsoever will be achieved in the Middle East as long as some people persist in forgetting the cause of the Palestinian people and refuse to put it at the top of their priorities. That people's cause is one that is linked to peace and security in the whole world. Kuwait cannot accept a solution to the question of Palestine which is not based on international legitimacy represented by the need for Israel to withdraw from the West Bank, Holy Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and all occupied Arab territories, or which is not based on the return of refugees to their homeland and the restoration of legitimate rights to the Palestinian people, particularly its right to self-determination and the establishment of its own independent State under the leadership of its sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Within the framework of Kuwait's concern for this legitimacy, we call for the speeding up of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, which would deal with the question of Palestine as the core of the struggle in the region. We call for an end of artificial and unjustifiable obstacles being put before this unanimous international demand expressed in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. We further call on the permanent members of the Security Council, who bear the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to spare no effort in order to break that artificial deadlock which has been imposed on all regional and international efforts to find a just settlement of the question of Palestine in keeping with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the will of the international community.

(Mr. Abulhassan, Kuwait)

Kuwait also calls on the Secretary-General to continue his efforts and good offices aimed at convening the International Conference. We call on the Secretary-General to invoke all the capabilities of the international Organization with a view to enhancing progress towards a settlement of the question of Palestine in such a way as to allow the Palestinian people to freely determine its future and to realize its legitimate hopes and aspirations to establish its own independent State on its own national soil.

Mr. NETANYAHU (Israel): I would like to begin with a quotation:

"What's happening to the Palestinian people is causing great anxiety. Our youngsters are leaving their pigeon-holes in the refugee camps and building themselves luxurious villas in Amman, Beirut, Damascus and Baghdad. Once they move to these spacious villas, they begin to forget their old homes where they grew up and maybe even their nationality and identity."

The speaker is a senior PLO official, recently quoted in the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Qabas. He goes on to say:

"The Palestinian leadership is concerned over this phenomenon and have decided that this must stop if we are to recapture Palestine. We decided to preserve the existence of the Palestinian camps, the huts and small houses made of cardboard. We understand that such a massive transition of youngsters to new luxurious houses means that we have found an alternative homeland."

The remarkable thing about this statement is its frankness. It unmask the main reason why the problems of the Palestinian Arab refugees have not been resolved. The PLO, ostensibly concerned with its solution, is in reality dedicated to its perpetuation. And this also explains why, while other refugees' problems in this century - problems of far greater complexity and size, problems involving some 50 million human beings - have been successfully settled, yet the Palestinian Arab refugee problem persists and has persisted nearly half a century after it began.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

By its own admission, the PLO wants to stuff its people back into the "cardboard huts" and the "pigeon holes" to - using their language - "preserve the refugee camps" - no matter the suffering, the degradation or the human misery to their fellow human beings. Now the PLO has also taken active measures to ensure that its policies are followed. It opposes any initiative to improve the lot of the refugees. I am not here speaking merely of Israeli initiatives, such as a ministerial proposal that we have had in our Cabinet to bring in a massive infusion of funds and development projects to address the remaining problems of refugees under Israeli jurisdiction - there are not many, but we would like to have those problems completely resolved. It is not those initiatives alone that the PLO has tried to block; it has tried to block Arab initiatives and Arab proposals and to block them with violence if necessary. The PLO knows that without refugees there is no PLO, and hence there must be refugees.

I began with this quotation because it leads to a larger truth about the Arab-Israeli conflict. There is nothing intrinsically insoluble about any of the specific areas under dispute. I have already mentioned refugees, but the same applies to contested territories and the absence of mutually agreed borders. Many such disputes, involving much larger territories and much longer borders, have been resolved peacefully in this century.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

If this were all that was involved - a territorial dispute - we could long ago have reached a solution, but that is not all that is involved. The opening passage that I cited, like innumerable other statements made by the PLO, make that absolutely clear. The idea is, to borrow a phrase from that quotation, to "recapture Palestine", which, as the PLO charter explicitly states, means the liquidation of Israel - and, incidentally, Jordan as well.

There are two immediate consequences of this policy. First, by definition, if Israel is to be annihilated it cannot be a party to any peace negotiations, except, that is, to those negotiations that are to prepare its own demise. Secondly, any Arab who wavers from that policy and seeks a genuine accommodation is to be violently opposed and if necessary liquidated. Hence the scorn heaped on President Sadat of Egypt, upon whose grave Yasser Arafat danced, and hence the hundreds of moderate Palestinian Arab leaders who have been exterminated by the PLO over the years. In fact, until recently any Arab Head of State caught negotiating with Israel, or even suspected of doing so, has lived under the threat of assassination.

The result of this climate of fear is to make negotiations between Jews and Arabs difficult, and often impossible. How can one resolve these outstanding problems without negotiating? In other words, what has hindered peace is the absence of negotiators, an absence ensured by a reign of terror. This Arab terror, which began in the early part of this century, before there were refugees, before there were disputed territories, before there were even independent States in the region, has killed far more Arabs than Jews and has ensured the continuation of conflict.

From this rostrum today we have heard, and throughout the rest of this debate we shall constantly hear, that the Palestinian problem gave rise to terrorism. But the opposite is true; it is terrorism that gave rise to the Palestinian problem. That is why the campaign of terror - Arab terror - began in the 1920s, long before

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

the grievances professed by the apologists of Arab terror even existed. The mere possibility of peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews was enough to evoke the wrath of Arab terrorists. From Hajemin el-Husseini, who made a pact with Hitler to exterminate the Jews, to the Ayatollah Khomeini, with whom Yasser Arafat has made a similar arrangement, the goals of Arab terrorism have remained unchanged: conflict, not compromise; liquidation, not liberation.

Those who say that the absence of peace promotes terrorism have it all wrong. It is terrorism more than any other force, that ensures the absence of peace, and there is a very simple reason for that. Peace and terrorism are the antithesis of each other. Terrorism rejects politics, and politics is the non-violent resolution of conflict. Terrorism does not tolerate the essential process that brings about the peaceful resolution of disputes, direct negotiations between the parties. Terrorism seeks not to negotiate with its adversaries but to obliterate them. That is why, if it is up to the terrorists - if it is up to the PLO - there will never be peace.

From this it follows that, if one weakens terrorism, one strengthens peace, and this has been Israel's policy: to roll back the forces of terrorism while seeking political negotiations with our neighbours. Until we arrive at those negotiations we shall continue to foster peaceful coexistence and improve the living standards of Arabs and Jews alike.

We are encouraged by signs of realism and openness from certain quarters in the Arab world. The recent meeting between the then Prime Minister Peres and King Hassan of Morocco is one such sign. Another is the decision by Jordan to shut down active PLO bases in its territory. But, while I point out those positive signs, I should also point out that there are other signs, signs that the main engine of

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

terror - the PLO in its various options - is committed to reversing that direction. The PLO has recently announced that it will step up its campaign of "armed struggle" - that is a tired euphemism for terror. Hence we see the murderous assault recently on the western wall, the most sacred site for the Jewish people, and we see the recent murders and attempted murders of moderate Palestinian Arabs and, of course, we see the recent massacre of worshippers in a synagogue in Istanbul.

These attacks speak volumes because what they tell us is something fundamental about terrorism. They tell us that the means and ends of terror are indissolubly linked to one another, because the means of terror indicate unmistakably what the true ends are. What the PLO would do to its Arab subjects if it ever came to power has already been witnessed in Lebanon. There what we can see today is the local Shi-ite inhabitants vigorously resisting the PLO attempts to come back into the area, because they remember well the 10 years of PLO terror and pillage and rape. And what the PLO would do to the Jews of Israel if it ever had the power to do so was demonstrated in Istanbul. It would carry out one mass pogrom, in their words "to cleanse Palestine with blood".

There is one other thing that is peculiar to the forces of terror, all forces of terror, and that was understood 100 years ago by Dostoevsky. He described what happens when a group of terrorists decides one of their members is a traitor to the cause, and they kill him. At that point, Dostoevsky says, they are locked in a circle of blood. They are slaves for ever to the forces of fear, mutual fear, and moral disintegration.

That is exactly what is happening today to the PLO. It has now been splintered into a myriad factions, each claiming to represent the authentic cause,

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each butchering the other with relentless zeal. This is how one Palestinian leader put it recently:

"Currently the PLO does not exist; in theory, yes. The PLO money has not been spent in the interests of the Palestinian people. If I tell you that Khaled Al-Hassan" - that is one of Arafat's chief aides - "has more capital than any Kuwaiti family, what does that mean? Arafat had five of our friends axed. They cut them with axes. Three of them were engineers in Al-Bakka in Lebanon. Even President Assad did not believe it had happened until he was told the facts of the incident."

That is saying something. The speaker, incidentally, is Abu Nidal, again quoted in Al-Qabas.

We cannot rely on the process of internal violence to curb the forces of terror. We must take active measures to defend against the terror campaign and to resist its effort to subvert the process of peace. There is now, I am afraid, in this General Assembly one such attempt to derail a genuine rapprochement, and that is the move to convene an international conference which would dictate terms to Israel, rather than allow a direct and unfettered exchange between Israel and its neighbours. Currently that effort is concentrating on a preparatory conference of the permanent members of the Security Council. The idea smacks of an imposed settlement and Israel will oppose it. As Vice-Premier Peres put it recently,

"This is akin to bringing the mothers-in-law to a wedding without bringing the bride and the groom."

And, what is worse, two of the permanent members - the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China - do not have diplomatic relations with Israel. The Soviet Union even voted against accepting Israel's credentials at the United

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Nations. How can it seriously talk about a peace conference under United Nations sponsorship involving Israel when it joins in an effort that effectively calls for the expulsion of Israel from the United Nations?

There are other ways to bring peace. The conflict between Israel and the Arab States can be solved. Solutions can be found to the outstanding problems, including the problems of borders, the problems of refugees, the problems of conflicting aspirations. But the prerequisite is to do away with violence and terror and to open direct negotiations between the parties. This is an effort that deserves the support not only of Jews and Arabs, but of all those in the international community that are genuinely interested in bringing to a peaceful end a conflict that could have been resolved and reconciled long ago.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.