



# General Assembly

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

### Summary record of the 372nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 5 October 2015, at 10.30 a.m.

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

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

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

2. **The Chair** said that the Committee, in cooperation with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States, had held an international meeting on the question of Palestine in Brussels on 7 and 8 September 2015, an informal summary of which he had distributed to Committee members.

3. On 10 September 2015, the General Assembly had decided in draft resolution 69/320 that the flags of non-member observer States would be raised at Headquarters and United Nations offices following the flags of the Member States. On 30 September 2015, the flag of the State of Palestine had been raised for the first time at Headquarters in a ceremony attended by the President of Palestine, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and many ministers and ambassadors.

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

4. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the raising of the flag of the State of Palestine at United Nations Headquarters on 30 September 2015 had been attended by representatives of the overwhelming majority of Member States, many of which had abstained in the vote at the General Assembly. Their presence in such large numbers had helped to mark that historic occasion. In the meantime, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, remained highly volatile. The current extreme-right Government of Israel, which was under the influence of extremist settlers, had opted for militarism and terrorist tactics in order to extinguish the hope generated by the raising of the Palestinian flag. In so doing, it had ignored appeals to reason from stakeholders around the world, including the Secretary-General.

5. The Israeli Government had escalated its policy of incitement around the holy sites of Jerusalem,

particularly the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Some 3,500 police officers and border guards had been stationed in occupied East Jerusalem. The desecration of the holy sites had inflamed the feelings of the Palestinian people, particularly those of the Islamic faith, leading to confrontations at the Al-Aqsa Mosque and around the Old City. In an illegal act of collective punishment, the occupation authorities were preventing Palestinians in the occupied West Bank from travelling to Jerusalem or entering the Old City.

6. In the occupied West Bank, the onslaught of the occupation authorities and settler groups had continued unabated. The latter had committed acts of terrorism, including the arson attack in the town of Duma on 31 July 2015, in which a toddler and several members of his family had lost their lives. Settlers were attacking civilian cars across the West Bank. The Israeli occupation forces had killed several civilians, injured over 70 and arrested dozens over the previous few days. On 4 October 2015, they had shot dead a Palestinian teenager who had been attempting to flee a settler mob. The occupation authorities had threatened a massive intervention across the occupied West Bank in order to force the Palestinian people to submit to their will. Such provocative tactics would prove unsuccessful.

7. The international community and, in particular, the Security Council and the Secretary-General, must prevail on Israel to desist from its insane course of action. Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, the occupying Power had a duty to protect the civilian population under its control. Instead, it had become a source of insecurity. The international community therefore had a responsibility to intervene and protect the Palestinian people, pending the end of the occupation and the establishment of the independent State of Palestine. It seemed likely that the confrontation would intensify over the following days and that innocent blood would continue to be spilled. Most of the casualties would belong to the Palestinian side, which was no match for Israel's military machine. At a time when the region faced numerous other explosive issues, not least the fight against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the occupation authorities had chosen to drag the Palestinian people into a religious confrontation over Jerusalem. They would bear full responsibility for any ramifications.

### Consideration of the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/AC.183/2015/CRP.2)

8. **Mr. Grima** (Malta), Rapporteur, introducing the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/AC.183/2015/CRP.2), said that in accordance with established practice, the Secretariat would continue to update the draft report, as necessary, in consultation with the Rapporteur, in order to reflect any new developments that might take place before it was forwarded to the General Assembly.

9. **The Chair** invited the Committee to consider the draft report chapter by chapter.

10. *Chapters I to VII were adopted.*

11. *The draft report as a whole was adopted.*

12. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia), Vice-Chair, said that it would have been useful for the draft report to place a still greater emphasis on the issue of funding and, in particular, the situation of the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other United Nations agencies, which were struggling to secure funds for reconstruction projects in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Several fundraising events had been organized, most notably the international Gaza donor conference held in Cairo on 12 October 2014, and donor States must be reminded of the need to honour their commitments.

13. **The Chair** urged all stakeholders to increase their funding for UNRWA and for reconstruction projects, particularly in the Gaza Strip.

### Report on the international meeting on the question of Palestine, Brussels, 7 and 8 September 2015

14. **Mr. Percaya** (Indonesia), Vice-Chair, said that the theme of the international meeting on the question of Palestine, attended by many high-ranking representatives of international and regional organizations, Governments and civil society, had been "Israeli settlements as an obstacle to peace — possible ways forward". The Committee delegation had had a useful exchange with the head of the United Nations Directorate within the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who had confirmed that Belgium was seeking full European Union support for recent French proposals for finding a way forward.

15. In his message to the meeting, the Secretary-General had said that settlement expansion and settler impunity were root causes of violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and could not be reconciled with the stated intention of the Government of Israel to pursue a two-State solution. The Chair of the Committee had emphasized that Israeli settlements were illegal under international law, violated the Fourth Geneva Convention and had been declared by the Security Council to be an obstacle to peace in the Middle East.

16. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine had said that since 1967 Israel had openly built illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, so that some 600,000 settlers had effectively confiscated over half of the territory of the State of Palestine. He had urged Governments and the European Union to ensure that public and private entities and individuals ended their involvement with the settlement regime. The representatives of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States, noting that the clearly illegal settlements had fragmented Palestinian communities and begun the Judaization of Jerusalem, had called for an internationally established time frame for the end of the occupation and a move from mere condemnation to action. Other speakers had described the impact of settlements on the Palestinian population, international legal aspects of settlements and the steps that the international community should take to achieve a two-State solution.

17. The points had been made that settlement expansion was an official policy designed systematically to deny Palestinians their right to self-determination and confiscate most of Area C of the West Bank. Settler violence against Palestinian civilians could trigger a new cycle of violence, including in Jerusalem, where the situation was volatile. Although the transfer or deportation of people to occupied territories by occupying Powers was defined as a war crime and a crime against humanity under international law, the settlements continued to thrive in a climate of impunity, but Israel had to be held accountable for its illegal practices.

18. A number of possible legal and economic strategies had been put forward at the meeting, such as banning trade in products manufactured in settlements and labelling them to indicate their origin; the suspension by the European Union of its Association

Agreement with Israel because that Agreement was predicated on the parties' respect for human rights and democratic principles; and the convening of an international conference to end the occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in the absence of action by the Security Council. It had been argued that the two-State solution remained the only viable option and that it was also in Israel's interests if it wished to remain a democratic State.

19. At the consultations that the Committee delegation had held on 9 September 2015 with civil society organisations based in Europe and the Middle East, it had been recommended that the Committee should submit a draft resolution giving guidelines for Member States regarding actions by corporations and businesses that benefited from settlement expansion; make more public statements to which civil society organizations could refer; and foster synergies with such organizations.

#### **Other matters**

20. **The Chair** said that the New York session of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Government, conducted by the Division for Palestinian Rights, had started on 7 September 2015 with the arrival of two trainees from Palestine. The programme had contributed meaningfully to the capacity-building of Palestinian Government institutions.

21. The special meeting in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People would be held on 23 November 2015. Delegations should be represented at the ambassadorial level.

22. **Mr. Percaya** (Indonesia), Vice-Chair, said that his Government hoped to host a second international meeting on the question of Jerusalem in mid-December 2015.

23. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) welcomed the Committee's collaboration with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States in organizing the meeting, which would be held at a crucial time.

*The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.*