



# General Assembly

Seventieth session

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Official Records

*President:* Mr. Lykketoft . . . . . (Denmark)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

## Agenda item 38 (continued)

### Question of Palestine

**Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/70/35)**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/354)**

**Draft resolutions (A/70/L.10, A/70/L.11, A/70/L.12 and A/70/L.13)**

**Mr. Estreme** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country wishes to refer to “The situation in the Middle East” and “Question of Palestine”, agenda items 37 and 38, respectively. They deal with issues that Argentina is following, and historically has followed, with great concern.

It has been 68 years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II), which established the plan for the partition of Palestine, and 48 years have passed since the State of Israel began its occupation of the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Since then, we have witnessed numerous initiatives for peace, from the Madrid Conference of 1991 to the failed attempt to renew negotiations in 2013. None of those initiatives has been able to put an end to the Israeli occupation and to establish an independent and viable State of Palestine. The absence of progress explains the frustration that exists on a worldwide scale at the failure to make progress in the peace process between Palestine and Israel.

Argentina shares the view of the international community that the formula to achieve lasting peace in the region consists of a two-State solution, based on the pre-June 1967 borders and subject to what the parties agree between them. At the same time, it is also essential to achieve a fair, equitable and mutually agreed upon solution to the question of refugees and, of course, the recognition of Israel’s right to live in peace and security within secure and internationally recognized borders.

Unfortunately, despite the many efforts made by the international community, the situation continues to be characterized by recurring cycles of violence. My country continues to be concerned about the consequences of Israel’s ongoing blockade of Gaza and the slow process of reconstruction after the 2014 conflict, which is facing increasing financing difficulties. At the same time — and I wish to be very emphatic — my country condemns in the strongest terms the launching of rockets by Hamas from the Gaza Strip towards Israel.

With regard to the situation in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, my country rejects the acts of violence and incitement that took place in October. Those actions are unacceptable and unjustifiable. Measures recently adopted by Israel in the West Bank and Jerusalem, including the demolition of homes, plans for more bypass roads in the West Bank so that settlers can avoid Palestinian traffic and, in an unprecedented step, the temporary ban on the entry of Palestinians into the old city of Jerusalem, clearly contribute to an escalation of the conflict.

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We note with concern that Israel's response to the situation in occupied Palestinian territories is almost exclusively focused on the issue of security, with mass detentions, including military operations, and the resumption of the practice of demolishing the houses of those accused of committing acts of terrorism and of their families.

Argentina believes that any unilateral attempt to change the status of East Jerusalem, including the old city, its walls and, in particular, the esplanade of the mosques is not only controversial but, in the current context, inflammatory. It has the potential of transforming what is primarily a national and territorial conflict into an openly religious one, with unpredictable consequences. In a world that has borne witness to acts of terrorism that recognize no borders, we believe that the achievement of a lasting solution to the Palestinian question would significantly contribute to providing stability to that tumultuous part of the world. That is why we deplore the inflammatory rhetoric coming from extremists on both sides.

We believe that continuing the status quo without any prospects of a short-term solution is completely unacceptable. A continuation of the status quo will only make the possibility of a definitive settlement ever more difficult. In that vein, we recall once again that Israeli settlements and the seizures of land in the occupied territories, including in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, are completely illegal, and that unilateral measures designed to consolidate the illegal Israeli occupation undermine peace and complicate a two-State solution.

We note once again that the Security Council has shown itself powerless to live up to its obligations in order to contribute to achieving a permanent settlement to the issue. In view of the inability of the two parties to find a solution, Argentina draws attention to the responsibility of those who impede or prevent decisive action by the Security Council to overcome the political impasse and speed up the consolidation of peace and security. For that to be achieved, it is essential for the Council to remain inflexible in its condemnation of acts of provocation and actions that are incompatible with peace and to do everything it can to salvage the two-State solution while that remains feasible.

Argentina believes that the root of the violence in the occupied Palestinian territories lies in the lack of hope, the stalemate in the negotiations, the daily

coexistence of Israelis and Palestinians with fear and the continuation of a humiliating oppressive occupation that has already lasted nearly half a century. It is not surprising that under such conditions resentment and mistrust continue to grow and that episodes of violence at the hands of civilians are on the increase. In that regard, collective effort is needed to work on a two-State solution, as established by the relevant resolutions of the Assembly and of the Security Council, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative.

In conclusion, Argentina once again expresses the sincere hope that in the near future the Israelis and the Palestinians will be able to overcome their mutual distrust and revitalize negotiations in order to reach a permanent solution to this unsustainable situation. We trust that, by acting in good faith, with flexibility and in accordance with international law, these two nations, and friends of Argentina, will be able to reach agreement on the outstanding issues concerning the definitive status of Palestine.

**Mr. Al-Hamadi (Qatar)** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank the Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for his statement (see A/70/PV.62), and the Division for Palestinian Rights for its report.

I would also like to associate myself with the statement delivered by the representative of the State of Kuwait on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as with the statement by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/70/PV.62).

After the adoption of resolution 67/19, which grants observer status to the State of Palestine in the General Assembly, and the growing recognition of that State, the international community has stressed the need for a durable and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian cause, based on the two-State solution, the establishment of a Palestinian State that is viable, independent and sovereign, within the pre-June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital and living side by side with Israel in peace and security, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the road map for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative, the return of refugees, the reaffirmation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian

people and the end of the Israeli occupation of all Arab occupied land.

The tumultuous situation in occupied Palestinian land is due to the continuing occupation and illegal practices of the Israeli forces against civilians, as well as to the atrocities committed with impunity by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians. Accordingly, the lack of a response to the continuing violation of the basic rights of the Palestinians and the violation of the sanctity of their holy sites can lead only to a loss of hope with respect to the establishment of a Palestinian State and the reaching of a durable solution.

We object in the strongest terms to all the programmes and plans by the Israeli authorities that would alter the character, status or demographic composition of Jerusalem. We reject any change to the map of Jerusalem or any attempt to deprive Palestinians of their right to worship in their holy places. After the recent destruction of infrastructure and public and private property in the Gaza Strip, Israel has maintained its blockade, depriving Gaza's citizens of their basic rights and facilities. It is time to end the siege, to allow the free access of goods and to lift the ban on the materials needed for reconstruction. The escalating situation witnessed in Gaza, the West Bank and all the occupied territories demands a redoubling of effort to find a durable and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question through a binding Security Council resolution that would impose a time limit for ending the occupation.

Against the backdrop of a lack of a sustainable peace process, Israel's use of excessive violence against unarmed Palestinians and its lack of responsibility demand that further steps be taken by the international community. We call for the implementation of all the relevant resolutions to end the occupation of Palestinian land; to provide international protection to Palestine, including Jerusalem; and to stop the continued violations by Israel.

In conclusion, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the State of Qatar reaffirms its full solidarity with the just cause of Palestine and will support all international efforts aimed at bringing about a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

**Mr. Liu Jieyi** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The question of Palestine has always been at the heart of the issue in the Middle East. The States Members of the

United Nations have discussed the question of Palestine in the General Assembly year after year for several decades, without seeing any prospect of a solution. The peace talks between Palestine and Israel recently ended in a stalemate, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is escalating and the security situation is deteriorating. All those issues bring further to the fore the significance and urgency of settling the Palestinian question. A comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian question is in the interests of all parties. China hopes that the international community will prioritize efforts in the following areas.

First, the international community should urge both Palestine and Israel to take immediate steps towards a ceasefire and to put an end to the violence, so as to ease this tense situation. Israel, being the more powerful party, should be the first to take action. At the same time, the reasonable security concerns of the countries in the region should also be taken seriously.

Secondly, the international community should do more to build confidence and minimize mistrust in order to dispel the mutual suspicion between the Palestinian and Israeli sides and encourage them meet each other halfway for an early resumption of the peace talks.

Thirdly, the United Nations should play a greater role on the question of Palestine. The General Assembly should urge Member States to faithfully implement the Assembly's resolutions concerning the question of Palestine and Israel. The Security Council should react positively to the reasonable request of Palestine and Arab countries and seriously consider matters such as the provision of international protection to the Palestinian people.

Fourthly, the international community should further enhance economic assistance to, and cooperation with, Palestine so as to ease the serious humanitarian situation.

China is a firm supporter of peace between Palestine and Israel. At the meeting held yesterday on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see A/AC.183/PV.374), President Xi Jinping again sent a congratulatory message on behalf of the Chinese Government and the Chinese people expressing his sympathy and support for the Palestinian people. President Xi Jinping emphasized that China firmly supports the just cause of the Palestinian people for the restoration of their legitimate national rights and

supports the establishment of an independent Palestine, with full sovereignty, based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and supports the increased participation of Palestine as a State in the international community. China sincerely hopes that the parties concerned can proceed based on the fundamental interests of their peoples and the long-term stability and security of the region and take an early political decision to resume the peace talks as soon as possible.

The volatile situation in the Middle East made possible the rise of such terrorist groups as the Islamic State. Recently, the Islamic State and other terrorist groups have launched multiple terrorist attacks in various places throughout the world, killing innocent civilians, including Chinese citizens. The Chinese Government strongly condemns those acts. The perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Terrorism is a cancer of human society that requires a concerted response by the international community. China is an important participant in international counter-terrorism operations. We oppose all forms of terrorism, and we support the actions of the international community, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other recognized basic norms governing international relations, to further strengthen coordination aimed at developing synergy in combating terrorism under the umbrella of the United Nations. Efforts to combat terrorism should tackle both the symptoms and the root causes. The international community should faithfully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions and enhance cooperation in fields such as preventing the cross-border movement of terrorists, countering terrorist financing and combating cyberterrorism.

The history of the Middle East has repeatedly shown that conflicts yield no true winner and that people long for peace, which ultimately always wins out. While attending the Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) at the opening of the seventieth session of the General Assembly in September (see A/70/PV.7), President Xi Jinping fully elaborated on the idea of building a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation with an emphasis on using history as a reference and building partnerships in which countries treat each other as equals, and engage in mutual consultation, with mutual understanding, so as to establish a security architecture that features fairness, justice, joint contributions and shared benefits. China

is ready to join the international community in a common effort to continue to promote peace, stability and development in the Middle East.

**Mr. Almahmoud** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): In connection with the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the celebration of which was held yesterday, I would like to underscore what was put forth in the letter of the President of the United Arab Emirates, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, to the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. In his letter, my President reiterated the continuing solidarity and support of my country for the Government and the people of Palestine in their struggle for the restoration of their land and all their legitimate rights, including the right of return, the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our continuous support for the Committee's efforts to reveal the facts about the dangerous abuses that Israel, the occupying Power, is committing against the Palestinian people, as well as our gratitude for the Committee's furthering of the Palestinian people's just cause.

Our meeting today on this item is being held at a very critical juncture for the Palestinians, both in terms of the worsening situation on the ground and the continuing stagnation of the political process. With regard to the situation on the ground, members will have witnessed the violence and chaos that have prevailed in the Palestinian territories in the past few months, especially in East Jerusalem and Hebron, following the serious abuses carried out by the Israeli Government and its settlers. A number of heinous crimes were committed against the Palestinian people, including the killing of civilians, the demolition of houses and mass arbitrary arrests, which even involved children. Moreover, Israel continues to build more settlements and to confiscate more land, in addition to violating the sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Muslim and Christian holy sites at the hands of groups of extremist settlers under the protection of the Israeli military forces. Since 2006, Israel has continued to impose its inhumane siege on the Gaza Strip, whose residents suffer from deprivation, poverty and displacement owing to the devastating destruction caused by the repeated Israeli wars on most of its residential areas and basic infrastructure. Israel therefore bears the primary responsibility for the ongoing escalation of violence in

the Palestinian territories. Its continued occupation and its destruction of the Palestinian economy and heritage, along with growing poverty and unemployment among the Palestinian population, have resulted in deep frustration and anger.

Once again, the United Arab Emirates condemns in the strongest terms all provocative policies and practices on the part of Israel and the latter's continued grievous and illegal abuses, which constitute flagrant political, material and legal breaches of international law, international humanitarian law and resolutions of international legitimacy. We call on the international community to shoulder its responsibility regarding those violations committed by Israel. In order to change the status quo, it is crucial to exert pressure to save the peace process and to take every necessary measure to prevent Israeli settlers from invading the Al-Aqsa Mosque. We call for international protection for the Palestinian people in line with the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and its protocols. We also underscore the importance of the key role of the Security Council, which must adopt a draft resolution aimed at implementing mechanisms and procedures that will ensure the protection and safety of Palestinian civilians.

Lastly, the United Arab Emirates, which co-sponsors a number of draft resolutions before General Assembly under this item, believes that a just, comprehensive and lasting solution for the Palestinian cause is the only strategic option in ensuring peace, security and stability in the Middle East. That cannot be achieved without the backing of the international community and its support of the legitimate national rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people. We must therefore address the root causes of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We also call for the full withdrawal of Israeli forces to the pre-June 1967 borders — inclusive of the holy city of Jerusalem — and the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with the two-State solution, international law, the Charter of the United Nations, legally binding international resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the Quartet road map, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative.

**Mr. Raja Zaib Shah** (Malaysia): Malaysia thanks the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for his statement (see A/70/PV.62). My delegation would also like to thank the

members of the Committee's Bureau, the Division for Palestinian Rights and others within the United Nations system for their tireless commitment to working on matters relating to the question of Palestine. Our delegation continues to call on the Secretary-General and the United Nations to be resolute in their mandate, responsibilities and shared commitment aimed at a just solution for the question of Palestine and a lasting peace.

Malaysia would also like to align itself with the statements made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the representative of Kuwait on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (see A/70/PV.62).

The Government and the people of Malaysia joined the international community yesterday in observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The commemoration of the event is significant in that it provides an opportunity for collective reflection on moving forward and on remaining steadfast in our commitment to continuing efforts aimed at achieving self-determination, sovereignty and independence for Palestine. Malaysia reaffirms its full support for the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to a sovereign State of Palestine, living side by side, in peace and security with Israel, based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. Like many others, we recall the momentous adoption of resolution 69/320, in September, which subsequently led to the historic raising of the Palestinian flag at the United Nations by President Mahmoud Abbas. In the same spirit of resolute determination as that shown by Palestine, we must seek to break the current deadlock by urgently addressing the root causes of the decades-long conflict, so as to end the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Since the beginning of October, more than 1,520 Palestinians — 60 per cent of whom are children — have been arrested by Israeli forces. In East Jerusalem, 110 children were arrested, representing an increase of 56 per cent from the previous quarter. We need to immediately de-escalate and stop the current wave of violence in order to avoid the further loss of life, including violence by Israeli settlers, the renewed use of administrative detention — particularly in the case of children — the forced displacement of Palestinians and the exploitation of natural resources in Palestinian land.

Of particularly grave concern to us is the serious humanitarian situation in Gaza. Malaysia continues to demand an immediate lifting of the blockade on Gaza and an end to the illegal and inhumane collective punishment carried out by Israel on the people of Gaza.

Meanwhile, as Israel continues to apply the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force, amounting to extrajudicial executions, the disturbing pattern of unlawful crimes by Israeli forces must not continue to go unnoticed by the international community. My delegation strongly condemns the raids conducted by Israeli forces on schools and hospitals, in violation of international humanitarian law and in blatant disregard of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of, and respect for, civilian hospitals by parties to the conflict. We call for an immediate investigation into the findings of Amnesty International regarding the unlawful and deliberate killings carried out by order of Government or military officials — killings that are prohibited and designated as crimes under international law.

Malaysia also condemns in the strongest terms the acts of provocation, incitement and violence committed by all sides at the holy sites of the old city of Jerusalem, acts that only serve to fuel tension and exacerbate the deteriorating security situation on the ground. My delegation is deeply concerned by the attempts to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, which is a blatant violation of numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. We strongly urge all parties to exercise restraint and uphold respect for the sanctity of the holy sites.

Malaysia strongly condemns Israel's continued expansion of illegal settlements and punitive demolitions in Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem, which are illegal acts under international law, further threatening the two-State solution. In that regard, my delegation unequivocally calls for ensuring accountability on the part of all involved in the conflict and calls on them to adhere to international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The occurrence of widespread impunity is simply not acceptable.

We therefore reiterate our support for providing international protection for Palestine, guided by various precedents, including Security Council resolution 605 (1987) and the report of the Secretary-General issued on 21 January 1988 (S/19443). The question of

providing international protection warrants urgent consideration, because such protection would ensure stability and security and enable both sides to return to the negotiating table.

Malaysia urges the international community to demand that Israel immediately cease building illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem, before the possibility of a two-State solution is completely eroded. Responsible Member States must also play their part in ensuring that Israel accepts and adheres to the internationally accepted parameters of the two-State solution.

As a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Malaysia fully endorses the Committee's report (A/70/35) and its recommendations. My delegation is also pleased to co-sponsor all the draft resolutions under this important item.

Let me conclude by recalling the message of solidarity made yesterday on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People by The Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak, who reiterated that Malaysia stands in solidarity with the Palestinian people and is committed to continuing to work with like-minded countries to address the root causes of the conflict.

**Mr. Pedersen** (Norway): We have witnessed with deep concern the vicious cycle of escalating violence and tension in Israel and Palestine during the past month, with innocent civilians dead and thousands injured. The effort to resolve the conflict by establishing two States living side by side in peace and security remains at an impasse. Now, instead, the two peoples are living side by side in fear, anger and distress. This pattern underscores that the current situation is unsustainable, and should serve to remind the parties of the need to resolve the conflict on the basis of the two-State solution. I would like to make three observations.

First, we welcome all efforts to promote calm, encourage restraint and prevent actions that further exacerbate tensions, in particular around the holy places in Jerusalem. The commitment of major stakeholders to maintain the status quo on the holy esplanade is important, but the implementation of the agreement reached in October is even more so. It is imperative to continue security coordination between Israelis and Palestinians. Like every other State, Israel has the right

to take the necessary measures to protect its citizens against violence and unprovoked killings. At the same time, house demolitions should stop immediately, both in Jerusalem and the West Bank. They just fuel violence.

Secondly, we call for a return to a credible political process. While tensions at the holy places in Jerusalem instigated the current crisis, lack of hope for a better political future contributes to increasing frustration and anger among Palestinian youth. No amount of frustration justifies violence. Still, the crisis cannot be resolved through de-escalation and security measures alone. The current tensions call for immediate and coordinated political steps by both sides. Israel should stop building new settlements on occupied land and stop expanding existing ones. Such building undermines any political process and turns hope into frustration, anger and rage. Palestine needs to reform and strengthen its political institutions and governance structures. In particular, the West Bank and Gaza need to be reintegrated into one authority that fully respects the parameters of the security agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

Thirdly, cooperation between the parties to strengthen the Palestinian economy and the reconstruction of Gaza can pave the way for the political process. On 30 September, Norway chaired the ministerial meeting of the donors' group — the so-called Ad Hoc Liaison Committee — here in New York. The donors reiterated their continued commitment to supporting and developing capable, robust Palestinian institutions and a viable economy. Serious measures need to be undertaken in the West Bank, Gaza and Area C. Unresolved issues related to the Paris Protocol need to be resolved without further delay.

While we urge donors to increase their support, donors cannot be expected to compensate for unresolved economic issues between the two parties. Economic cooperation is no substitute for the political process, but it may help to build stability and to prepare the ground for such a process. Achieving the full potential of a Palestinian State with well-functioning political and governmental institutions, including a sustainable economy, requires a political resolution of the conflict.

The parties hold the key to resuming talks, but the international community needs to engage and support them in a concerted manner that can bring the conflict to a resolution. Business as usual cannot continue.

**Mr. Çevik (Turkey):** I would like to reiterate Turkey's strong and long-standing commitment to the establishment of a peaceful, stable, inclusive and democratic environment that respects fundamental human rights and freedoms in the Middle East. The Israeli-Palestine conflict remains the core challenge inhibiting the establishment of such an environment. Failure to address that issue will further destabilize the region, deepen the despair and lead to more extremism.

The recent escalation that began following the entry of Israeli security forces into Al-Haram Al-Sharif showed once again how sensitive and dramatic the situation is in the absence of any real hope for peace. We are very concerned about the latest developments and strongly condemn the disproportionate use of force by Israeli security forces.

We should all be very clear about the root cause of the problem, which is Israel's illegal occupation of East Jerusalem and the other Palestinian territories. That historical injustice, reinforced by Israel's daily illegal practices on the ground, undermines even the belief in the possibility of peaceful coexistence, and it fuels hatred, alienation and radicalism in the region. The Palestinians are still deprived of their right to lead decent lives, with dignity, respect and freedom. As the Secretary-General has rightly underlined, the Palestinians' hopes for peace have been dashed countless times. The international community should do something to convince the Palestinians of the possibility of a better future.

We all agree that the status quo is unsustainable. Settlement activities continue despite numerous calls and the condemnation of the whole international community. Impunity leads to a steady increase in settler violence. The situation in Gaza also remains worrisome. Eight years of an illegal blockade and three Israeli military operations have caused tremendous devastation, despair and insecurity. Restrictions on access, movement and economic activities continue and reconstruction remains slow.

Palestine's just cause has once again been confirmed at the global level by resolution 69/320, which paved the way for the raising of the Palestinian flag at the United Nations. The European Union decision on the labelling of settlement products is also an important step. It reaffirms that settlements are illegal under international law.

On the Palestinian side, the need for Palestinian reconciliation is more relevant than ever. The support and encouragement of the international community are vital in that regard. Once established, the Palestinian national unity Government, with strong and inclusive institutions, should exercise control over the entire Palestinian territory.

The current situation is a bitter foretaste of what is to come if the prospect for peace eludes us. With that in mind, the international community should shoulder its responsibility and renew its engagement to bring about a negotiated political settlement based on the two-State solution in accordance with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. Efforts to secure the adoption of a Security Council draft resolution setting a time frame and parameters for peace negotiations based on the two-State peace vision should be intensified. The Council should assume its responsibility in that regard.

Turkey's commitment to supporting the Palestinian people's right to a life of dignity will never cease. We will back efforts to find a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the conflict and to re-establish a sovereign, independent Palestinian State based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

**Mr. Okamura** (Japan): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this important meeting. I wish to address both agenda item 37, "The situation in the Middle East", and agenda item 38, "Question of Palestine".

I would like to pay tribute to Ambassador Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine, in celebration of yesterday's International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Furthermore, allow me to extend my country's sincere condolences and our heartfelt sympathies to those affected by the tragedies that recently befell Ankara, the Sinai Peninsula, Beirut, Baghdad, Paris and Bamako. Japan condemns, in the strongest terms, those vicious terrorist attacks and stands united with the Governments and the people of the countries affected.

As the recent attacks will attest, instability in the Middle East has repercussions far beyond the region. The international community must be united in squarely confronting the challenges at hand, including the threat of terrorism. However, crisis management will not suffice. We must also address the underlying factors of instability, which extremists are exploiting.

Those include the frustration of the people, especially the youth, who are increasingly losing confidence in their economic prospects and losing hope that political solutions to the crises of the region will be reached.

Against that backdrop, the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) is illuminating. Its preamble reminds us that "[t]here can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development." I believe that the experiences in Asia are tangible examples of that observation. Roughly half a century ago, the Asian region witnessed a series of conflicts and economic strife. But today political turmoil has become quite rare, owing to equitable growth and prosperity in the region. Perhaps we may consider the situation of the Middle East with those Asian experiences in mind. Allow me to elaborate.

With regard to the question of Palestine, the General Assembly has adopted a series of resolutions on the issue. While important, however, that is not enough. In the light of the recent outbreak of violence and the growing cost of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, tangible progress on the ground is urgently needed. Therefore, Japan deeply deplores that Israel recently approved the construction of 454 settlement units in East Jerusalem. Not only are settlement activities violations of international law, but they worsen tensions and severely undermine international efforts for the resumption of peace talks. Furthermore, while we recognize the necessity of maintaining order, we call on Israel to conduct its law enforcement activities with proportionate measures and to refrain from collective punishment, including the demolition of homes, which may exacerbate an already volatile situation.

There is a clear need for the resumption of peace talks to bring about a two-State solution. But the stagnation of the process must not stop us from moving ahead where progress is possible. The international community can make a positive difference. To that end, Prime Minister Abe visited the region in January and called on both leaders to resume the peace talks. On the ground, Japan has contributed \$1.6 billion for Palestinian development, firm in our belief that a viable economy underpins peace.

One such example is the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park, a flagship project conducted under the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity initiative. The project is expected to provide up to 7,000 jobs, with annual



economic benefits of \$40 million. We are proud to report that the project is now in operation. Perhaps it is an auspicious sign that the first company, Palolea, is a firm that manufactures products produced from olive trees, given that olives are a symbol of peace. By bringing together Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians through our assistance efforts, Japan seeks to show the dividends to be gained through cooperation, thereby reversing the cycle of violence and mistrust. Furthermore, through the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development, we will continue to channel the experiences and resources of East Asian countries towards Palestinian development.

Allow me to address the situation in Syria, which is facing one of the worst humanitarian crises of our generation. To alleviate that dire humanitarian situation, Japan has contributed \$1.1 billion in aid to provide not only life-saving relief but also basic services such as education. For example, with our eyes set on the eventual resolution of the crisis, Japan is ensuring that the opportunity to get an education is not cut off in the case of the 2.6 million Syrian children who are without schools. That is why we are contributing to the Back to Learning campaign, in partnership with UNICEF.

The worsening humanitarian situation highlights the need for a political solution to the crisis. We therefore welcome the convening of the recent meetings in Vienna with a view to the opening of a much-needed political horizon. In that regard, Japan reiterates its position that there is no military solution to the Syrian crisis. Japan will therefore continue to work with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, and with other parties concerned parties to make a political solution to the crisis possible.

The increasing volatility of the Middle East calls for concerted efforts by the international community. Japan, as an ardent promoter of the concept of human development, firmly believes that peace and sustainable development go hand in hand. Spurred on by that conviction, we will continue to cooperate with the international community in tackling imminent challenges and in cementing the foundations for peace and stability in the region.

**Ms. Kalamwina (Zambia):** I wish to commend you, Sir, for convening this very important meeting to deliberate issues of peace and security that are of concern to all United Nations States Members.

First and foremost, allow me to pay tribute to the United Nations for its tireless efforts aimed at resolving the Palestinian-Israeli discord. Indeed, the recent vote in favour of resolution 69/320, granting non-member observer States, in particular the State of Palestine, the right to fly their flag at United Nations Headquarters was undeniably a great milestone. In that respect, I also wish to extend sincere congratulations to the Palestinian authorities on their well-deserved right to fly their national flag alongside those of other United Nations States Members. That undertaking is recognition of the essence of the legitimacy of the national aspirations of the Palestinian people, their existence among the nations of the world and their right to self-determination. Although symbolic in nature, it cements the steps to solidify the pillars of Palestine in the international arena.

*Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Zambia, as a former colony, continues to be a strong advocate for peacebuilding processes and the coexistence of countries engaged in discord and conflict with their neighbouring States. We acknowledge that the raising of flags of observer States to the United Nations is to a large extent representative of the international community's support of the need for self-determination of the State of Palestine and others, and therefore we must continue to support dialogue between Palestine and Israel.

Zambia follows with great concern the prolonged impasse and failure of the two parties to adhere to United Nations resolutions and the many agreements that have been signed by Palestinian and Israeli leaders at various forums. This continues to be a stumbling block to the efforts being made and a drawback to the social and economic development not only of the two States but of the Middle East region as a whole. In addition, the continued fighting and attacks that have resulted in dire humanitarian situations will further destabilize an already fragile environment.

Zambia reaffirms its recognition of the Palestinian Authority as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people's struggle to self-determination and inalienable right to establish a homeland of their own. Zambia further believes that the Palestinian people have a right to self-determination and independence on the basis of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 1967. Zambia therefore supports the Palestinian people's

right to self-determination and any efforts made in that direction, including Palestine's full membership and admission to the United Nations. It is in that respect that Zambia calls on the two parties to urgently return to meaningful dialogue, and adhere to and comply with relevant resolutions and agreements to resolve the impasse. This will ultimately bring peace and security to the region.

Finally, Zambia wishes to reaffirm its support for a two-State solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, which would enable the peoples of the two States to live side by side in harmony and bring to an end the atrocities that innocent civilians have continued to experience. It is only through the recognition of Palestine as an independent State that the conflict will be resolved and peace will prevail in the region.

**Mr. Atlassi** (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chair for their valuable efforts to support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People will be another opportunity for His Majesty King Mohammed VI to pledge to the Chair of the Committee — and through the Committee to the Palestinian people and its leadership, headed by President Mahmoud Abbas — the full and ongoing support of the Kingdom of Morocco for the historic and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, in particular the right to establish, within the borders of 4 June 1967, and with East Jerusalem as its capital, a viable, independent State living side by side with Israel in security and peace and in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy.

The Kingdom of Morocco, which chairs the Jerusalem Committee, is following with deep concern and regret the approach adopted by Israel in Palestine, and Jerusalem in particular, aimed at destroying the legal status of the holy city of Jerusalem, identified in resolutions of international legitimacy as an integral part of the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. Israel is dragging the matter into the labyrinth of religious and sectarian conflict in order to divide Jerusalem geographically and temporally through its systematic and repeated violations of the sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and its settlement expansion in the holy city of Jerusalem. In his message, His Majesty asserts that Israel is

“underestimating the symbolism of the holy city of Jerusalem and the special place that it holds with all Muslims by continuing to Judaize or attempting to confiscate it. This will most certainly have to have terrible consequences. As Chair of the Jerusalem Committee, we have repeatedly called for protecting East Jerusalem from Israeli plans to change its legal and demographic identity and religious and cultural character. We stand in solidarity with our Palestinian brethren. We will spare no effort to ensure that the Jerusalem Fund will continue to carry out concrete activities to support the steadfast residents of Jerusalem and enable them to live with dignity on their land, protect Islamic holy sites and maintain cultural and human heritage so that Jerusalem can be as it has always been — a symbol of tolerance and coexistence among religions and cultures”.

The situation in the occupied territories calls for us to swiftly respond to the urgent needs of the Palestinian people, including by providing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East with the necessary financial resources to continue to provide basic human services to Palestinians. We must also support the efforts of the Palestinian Authority. His Majesty the King has reiterated his full support to the Palestinian Authority under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas.

In the framework of such unconditional support, yesterday Mr. Salaheddine Mezouar, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco, received his Palestinian counterpart Mr. Riad Malki, who is currently on a visit to the Kingdom of Morocco. Both parties agreed to establish a joint committee with a view to exchanging views, collaborating on shared issues, and developing economic, commercial and cultural cooperation, scientific research and health and social services. Both sides also discussed the question of Palestine and the main immediate challenges and changes facing the Arab region. They condemned and rejected extremism and terrorism in all their forms and manifestations, regardless of rationalization, and asserted the need for concerted regional and international efforts to combat that dangerous scourge.

The Ministers also condemned the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories as a consequence of the Israeli occupying forces' provocative practices against unarmed Palestinians aimed at dividing the Al-Haram Al-Sharif, in blatant

violation of legitimate international resolutions and in disregard of the relevant international instruments. The Ministers called on the international community to fulfil its legal and ethical responsibility, and to pressure Israel to cease flouting international resolutions and international humanitarian law. Both Ministers also asserted the need to create the conditions conducive to the resumption of negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis on the subject of the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and the restoration of the legal status of the holy city of Jerusalem.

Although more than 24 years have passed since the beginning of negotiations, no truly peaceful settlement has been reached between Palestinians and Israelis. That is the reason behind the despair among Palestinians. Rather than war, bloodshed and the killing of innocent civilians, the only sound way to resolve the question of Palestine is through good will and a return to the negotiation table within a specified time frame with a view to achieving the solution of two States exist side by side in peace, security, harmony and cooperation.

Morocco maintains its principled position, based on the Arab Peace Initiative, with regard to the achievement of peace based on the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, within the borders of 4 June 1967. The international community is therefore called on, now more than ever, to revive the peace process within a specific time frame and on the basis of international legitimacy. Morocco is more than willing to engage positively in all initiatives that will push forward the peace process with a view to reaching a settlement that will ensure security and stability in the region.

**Mr. Mminele** (South Africa): The South African Government joins the international community in commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Furthermore, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/70/PV.62). This event is a reminder that the people of Palestine have not yet achieved their freedom from illegal occupation, despite overwhelming international support. Violence and the associated impacts of the illegal occupation continue unabated.

This year, the United Nations is commemorating its seventieth anniversary, and the question of Palestine has been on its agenda for almost as long. Yet when

we take stock of the work of the Organization on this matter, we can quite accurately conclude that the question of Palestine ranks as one of the biggest shortcomings of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council. The United Nations, after all, was central in leading former colonies towards statehood and liberating peoples living under occupation — but it has unfortunately failed Palestine. In fact, few issues have highlighted the shortcomings of the Organization as clearly as the question of Palestine.

We are commemorating this event against the backdrop of the escalation of tensions and violence at the holy sites, including Al-Haram Al-Sharif. The tensions are clearly an indication that the violence and occupation cannot continue. They remind us of the urgency to ensure that comprehensive and unconditional negotiations regarding all final status issues need to be dealt with. If a comprehensive settlement is to be achieved, the unrelenting expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, the Gaza blockade, and the continued occupation of the Palestinian territories have to immediately come to a halt.

In that respect, South Africa joins the international community's calls for urgent action and practical steps, in particular by the Security Council, to compel the occupying Power to cease its settlement campaign in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. We also call on the occupying Power to abide by all its obligations under international humanitarian law, United Nations resolutions and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. We remain strongly critical of the ongoing defiance of the Government of Israel in that regard, which complicates any possible resumption of substantial negotiations.

South Africa remains unmoved in its opinion that the only way to achieve peace is by creating an environment conducive to a two-State solution, where Israel will be able to exist side by side in peace with a viable and fully independent Palestinian State, within internationally recognized borders based on those of 4 June 1967, and with East Jerusalem as its capital. In the meantime, deliberations and measures to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people in occupied Palestine and the retention of the current status quo in the holy sites remain paramount, considering the escalation of tensions and violence in sensitive religious sites, such as the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The world

cannot afford any more devastation such as that which occurred in the Gaza Strip.

In conclusion, the South African Government believes that the only way to bring lasting peace to the Middle East is to have a comprehensive and unconditional negotiated settlement to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories, and Israel's continued blockade of Gaza. This, we believe, will contribute towards peace and security throughout the Middle East. The ongoing delay in achieving such a settlement has led to an unending cycle of violence. South Africa will therefore continue its efforts, in both the bilateral and multilateral contexts, to contribute to the achievement of the right to self-determination and freedom of the Palestinian people.

**Mr. Sareer** (Maldives): The Republic of Maldives wishes to express its appreciation to the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for his commendable work and for the report submitted for our consideration (A/70/35). I also would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report under this agenda item (A/70/354).

The Republic of Maldives expresses its concern with regard to the continuing ill-treatment of the Palestinian people by the Israeli occupying forces. My delegation would like to reiterate its unyielding support for the people of Palestine in their quest for peace.

As we mark the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations this year, we commemorate its historic achievements, including the promotion of international peace and security, global development gains and the enhancement of fundamental human rights all over the world. However, one particular issue has cast a shadow over all those achievements throughout the Organization's illustrious history. The issue of Palestine is a constant reminder of the failure of both the United Nations and the international community to resolve this flagrant injustice. The Security Council has adopted numerous resolutions on the situation of the State of Palestine, and yet the conflict remains unresolved. The Assembly has been presented with a great quantity of reports on illegal Israeli practices and policies that blatantly violate international law, yet the occupying Power is not held accountable and its impunity remains unchecked.

The fact that the Security Council draft resolution (S/2014/916) calling for a final status agreement and an

end to the Israeli occupation by the end of 2017 failed in its adoption is indicative of the Organization's inability to make any substantial headway on that issue. After seven years of inaction, we urge the Council to take the firm measures necessary to end the occupying Power's ongoing brutal practices, which deprive the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights. The United Nations must take the lead in steering the peace process from passive rhetoric to pragmatic action, because justice can no longer be delayed.

Each year, thousands of Israeli settlers move into the occupied territories illegally. Just in the first half of this year, Israel started the construction of nearly 1,300 structures and completed almost 1,500, even in East Jerusalem, which constitutes a violation of international law. Just last week, 17 Palestinian-owned homes in five communities in Area C and East Jerusalem were demolished, displacing 27 people, including 12 children. According to the occupying Power, those homes, which have stood for decades, did not have the appropriate building permits. As the Secretary-General's report confirms once again:

“The physical destruction caused by the Israeli occupying forces included destruction and severe damage caused to thousands of homes, schools, businesses, hospitals, United Nations facilities, and civilian infrastructure” (A/70/354, p. 6).

The report goes on to illustrate how over a half a million Palestinians were displaced; how many, including children, were killed; and how not a single home that was destroyed has been rebuilt due to Israel's blockade and import restrictions. Such actions by the occupying Power not only violate the rights of the population but also exacerbate their social and economic conditions. The Israeli military aggression against the Palestinian civilian population is responsible for creating the most protracted refugee problem in the world, totalling 5.3 million people.

According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), all 12 Palestine refugee camps and all 560,000 registered Palestine refugees in Syria have been affected by the ongoing and deadly conflict. The ongoing and immediate need of humanitarian aid for and the protection of the majority of the 450,000 Palestine refugees remaining in Syria, who are now internally displaced, is substantial. One-third of UNRWA facilities in Syria, which once functioned

as safe havens for Palestinian refugees, have been demolished. UNRWA has indicated that Palestinian refugees have fled to Lebanon and Jordan, but due to budgetary implications they are not able to provide all necessary humanitarian aid. More than ever before, it is therefore imperative that the illegal occupation of the Israeli forces in the occupied territories come to an end.

The Palestinian people, including women and children, have been exposed to years of perpetual violence and continuing oppression. Generations have been denied their fundamental human rights. These conditions facilitate the proliferation of radicalization across the region. The Palestine situation cannot be perceived as an isolated matter. The challenges the region faces undermine the entire peace and security situation in the Middle East, and the world at large. Last week, the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process highlighted how destabilization resulting from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has clear interlinkages with the global threat of terrorism, including the horrific attacks in the recent past. In that regard, the Maldives calls upon United Nations as a whole, the Security Council in particular, and the international community to steer forward the peace process in a more urgent manner.

The Republic of Maldives firmly reaffirms its position that sustainable peace can be maintained only through the two-State solution, recognizing a sovereign and independent State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Furthermore, we call for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from all territories they have occupied for decades. On 30 September, the Maldives was heartened to see the raising of the Palestinian flag at United Nations Headquarters. The raising of the flag gives us hope; it is a forward movement in the quest for the realization of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Once again, the Maldives stresses the need for the United Nations to fulfil its legal, political and moral responsibility to achieve a lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and Security Council resolutions.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform members that the consideration of draft resolutions A/70/L.10, A/70/L.11,

A/70/L.12 and A/70/L.13 will take place at a plenary meeting to be held this afternoon at 3 p.m. in this Hall.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 38.

### **Agenda item 37**

#### **The situation in the Middle East**

##### **Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/353)**

##### **Draft resolutions (A/70/L.14 and A/70/L.17)**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/70/L.14 and A/70/L.17.

**Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*):** Despite numerous humanitarian achievements in which we take pride; despite the international community's awareness of the need to address the root causes of humanitarian crises throughout the world; and despite the Organization's focus on the promotion of respect for human rights, for a variety of reasons the international community remains unable to halt the most unjust practices of an occupation that imposes a status quo by force and exploits the imbalance between an occupied people and an occupation force.

To express the international community's rejection of occupation and illegitimate Israeli practices in the occupied Arab territories, on behalf of the sponsors I am introducing two draft resolutions under agenda item 37, "The situation in the Middle East". The first, draft resolution A/70/L.14, recalls the resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council on the special status of Jerusalem and the need to annul all administrative and legislative measures taken by Israel to change the legal status of the city. It also stresses that any just and comprehensive solution for Jerusalem must include provisions with international guarantees of the freedom of worship and religion. It must also ensure an end to the occupation and illegitimate acts of Judaization by Israel and Israeli settlers, as well as all recurrent violations of Palestinians' freedom of worship, including repeated aggressions against the Al-Aqsa Mosque and all excavation work in the old city of Jerusalem and in and around holy sites.

The second, draft resolution A/70/L.17, on the Syrian Golan, recalls Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and expresses the General Assembly's deep concern about Israel's failure to implement that resolution.

It also reaffirms that all relevant provisions of the Regulations annexed to the Hague Convention of 1907, and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, continue to apply to the Syrian territory. It stresses the illegitimacy of the imposition of Israeli law on those territories and of Israeli settlements there. It calls on Israel to fully withdraw to the line of 4 June 1967 and to respect the agreements in that regard.

The sponsors of the draft resolutions believe that it is high time for the international community to deal with the conflict in the Middle East in a comprehensive and decisive manner. The people and the region continue to suffer from war and aggression and look forward to achieving peace, stability and coexistence, which they cannot do without the serious commitment and political will of Israel to fully withdrawing from all Arab and Palestinian occupied territories and implementing General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the basis of the principle of land for peace and the rules of international law.

To that end, we wish to see all Member States support both draft resolutions by voting in favour, thereby expressing the resolve of the international community and to respect the goals of international legitimacy, end the occupation and aggression, and uphold the noble purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

**Mr. Safronkov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Currently, the Middle East is seized by a rapidly growing sense of chaos. The terrorist violence is increasing in scope as the Islamic State and Jabhat Al-Nusra fight for broad swaths of territory in Iraq and Syria, planting their roots in other States of the Middle East. As this year has shown, their xenophobic and deadly rhetoric is extending beyond the region. In February 2012, when the General Assembly adopted resolution 66/253, we supported the Syrian position to dissociate itself from violent groups and militias. However, that concern was not given significant attention and was not included in the text.

In 2013, many of us also did not muster the sufficient decisiveness to reject the violence and terrorist acts of the anti-Government forces. Much time has gone by, but it has become clear to all that our differences of opinion with any Power will not help us to stop all becoming victims of terrorist violence. Chaos, destabilization and the undermining of the pillars of statehood are without

a future and will lead to negative consequences in the future. Since then, the Vienna process has begun moving towards a solution to the Syrian conflict, including the 2012 Geneva communiqué (A/66/865, annex) and the principles agreed in the two meetings of the International Syria Support Group in Vienna.

Despite all the turbulence throughout the region, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains key to the fate of the region. It has recently become a new centre of tension and violence affecting Israeli and Palestinian civilians. That is unacceptable and we must bring an end to it as soon as possible. Of key importance is the normalization of the situation around the holy sites of East Jerusalem, which are sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims. There must also be an end to the illegal and growing settlement activity that has raised tensions between Palestinians and Israelis.

Israel and Palestine must return to the negotiating table and begin immediate, substantive negotiations to find a solution to the conflict, on the basis of international law and in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative. To that end, Palestinian unity must be represented by Palestine Liberation Organization. We need an independent and secure Palestinian State with territorial contiguity, living side by side in peace and security with Israel. We must also retain our focus on the situation in Gaza with a view to removing or at least reducing the blockade. The current donor funds should contribute to that. Further, the Palestins must unite under the Arab Peace Initiative and a restructured Palestine Liberation Organization.

Russia supports and will continue pushing for a renewal of negotiations, both bilaterally and in various multilateral forms, first and foremost in the format of the Middle East Quartet of international mediators. We believe it important to reactivate the Quartet's meetings and appreciate its statements of September and October, supporting the efforts of the Special Envoy in the region. We hope that the Quartet, Israel and Palestine will move together towards a comprehensive solution. As with other matters relating to the Middle East, the peace process between Israel and Palestine need the collective efforts and political will of the parties themselves and of the responsible members of the international community.

**Mrs. Al-Mughairy** (Oman): In the name of the Sultanate of Oman, I would like to thank the President

for convening this meeting on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. I would also like to thank Ambassador Fodé Seck, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Senegal and Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for the report prepared by his Committee (A/70/35). In addition, we express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his reports on the question of Palestine (A/70/354) and on the situation in the Middle East (A/70/353). Likewise, we commend the statement of the Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see A/70/PV.62).

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, whose founding was intended to promote the strengthening of international peace and security and the maintenance of the rights and dignity of humankind as among its most important goals. However, the question of Palestine remains unresolved, although it has been one of the most important issues concerning the Organization since soon after its inception. There is still no permanent solution that maintains the dignity of the Palestinian people and restores their rights. The illegal and inhuman acts carried out by the Israeli Government continue as it expands settlements in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem and violates international laws and customs by building and expanding its separation wall in the West Bank, in flagrant violation of the rights of Palestinians living in the occupied territories and the provisions of international humanitarian law. The siege of Gaza is still on and has led to intensifying the suffering of Gazans, following the assault last year.

My country followed with great concern the recent intrusion of some Israeli extremist groups into the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which prevented worshipers from freely conducting their religious rites. That is a violation of humanitarian law, international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. My country therefore calls on the international community, represented here in the United Nations and in the Security Council, to assume its responsibilities by seeking to compel Israel to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions, provide the international protection demanded by the Palestinians, and allow the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate rights.

My country further calls upon the international community, through the United Nations and specifically the Security Council, to assume its responsibility to

ensure that Israel, the occupying Power, puts an end to its practices, policies and endeavours to change the demographic composition of the populations. Israel must return to the negotiating table in order to end the occupation of the Palestinian territories and allow for the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. Additionally, Israel must withdraw from the Syrian Golan and the rest of the territories still under occupation in southern Lebanon.

Oman confirms that peace and stability are achieved through dialogue and negotiations. As was emphasized in the statement of the Sultanate of Oman in the general debate a few weeks ago,

“We call on the Palestinians and the Israelis alike to return to the negotiating table and work on achieving the vision of two independent States living side by side, through steps that would secure the interests of both parties, based on the pillars of the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant United Nations resolutions. We also call upon the United Nations and the parties sponsoring the peace process in the Middle East to make greater efforts to reach an agreement for the settlement of the crisis, instead of merely to managing it” (A/70/PV.28, p.3).

In conclusion, Oman confirms its strongly held view that it is necessary to return to dialogue and negotiations, and calls upon the parties involved in the peace process, particularly the Security Council and the Quartet, to play an active role in order to reach a just, comprehensive solution and the long desired peace that will lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, living side by side with Israel within internationally recognized borders.

**Mr. Ja’afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to thank my colleague, the Permanent Representative of Egypt, for introducing draft resolutions A/70/L.17, entitled “The Syrian Golan”, and A/70/L.14, entitled “Jerusalem”. I would also like to thank all States that have voted in favour of the resolution on the Golan in the past and intend to do so again today. I call up the delegations present to attend this afternoon’s meeting in order to vote in favour of the two draft resolutions on occupied Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan.

Israel, with the support of its sponsors and protectors, tries to turn the question of the Israeli occupation of Arab territories into a simple matter of misunderstanding — a difference of opinion that should not be cause for discord, as if we were speaking of a normal issue, where the number of children killed and injured, as well as the number of settlers, refugees and detainees, among others, were not a matter of a whole people succumbing to the yoke of an rejected internationally occupation. It is as if all those Palestinian victims were mere statistics, without identities, families, children or unique human stories like those of all other human beings living in Western capitals around the world.

Every time we hear about the building of settlements here and the issuance of settlement permits there, the reaction is mere condemnation, as if building those settlements were a normal matter that did not destroy all hope for the establishment of a viable Palestinian State. It is as if it were normal for Israel to violate Muslim and Christian holy sites; as if its attempt to confiscate those sites did not foretell a catastrophic escalation of the situation; as if it were routine for Israel to continue, as it has for half a century, to launch periodic aggressions against the countries and peoples of the region; and as if none of that undermined international law or threaten the peace and security of the region and the world.

Some consider it acceptable that the number of resolutions adopted by the United Nations to condemn this aggression continues to grow, since Israeli politicians justify their actions by saying that the world is engaged in anti-Semitism by voting against their occupation and excessive use of force. That is what Israel is clearly attempting to do at this meeting.

If we want to prevent Israel from continuing to perpetrate its crimes, we must turn our words into deeds. The Palestinian people and the Syrian people under the yoke of Israeli occupation in the Golan cannot bear to be used as a pretext for Israeli leaders to project their weapons of arbitrary hatred. We have to shoulder our common responsibility to end the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan. We must stress in a united voice that we have had enough — enough of all the countries that are abusing the United Nations and preventing it from shouldering its relevant responsibilities by protecting Israel and supporting its acts; enough of Israel pushing its narrow-minded political agendas in the international Organization; and enough of precedence being given

to those agendas at the expense of legal principles and moral responsibilities.

I am not going to delve into the details of the Israeli violations in the Arab occupied land; representatives have all talked about and condemned them. However, I would like to read the announcement made by an Israeli soldier over a loudspeaker on 29 October, threatening the residents of the Aida Palestinian refugee camp in Bethlehem:

“Residents of the Aida refugee camp, we are the Israeli military. If you throw stones at us, we will spray tear gas at you until you all fall dead. Men, women and the elderly — you will all die. We will not leave anyone alive. We have arrested one of you. He is with us now. We have taken him from his home, and we will slaughter and kill him before your eyes. Go back to your homes or else we will shoot you with tear gas until you die.”

The hatred, terrorism and racism in the words of this Israeli soldier reflect the heart of the Israeli policy and its view of the Palestinians since the establishment of Israel, in accordance with one half of a resolution adopted by the General Assembly 67 years ago. I say half of a resolution because the second half of that resolution, which established the State of Israel, provided for the establishment of the State of Palestine. However, that did not happen.

No one should imagine that the crisis that Syria is suffering now could deter us even an inch from our inalienable right to recover the occupied Syrian Golan, in accordance with the borders of 4 June 1967 and all necessary measures under international law and the Charter of the United Nations. That is our land and the land of our ancestors and it will remain the land of our sons and daughters after us.

In the occupied Golan, our sons and daughters are tasting the bitterness of Israeli violations, including oppression, racial discrimination or arbitrary detention. The list is long. Unfortunately, it has not yet reached the champions of human rights and protectors of international humanitarian law or the sponsors of Israel. It is as if there were lawful and unlawful war crimes. Similarly, these days there is lawful and unlawful terrorism and Governments that are above the law and others that are under the law. Some of those hypocrites are exhausted by the mere thought of supporting draft resolution A/70/L.17, entitled “The Syrian Golan”, which we will vote on this afternoon.



Everyone knows that Israel's violation of international law represents a double standard and is very dangerous. Not only has it occupied the Syrian Golan, but it went as far as to enact a provocative law in 1981 to annex the Syrian Golan and brought in flocks of foreign settlers to live there. Israel encourages them to live there by giving them huge financial incentives. It confiscated the Syrian territories and demolished homes with residents inside. It has even gone so far as to impose fines up to \$50,000 on anyone who builds a house to shelter himself and his family, and forced them in punishment to undertake unpaid labour in the interest of the occupation forces for no less than six months. It is hard to imagine that someone might come and force you from your home and say "This is mine". And when you build another house, they come again and tell you to demolish that house and pay \$50,000 to cover the cost of the demolition. In addition, after they confiscate your home and force you to pay \$50,000 and demolish the other house that you have built, they force you to do unpaid labour in the service of the occupation forces in the occupied Golan for six months. This really happens.

Israel has also abused the natural resources in the Golan, including water and oil. This year the Afek Oil and Gas company has undertaken drilling and exploration work in various parts of the occupied Golan, in clear violation of international law, in particular The Hague Convention of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which bans the occupying Power from exploiting, endangering and depleting the natural resources of the occupied people.

In addition to all this, Israel has arrested many Syrians living under the yoke of occupation, including the re-arrest of Syria's Mandela, the freedom fighter Sedqi Al-Maqet, who has been detained by Israel for 27 years. That is the same amount of time that Nelson Mandela spent in the apartheid prisons in South Africa. What some members might not know is that Israel has again detained the freedom fighter Al-Maqet because he was working on documenting and exposing Israel's support to the terrorists of Al-Nusra Front, who are affiliated with Al-Qaida, and the terrorists of the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade, who are affiliated with Daesh, in the area of separation in the occupied Golan.

In conclusion, all the Israeli measures that I have touched upon must stop immediately. Israel must withdraw from the Syrian Golan to the borders of 4 June 1967. I call on Member States to vote in favour

of the draft resolution on the Syrian Golan, uphold international law and implement the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council 497 (1981), which deemed Israel's decision to annex the Syrian Golan in 1967 null and void with no legal basis.

**Mr. Waheed (Maldives):** On behalf of the Republic of the Maldives, I wish to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report under this agenda item (A/70/353) and his continued good offices and those of his representatives, aimed at finding lasting solutions to the various conflicts that still plague the Middle East.

On 30 September, we welcomed the raising of the Palestinian flag at United Nations Headquarters. That marked an important step forward and a beacon of hope for the Palestinian people in their quest for self-determination. The Maldives reiterates its call for the full realization of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people — the right of the Palestinian people to establish a State of their own, alongside Israel, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

For 67 years, the Organization has failed Palestine and the people of the occupied territories. That failure epitomizes the inability of the international community to work together to bring the Palestinian conflict to an end. The countless United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Oslo Accords, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map strove to overcome Israeli occupation and the apartheid system that is currently in place. Those initiatives sought to change the mindsets of the generations of those who have grown up in an atmosphere of hatred, fear and violence. Nonetheless, the occupation of those territories and the incessant violations of the human rights of those people continue unchecked.

Countries of the region continue to face one of their biggest threats in the shape of the so-called Islamic State. The conflict in Syria is causing an unending web of violence and destabilization in the entire Middle East region. That conflict and the international community's failure to act led to the birth of the so-called Islamic State, which uses and abuses the Islamic religion to legitimize its violent acts and relentless violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Those acts of barbarity committed in the name of Islam are

inhuman and un-Islamic. The so-called Islamic State represents the greatest emerging threat to international security.

The international community has failed to take concrete actions to put an end to that violence. Today, after the recent terrorist attacks in France, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and Mali, we must take a firm stand and speak in a unified voice against the so-called Islamic State so as to end the conflict in Syria and the recruitment and financing of the so-called Islamic State. The flow of foreign terrorist fighters needs to be stopped. Countering the financing of that group and the flow of weapons will hasten its ultimate destruction. The only solution to that conflict is a political one in which all stakeholders come to the table and jointly find a solution.

The humanitarian consequences of the conflict have been dire. As of mid-2014, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated that 10.8 million of Syria's population of 22 million were affected by the conflict and in need of humanitarian assistance, including 6.5 million who were internally displaced. The Syrian conflict has spurred the world's largest refugee crisis. Men, women and children are fleeing the incessant violence, conflict and persecution, searching for a better future.

The refugee crisis assumed a global dimension when thousands of individuals began flooding into Europe. It is, however, essential to note that the first countries to be affected by that crisis were Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. For the past five years, those countries have borne the burden of the crisis, with drastic increases to their populations. Today, Lebanon hosts more than 1.3 million refugees and Turkey more than 1.5 million, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It is notable that the increase of Lebanon's population represents a quarter of its population before the conflict began. Those countries have been unable to handle the influx of refugees, and the international community's failure to act has resulted in this matter becoming a threat to the peace and security of those States.

My delegation cannot stress enough the importance of political compromise and productive engagement with the international community to resolve conflicts in the Middle East. The nuclear deal agreed and signed between Iran and the P5+1 represents the hope that tensions can be resolved in a peaceful and diplomatic

manner. We welcome that agreement and look forward to its concrete implementation. In the same spirit, the Maldives looks forward to seeing the United Nations and the international community make renewed efforts to find lasting solutions in a region that has been mired in strife for far too long.

**Mr. Rakhmetullin** (Kazakhstan): The time could not be more appropriate to address the unprecedented crisis of grave magnitude prevailing in the Middle East. The situation in the region has for decades been a major destabilizing factor for global security. We know that the current situation in the Middle East will be stabilized only when the Palestinian issue is resolved.

Kazakhstan recognizes the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and firmly supports the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, peacefully co-existing with Israel within the pre-1967 borders, and to its obtaining full membership of the United Nations. We see the two-State solution as the only viable option for a durable peace and therefore call on the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to demonstrate political responsibility and good will in order to reach a historic peace agreement that would meet the legitimate aspirations of their peoples.

As we commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and humankind has exceeded all bounds in the revolutions and world wars of the last century, our wisdom should serve peace and security. As the Arab Spring has shown, revolutions only hinder human development, turn societies backwards and make inter-State relations more tense and complicated. States, wherever they may be, must reject unconstitutional and illegal actions on the part of all forces, including external ones, that could lead to the destruction of statehood.

The humanitarian disaster in Syria is no longer considered to be a regional issue. The crisis has extended far beyond the geographical boundaries of the region. We support the efforts of the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the United States, Russia, the European Union and others stakeholders. Kazakhstan firmly believes that crises should be resolved only through genuine political dialogue, without violence or bloodshed. This year, Kazakhstan has twice hosted meetings of some of the Syrian opposition groups, providing an opportunity to discuss the political situation in Syria and a way towards positive solutions.

In the light of the most recent terrorist attacks in a number of countries, which have claimed so many innocent lives and caused so many injuries, the threat of that evil endangers all of humankind and its future. In the fight against terrorism, we must use all available political and ideological means. We believe that spiritual and religious leaders can play a significant role in fostering inter-ethnic and interreligious harmony and mutual respect, thereby reducing mistrust and fear. Enhancing its contribution to achieving that goal, Kazakhstan regularly hosts the triennial Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, providing a platform for communication among political and religious leaders for the sake of peace.

Today, we are unfortunately witness to distorted views of Islam that perceive it as a religion that justifies violence. In an effort to bridge gaps and overcome mistrust and hatred, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan has launched an initiative to convene a high-level United Nations forum on Islam against terrorism as soon as possible, and we invite Member States to support it. President Nazarbayev has also proposed establishing a United Nations-led counter-terrorism coalition and developing a common mechanism for

fighting this evil and bringing its perpetrators and their supporters to justice.

In order to be more effective, the measures taken by the relevant United Nations mechanisms, including the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, should be based on Security Council resolutions that render them legally binding. We also believe that a unified global network for countering international terrorism and extremism, as an outcome of the Secretary-General's forthcoming comprehensive plan of action to combat terrorism, would help to reduce such threats. Our thrust must shift from routine conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery to a new development strategy designed to reduce or largely eliminate threats of war and conflicts. We therefore propose launching a new dimension in global development, the 2045 Global Strategic Initiative.

In conclusion, we reiterate our commitment to the collective efforts to fight international terrorism and ensure peace in the Middle East, based on freedom and justice for all.

*The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.*