



# General Assembly

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## Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

### Summary record of the 331st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 17 March 2011, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Diallo ..... (Senegal)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

### **Update on developments since the previous meeting of the Committee**

2. **The Chair**, summarizing some of the activities and developments that had taken place since the Committee's previous meeting, said that international recognition of the State of Palestine had continued to increase; Paraguay, Peru, Suriname and Uruguay had recently declared or reaffirmed their recognition of the State of Palestine. A number of States members of the European Union, including Cyprus, Denmark, Greece and the United Kingdom, had elevated the diplomatic status of the Palestinian delegation in their respective capitals. In addition, the African Union summit, held in Addis Ababa in January 2011, had called on all countries to recognize a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders.

3. The Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress and the Global Foundation for Democracy and Development had organized a forum entitled "Latin American Alliance for Peace in the Middle East: The Role of Latin American Civil Society", which had been held in San Jose, Costa Rica, from 10 to 12 March 2011, under the auspices of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences. In their final declaration, participants in the forum had declared that Latin American States had a direct and crucial interest in promoting peace in the Middle East and should work towards that goal.

4. On 3 February 2011, France had announced that an international conference of donors for the Palestinian State would take place in Paris in June 2011.

5. On 3 February 2011, the principal members of the Quartet had met in Munich and had reiterated their support for the conclusion of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations by September 2011.

6. From 6 to 11 February 2011, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, had visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. At the conclusion of her visit, she had said that the settlement of Israeli citizens in the Occupied Palestinian Territory should be

stopped altogether, and had expressed concern regarding the intensely negative impact the fragmentation of the West Bank by the separation wall, settlements and checkpoints was having on human rights, peace, development and the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

7. On 14 February 2011, after having tendered his Government's resignation, Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad had been asked by President Mahmoud Abbas to form a new Cabinet.

8. On 18 February 2011, the Security Council had failed to adopt a draft resolution demanding that Israel should cease all settlement activities. Fourteen Council members had voted in favour of adopting the draft resolution, while a sole member had voted to reject it.

9. On 24 February 2011, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Robert H. Serry, had briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine.

10. On 12 March 2011, shortly following the killing of five Israelis in the Itamar settlement, the Israeli Government had approved the construction of 500 houses in the West Bank.

### **The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and developments in the political process**

11. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) said that his delegation was continuing its efforts to increase the number of States that recognized the State of Palestine. He had personally discussed the issue with officials from several States, including at various events that had been organized by the Committee. The number of States that had officially recognized Palestine stood at 112, and it was hoped that number would increase to 140 by August 2011. He therefore called on all Committee members to continue their efforts in that regard.

12. His delegation was grateful for the effort Committee members had made to persuade the Security Council to adopt a resolution demanding that Israel should cease all settlement activities. Although that effort had ultimately failed, he had been heartened by the nearly universal support that the draft resolution had garnered. Indeed, the Member State that had vetoed the draft resolution had not objected to its

substance, but had taken that action for reasons known to all. His delegation would continue to monitor developments on the ground and evaluate the possibility of taking further action in the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. It would also continue its efforts to persuade the Quartet to issue a statement setting out the parameters of a resolution to the conflict in line with the parameters that had been set out by the representative of the United Kingdom, speaking also on behalf of France and Germany, at the 6484th meeting of the Security Council, held on 18 February 2011. Those parameters were: cessation of settlement activity; agreement on the borders of the two States on the basis of the 1967 borders, with equivalent land swaps as may be agreed between the parties; negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the capital of both States; and a just, fair and agreed solution to the refugee question.

13. **President Mahmoud Abbas** had met with representatives of the Quartet in order to explore ways of prevailing on Israel to fulfil its obligations under the Road Map and international law and to resume permanent-status negotiations. He had also sent letters to the President of the Security Council, the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General condemning the intensification of Israeli settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem.

14. With regard to the reconciliation of the Palestinian factions, President Abbas had recently expressed his willingness to meet representatives of Hamas in the Gaza Strip to discuss the formation of a government of national unity in preparation for the holding of elections in the near future. That initiative had come on the heels of demonstrations by Palestinian youths in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip calling for an end to Israeli occupation and Palestinian factional divisions. He trusted that Palestine's friends in the Committee would support the reconciliation efforts.

15. His delegation was grateful that the Committee had chosen the issue of the plight of Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons and detention facilities as the theme of the United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held in Vienna on 7 and 8 March 2011. The Meeting had been highly informative and had succeeded in drawing international attention to an issue that was extremely important to the Palestinian people. Efforts to internationalize the issue of the Palestinian prisoners

would continue at the upcoming meetings of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

16. Lastly, his delegation had been working closely with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in its effort to secure increased funding from the regular budget, as the Secretary-General had recommended in his report on strengthening the management capacity of UNRWA (A/65/705). The Fourth Committee was expected to meet in the near future, in order to adopt a draft resolution in that regard. The draft resolution would then be referred to the General Assembly for adoption. Recalling the Agency's perennially dire financial situation, he called on all Committee members to make every effort to help UNRWA secure the funds it required to continue assisting the Palestine refugees.

**Report of the Chair on the United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, United Nations Office at Vienna, 7 and 8 March 2011**

17. **The Chair** said that the United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, under the theme "The urgency of addressing the plight of Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons and detention facilities", had been held at the United Nations Office at Vienna on 7 and 8 March 2011. It had been the first Meeting dedicated to an issue that had significant human rights ramifications and was key to peace efforts. The meeting had been well attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities, civil society organizations and the media, as well as a delegation from the Committee.

18. In the keynote presentation, Mr. Issa Qaraqe, Minister of Prisoners' Affairs of the Palestinian Authority, had focused on the need to internationalize the issue of Palestinian political prisoners detained by Israel and to treat them as prisoners of war, when appropriate. He had also suggested exploring the possibility of referring their cases to the appropriate legal bodies of the United Nations, including the International Court of Justice. The plenary sessions had focused on several significant issues, such as the conditions in which Palestinians, including women and children, were imprisoned in Israeli detention facilities and the legal aspects of the manner in which the

occupying Power arrested and detained Palestinians. The issue of Palestinian political prisoners had also been discussed in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian political process.

19. The participants had noted with concern that Palestinian prisoners were often detained in extremely poor and, in some cases, life-threatening conditions. Israel had continued to practice torture and other forms of mistreatment against Palestinian detainees, who had called attention to their grave situation through hunger strikes, most recently in January 2011. The participants had drawn special attention to the situation of detained women and minors, as well as physically and psychologically vulnerable prisoners, who had reportedly been subjected to mistreatment and deprived of appropriate health care.

20. Grave concern had been expressed regarding Israel's widespread use of administrative detention. Participants had called on Israel to apply the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions and meet minimum international standards for due process. In that connection, the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions had been called on to ensure that the Conventions were respected in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

21. In addition to participating in the Meeting, the Committee's representatives had also held meetings with ministers, ambassadors and officials of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations. Those meetings had explored possible measures that could be taken to relaunch the political process, with a view to achieving a permanent solution to the question of Palestine; reinforce the institutional capacities of the Palestinian Authority; ensure respect for the human rights of the Palestinians, in particular those of political prisoners, including women and children; and elevate the diplomatic status of the delegations of the State of Palestine around the world, particularly in Europe.

22. *The Committee took note of the Chair's report.*

**United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace and the United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Montevideo, 29 to 31 March 2011** (Working Paper No. 2)

23. **The Chair** drew attention to Working Paper No. 2, which contained the provisional programmes of

both the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace and the United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, which were scheduled to take place in Montevideo from 29 to 31 March 2011.

24. Recalling that the suggested theme was "The urgency of realizing a two-State solution", he said the objective of the Meetings was to encourage broad international action, including by Latin American and Caribbean States, in support of Israeli-Palestinian peace and achieving a solution to the conflict based on a shared vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. The topics in the proposed programme included obstacles and opportunities on the road to achieving peace, support by Latin American and Caribbean States for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, and the role of non-governmental actors in Latin America and the Caribbean in promoting a permanent settlement.

25. He took it that, if there were no objections, the Committee wished to approve the provisional programme contained in Working Paper No. 2.

26. *It was so decided.*

**Expression of farewell to Mr. Ali (Malaysia)**

27. **The Chair**, speaking on behalf of all the members of the Committee, thanked Mr. Ali (Malaysia) for his service to the Committee and wished him success in his future endeavours.

28. **Mr. Ali** (Malaysia) thanked the Chair for the expression of farewell.

*The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.*