

United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records



89th
PLENARY MEETING

Thursday, 6 December 1984,
at 3.20 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. Paul J. F. LUSAKA
(Zambia).

AGENDA ITEM 33

Question of Palestine (continued):

(a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People;

(b) Report of the Secretary-General

1. The PRESIDENT: I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken this morning [88th meeting], the list of speakers in the debate on agenda item 33 will be closed tomorrow, 7 December, at 12 noon.

2. Mr. FERM (Sweden): A few days ago the Assembly was discussing the situation in the Middle East. During the debate many delegations expressed their firm conviction that the question of Palestine remains the core of the conflict in that part of the world. That is also the view held by the Swedish Government.

3. Countless efforts have been made within the United Nations during the past several decades in the pursuit of a peaceful solution to the problem, and rightly, because this question touches upon fundamental aspects of peace and security, of international law and of humanitarian principles.

4. To put it simply, we are discussing the claims of two peoples to the same geographical area. We know the arguments; they have been put forward by the two sides during this session of the General Assembly, as they have so many times in the past. All sides in the conflict say that they want peace, and we do not doubt that. The question is: What price are the parties prepared to pay for that peace? Is Israel prepared to give up its territorial claims and withdraw from the occupied territories? Is the Arab side willing to accept the Israeli State and acknowledge its right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries?

5. We hope that the voice of reason and compromise will eventually prevail in the region and that the answers to these questions will be in the affirmative.

6. The corner-stone of a fair and peaceful solution is already laid. The main elements are present in a few essential resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly. General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 recognized the national rights of the two peoples concerned and provided the legal foundation for two

sovereign States in mandated Palestine. The 37 years that have elapsed since then have seen many changes and dramatic developments, including five major wars in the region. It would not be realistic, therefore, to attempt to revive and implement the letter of that resolution. Nevertheless, the basic concept of resolution 181 (II) remains valid. Indeed, the United Nations has a special responsibility to pursue a solution that gives the Palestinians themselves a real opportunity to fulfil their national aspirations. It is not for us to tell the Palestinians how they should exercise their right to self-determination, nor is it for Israel or any other country to dictate these matters.

7. In important respects, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) provide an adequate basis for negotiations towards a comprehensive settlement. My Government's understanding of the essential thrust of those two resolutions is that as a result of negotiations Israel would withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967. Israel's neighbours would give full recognition to Israel's right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

8. It is clear that a comprehensive settlement cannot be arrived at without the direct participation of the principal parties, including Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO], as well as those Arab States that are directly affected. The strategic realities make it essential that the major Powers should be party to such negotiations. A possible forum for the negotiations was indicated in the call by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983, for an international peace conference, a call confirmed by the General Assembly. The United Nations provides appropriate machinery in the search for a solution to the conflict.

9. My Government views with serious concern some of the ongoing developments in the Middle East. The prospects for the eventual fulfilment of Palestinian national aspirations have suffered severe set-backs during the last few years. The continued Israeli policy of illegal settlements and various repressive measures directed against the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza must be condemned.

10. Israel and some Arab countries have made obvious attempts to influence political processes among the Palestinians. The primary aim of such actions has apparently been either to eliminate the PLO as the leading Palestinian political force or to manipulate that organization's policies and leadership. My Government regards such attempts as harmful to the prospects for a lasting peace in the region.

11. A cause of concern continues to be the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The responsibility for the safety of the Palestinians living in southern

Lebanon rests for the moment with Israel as the occupying Power. Likewise, Syria must assume responsibility for the welfare of those refugees who live in areas under Syrian control.

12. My Government hopes that the talks in Naqoura will eventually lead to the long-overdue Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The responsibility for the protection of civilians will then be assumed by the Government of Lebanon. Should the Government of Lebanon seek assistance in order to fulfil its obligations in this regard, the international community should consider it its duty to render such assistance as may be possible.

13. The list of victims of this long conflict grows each day. Soldiers, innocent civilians and seekers of peace alike have shed their blood. It is 36 years now since my own countryman, Folke Bernadotte, gave his life for the dream of peace. That is too long and there has been too much blood. The negotiating table has been empty for too long.

14. Mr. AL-ANSI (Oman) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Once again the question of Palestine is before the General Assembly, where it has been considered in regular and special sessions since the founding of the United Nations.

15. It has taken on the characteristics of the problems for the solution of which the international community has looked to the United Nations as a forum that would establish peace and security in the world and achieve economic and social development for the benefit of all mankind.

16. Hence, discussion of the question of Palestine in the United Nations makes possible a better awareness of the Organization and of the way in which it deals with problems and obstacles that prevent it from implementing its resolutions. The will of the United Nations is but the collective expression of all its Member States. Had the international will been exercised with respect to this problem which has been with us for such a long time without any practical solution, it would no longer be so difficult to find a just and lasting solution.

17. Although the problem has many ramifications and various elements, it is obvious that a people has been driven out of its land by force but that it remains determined to regain its homeland. It has expressed this determination by all legitimate means recognized in the norms of international law. No people in the world has shown such determination without the international community having acted favourably on its behalf and supported its right to self-determination as a first step towards independence and sovereignty. The people of Palestine is no exception to this rule. It is the repository of a desire which is upheld by all peoples of the world that cherish peace and freedom.

18. International law recognizes the right of the Palestinian people to return to their families, their homes and their land. Furthermore, the United Nations made a pledge to the Palestinian people in 1947 and has reaffirmed year after year its right to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of its own independent State on its ancestral land.

19. The position of my Government on the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine has not changed. That position was confirmed by our Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in

his statement to the General Assembly on 5 October 1984 when he said:

“Given that situation, it is necessary to intensify our efforts to observe more strictly the international legal norms and the principles and Charter of the United Nations, and to respect and implement the Organization’s resolutions. The United Nations is the only organization capable of ridding mankind of the spectre of chaos, war and hunger.

“The Assembly’s agenda is composed of numerous, complicated items requiring concerted action by all countries of the world. Perhaps one of the most important and complex matters that have faced the Organization since its establishment is the question of the Palestinian people. It is now high time for Israel to understand that the only road to peace is through dialogue and negotiation, leading to a just solution that will restore the dignity of the Palestinian people and ensure their legitimate right to self-determination, including the right to establish their own independent State. Israel must also understand that resort to the use of force cannot guarantee its peace or security. It will not be able to achieve stability or ensure its interests if it persists in ignoring the interests of the Palestinians and continues to violate the sovereignty and security of neighbouring States.

“Israel’s rejection of the various peace initiatives and its frustration of all attempts to solve the Palestinian question make it responsible for the state of war and tension prevailing in the Middle East.

“The Sultanate of Oman, which has supported all the efforts of those who seek peace in the region and work to achieve it, endorses the Geneva Declaration on Palestine calling for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, in which all the interested parties would participate. The endorsement by the General Assembly, at its last session, of the guidelines of the Geneva Declaration calling for the attainment by the Palestinian people of their inalienable, legitimate rights is an important step in the context of international efforts to achieve a political settlement of this conflict. We understand full well, however, that no conference will succeed without the participation of all the parties concerned.

“We consider the Palestinian-Jordanian *rapprochement*, as evidenced by the continued and intensified bilateral talks, to be a positive and encouraging factor for mobilizing the Arab efforts and setting the stage for decisive action aimed at achieving a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.” [23rd meeting, paras. 125-129.]

20. The international community is duty-bound to support the legitimacy of the Palestinian people as represented by the PLO and the national institutions of the Palestinian people. The PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians who are continuing their struggle.

21. We are very pleased at the success of the Palestine National Council, which recently met at Amman and which reaffirmed the strength and wisdom of the enlightened national leadership of the Palestinian people.

22. We wish to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General for his role and for his sustained efforts, as borne out in his reports to the General Assembly and the Security Council [A/39/130 and Add.1].

23. We appreciate the specific efforts made by the many international committees under United Nations auspices, especially those of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and the efforts made in commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which is observed each year on 29 November. Similarly, we pay a tribute to the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories and to other United Nations and international bodies.

24. We hope that the international community will continue to search for a just solution of the Palestinian problem, and we believe that that would also resolve the question of other Arab territories under Israeli occupation, so that a just and lasting peace may prevail in the Middle East and all the inhabitants of that important region of the world may live in peace and harmony. We must also seek to put an end to the chronic international problems in the world today which result in destruction everywhere.

25. Our concerted action to bring about a solution to the problem of Palestine will benefit the entire international community without exception.

26. Mr. KRISHNAN (India): We are once again considering the question of Palestine, an item which has remained intractably on the agenda of the General Assembly for several decades now. Recent years have witnessed great vicissitudes in the plight of the Palestinian people and their brave struggle for national independence. A valiant people continue to remain deprived of their homes. Their lands, even beyond those defined by the United Nations at the time of the partition of Palestine, have been forcibly occupied. Numerous resolutions on the subject adopted by the United Nations remain unimplemented. Israel continues forcibly to occupy Arab lands and to thwart the will of the international community. Israel is also vigorously continuing with the policy of establishing settlements in the West Bank. As a result, the entire region of western Asia is in the grip of constant turmoil and tension with a possibility of their escalation into a wider, all-encompassing conflict.

27. Recent developments in the Middle East have introduced even more complex and dangerous elements into an already complicated situation. Israel's continued occupation of Lebanon in defiance of Security Council resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), its harassment and intimidation of the Palestinian and Lebanese people, the dispersal of Palestinians against their will into neighbouring States and Israel's policy of establishing new settlements are part of its policy seeking to consolidate its stranglehold over the occupied Arab territories and to annex them.

28. India's own sympathy for the people of Palestine and support for the establishment of a Palestinian State are rooted in our awareness of the historical, territorial and national identity of the Palestinians. Even during the days of our struggle for national independence, our leaders identified themselves with the Palestinian cause and raised their voices in support of the establishment of an independent Palestinian homeland. The continuing struggle of the brave Palestinians evokes sympathy and understanding among the people of India to this day. The decision to partition Palestine was taken in the

same year as India became independent. India secured its independence, but the people of Palestine were banished from their own lands. Many countries since then have also become free and are now masters of their own destinies. However, the Palestinians not only remain homeless, but even more of their lands have since been occupied. As the late Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, recalled in her closing address to the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi in March 1983:

“millions are still denied their birthright—for instance, the Palestinians, Namibians and the people of South Africa. His Excellency Chairman Yasser Arafat and His Excellency Chairman Sam Nujoma have honoured us with their presence. Yet they are barred from their own homes.”¹

29. India has consistently advocated that a just and comprehensive solution to the problems of western Asia should comprise the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable national and human rights, including the right to establish an independent State in their homeland, the total and unconditional withdrawal by Israel from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including the Holy City of Jerusalem, and a guarantee for all States in the region, including Palestine, to live within secure and recognized borders. In our view, the Palestinians have a right to return to their homes and property in Palestine, from which they have been mercilessly displaced and uprooted. Their right to self-determination should be exercised without any external interference and, like other States in the region, the State of Palestine should be enabled to live in peace and security and follow its own domestic and foreign policies. An essential prerequisite for the attainment of a peaceful solution is the full and equal participation of the PLO, the only genuine representative of the Palestinian people, in any discussions relating to their future and, indeed, the future of the entire region.

30. The efforts by the international community to find a comprehensive solution of the problem of the Middle East, the core of which is the question of Palestine, received a fresh impetus at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983. General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, adopted by an overwhelming majority last year, endorsed the Geneva Declaration on Palestine² and its call for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. The Geneva Declaration had envisaged that the proposed peace conference, to be convened under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the PLO, as well as the United States, the Soviet Union and other concerned States, on an equal footing, would take as its basis the internationally recognized guidelines endorsed at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine.

31. It will be recalled that resolution 38/58 C requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, urgently to undertake preparatory measures to convene the conference and to report on his efforts no later than 15 March 1984. We are indeed grateful to the Secretary-General for initiating a process of consultations, in pursuance of resolution 38/58 C, with the members of the Security Council and with other concerned States for the convening of the proposed peace conference. In our

own response [see A/39/227] to the Secretary-General's letter of 9 March 1984, the Government of India conveyed its broad agreement with the plan of action proposed by the Secretary-General. However, we suggested that some flexibility be retained in the selection of participants for the conference. In the time-frame for the convening of the conference, it was our view that the situation in western Asia did not brook any delay and that urgent preparatory measures should be undertaken so that the conference could be convened at the earliest possible time.

32. While most of the States consulted have indicated their agreement to the proposed peace conference, we deeply regret that some others have not found it possible to do so. In his report on the situation in the Middle East, the Secretary-General stated that:

"The history of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East and of the Palestine question has thus been a long record of missed opportunities punctuated by wars and violence that have only served to complicate the situation further and to create new misery and new obstacles to peace." [See A/39/600, para. 42.]

Indeed the time has come to pursue with determination our search for ways and means to remedy the injustice done to the Palestinian people and to find an early solution to the tragic conflict. The negative attitude of a handful of States to the proposed peace conference has led the Secretary-General to conclude in his report that "the conditions required for convening the proposed conference with any chance of success are not met at the present time" [*ibid.*, para. 40].

33. Time is of the essence, and delay does not facilitate a solution of the problem in the Middle East. We therefore view with interest, as an interim measure, the proposal of the Secretary-General, contained in his report, "of using the machinery of the Security Council in a new way to work with the parties concerned on various aspects of the Middle East problem and to distil from the various proposals and plans that have been put forward in recent years the common elements that could help work out the basis of a negotiating structure" [*ibid.*, para. 45]. It is important that a process of negotiations be initiated, the Secretary-General said, "to clear the ground and to prepare for a full-fledged effort to negotiate the problem" [*ibid.*].

34. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has, since its inception, consistently advocated a comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Middle East problem and the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is at the initiative of the non-aligned countries that the majority of United Nations resolutions on the subject have been adopted. In the past year, the non-aligned countries have been particularly active in mobilizing international support against Israeli action in occupied territories and its invasion of Lebanon. The non-aligned countries have also reaffirmed their firm opposition to the Israeli practices and policies in occupied Arab and Palestinian territories and called for the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights. At the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi in March 1983, this question was exhaustively examined. Fundamental principles for the solution of the problem were again reaffirmed. The heads of State or Government affirmed

"that a just and durable peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by it since 1967, including Jerusalem, and without the achievement of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment and exercise in Palestine of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right . . . to establish the Palestinian independent State in its homeland, Palestine."³

35. The Non-Aligned Committee of Eight on Palestine, set up by the New Delhi Conference to "work with the various forces influential in the Middle East conflict for the achievement of a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East,"⁴ has endeavoured during the year to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the Conference. The Committee of Eight has maintained its contacts with representatives of various States and with the Secretary-General to pursue the goal of the early convening of the peace conference. The search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and active support for and solidarity with our Palestinian brothers has been a fundamental feature of our Movement. The Committee of Eight met in October 1984 at ministerial level and decided to continue its active role in this direction and to spare no effort in support of the inalienable rights of the Arab Palestinian people, in accordance with international law and the will of the non-aligned countries and their peoples.

36. As a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, India has fully supported the Committee in its efforts to secure the rights of the Palestinian people and to promote their cause. The report of the Committee [A/39/35] bears testimony to its untiring efforts under the dedicated leadership of Mr. Sarré, of Senegal. Though the basic recommendations of the Committee have remained unimplemented so far, its activities during the year have served to increase the support of the international community for the cause of Palestine.

37. It is well known that the primary reason for the lack of progress in finding a comprehensive solution is the arrogance and intransigence of Israel, which has deliberately defied the will of the international community, as well as the lack of political will on the part of some important Member States. We appeal to all members of the international community to display statesmanship and join in the effort to find a speedy and just solution to the problem based on the principles enunciated by the United Nations and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We urge them, as a first urgent step, to strive for the discontinuance of the Israeli settlements policy and to call for an immediate freeze on new settlements and the dismantling of those already established. At the same time, continued Israeli occupation of Lebanon is totally unacceptable. We all want to see a sovereign, independent and united Lebanon. This calls for the withdrawal of all foreign forces. Side by side, increased and sustained efforts and an initiation of a new process towards a just, durable and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine through peaceful means has become a matter of highest priority.

38. We listened with great attention to the important statement made this morning by Mr. Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine

Liberation Organization [88th meeting]. We welcome the recent meeting of the Palestine National Council, held at Amman, and have noted the decisions taken at that meeting. This has demonstrated the staunch will of the Palestinians to continue their just struggle for the attainment of their legitimate rights, and we wish them every success.

39. In conclusion, may I recall the words of the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in her keynote address to the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi in March 1983:

“We are of one mind in our support for the brave, homeless and much harassed Palestinian people. Israel feels free to commit any outrage, unabashed in its aggression, unrepentant about its transgressions of international law and behaviour. But can it for ever obstruct the legitimate rights of Palestinians?”⁵

40. Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): Ten years ago the General Assembly took a historic decision solemnly recognizing the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, declaring the PLO to be its sole legitimate representative and identifying the Palestinian problem as the core of the conflict in the Middle East.

41. The General Assembly, by committing itself to the restoration of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and abandoning the erroneous path it had followed until then, which reduced the Middle East crisis to a question of the consequences of the Zionist régime's policy of aggression against the peoples of that region, undertook to redress a historic injustice for which it was itself responsible and to take up again its original task as an organization representing an act of faith for all oppressed peoples, and, in the final analysis, it became reconciled with itself.

42. This was the result of a long march lasting a quarter of a century and of a heroic struggle during which the Palestinian people, because of an international conspiracy which had deprived it of its land, its goods and its rights, paid a heavy price for its freedom, its dignity and its right to a national and independent existence on its own land. Thus the thick veil which had for long concealed the condition of the Palestinian people was lifted and the Palestinian national reality forced itself on the universal conscience as an undeniable reality and a necessary element in any just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem. At the same time, the world discovered that what some people had shamelessly tried to present as a citadel of besieged freedom was in reality no more than a war machine based on a racist, expansionist philosophy which boasted of perpetuating the denial of the right to exist of an entire people.

43. Ten years have passed since this historic rehabilitation and the Palestinian people continues, as in the past, to endure the calvary of exile or that of occupation in its own homeland. Its land remains occupied, its freedom denied, its right to exist challenged.

44. In their camps where the collective memory of a nation that refuses to give in grows stronger, clinging to what remains of its ancestral land in occupied Palestine, the Palestinian people continues undaunted its march through history and its struggle for its existence and its identity, strengthened by the

justness of its cause and by its unshakeable conviction that right will triumph in the end.

45. Since the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly, many victories have been won, however, and the elements of a just and comprehensive settlement have little by little become accepted and were endorsed by the General Assembly, which, at its seventh emergency special session, forcefully proclaimed: first, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to independence and to national sovereignty, as well as the right to establish its own independent sovereign State in Palestine; secondly, the inalienable right of the displaced and uprooted Palestinians to return to their homes and recover their property in Palestine; thirdly, the right of the PLO, as the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing in the search for a just solution to the Palestine problem; and, fourthly, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force.

46. The General Assembly having shouldered its responsibilities, it was then for the Security Council to act in harmony with the Assembly and take the decisions that could guarantee the effective exercise by the Palestinian people of its national rights. But the abuse of the veto by a super-Power, by keeping the Council dangerously immobile, totally blocked all the efforts and reduced all the chances for peace to nought.

47. Indeed, it has been the many kinds of assistance furnished to the Zionist régime by that very super-Power that have enabled that régime, which has been given the role of a staging point of imperialism in a particularly sensitive region of the world, to pursue its policy of aggression against the peoples of the Middle East, to build up its deadly war machine and to continue to show arrogant contempt for United Nations decisions and the international community's injunctions.

48. The recent rejection by the Zionist leaders of the idea of convening an international peace conference on the Middle East, when all the Arab States concerned had stated their readiness to participate in such a conference; the increase in repression and the Israeli presence in the occupied territories, in particular by the establishment of new settlements; the continued occupation of southern Lebanon; the refusal to comply with United Nations resolutions: all these are manifestations of Zionist expansionism. They would not have been possible without the support which the Zionist régime gets and the impunity it enjoys.

49. Thus, in the occupied Arab territories, the policy of zionization continues methodically and implacably. The repression of the Arab populations is growing and intensifying. Strengthened and bolstered by fanatic bands enjoying the unconditional support of some religious and political circles, the occupation forces have imposed a reign of terror in occupied Palestine.

50. The many forms and consequences of all this extortion and institutionalized terror are described in detail in the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories [A/39/591]. That is how the Zionist régime continues its sinister undertaking of de-Arabizing Palestinian territory once and for all, by uprooting the Arabs from their homes and establishing more and more

settlements—showing utter contempt for international condemnation—and transferring enormous numbers of Israeli settlers to the occupied territories, with a view to their final annexation.

51. In Lebanon, despite imperative resolutions adopted unanimously by the Security Council, the Israeli occupation is becoming more unbearable every day. A sovereign country that is a Member of the United Nations continues to witness a part of its territory occupied, its people oppressed, its unity broken, its economy thrown out of joint by a war that was imposed on it.

52. The Syrian Golan Heights, “annexed” by an unprecedented act of legislative piracy, continues to suffer inadmissible attacks on its identity and its Arab nature.

53. The Arab States of the region, constantly exposed to brutal aggression and the insatiable appetite of the Zionist régime for territory, remain the victims of unending threats and blackmail.

54. It is an undeniable fact that certain peace efforts have so far been fruitless because, instead of attacking what is still the crux of the matter—that is, the Palestinian national reality—they have turned a blind eye to this reality, preferring to deal with certain phenomena which, however serious they may be, are only the consequences of the Zionist régime’s policy of aggression and expansionism and whose solution therefore cannot constitute a final settlement of the Middle East problem.

55. The only path that could lead to a just and comprehensive settlement of this bloody conflict is one that would enable the Palestinian people to exercise all its inalienable national rights and would guarantee respect for the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force.

56. In this respect, again, the responsibility must be shouldered by the Security Council, the body entrusted with the formidable task of maintaining international peace and security. By acting in harmony with the General Assembly and resolutely undertaking to work to give concrete form to the international consensus on the Middle East, the Security Council will regain its credibility, its effectiveness and its authority.

57. For its part, Algeria will continue to lend its full support to the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people and to work for the unity, cohesion and independence of the decision-making of its resistance, until all the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people are finally restored to them. Fortified by the experience of its own liberation struggle, Algeria remains convinced that, with regained unity and the mobilization of the entire Palestinian resistance around a common, mutually accepted platform, the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, will be able to strengthen its capacities and means of action and fulfil all the deep aspirations of the Palestinian people.

58. Mr. BOUZIRI (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): For more than four decades, the question of Palestine has been, and unfortunately continues to be, of deep concern to the international community.

59. In this matter, the United Nations plays a primary role, inherited from the League of Nations and also bequeathed to it by the British Government which held the Mandate over Palestine and which, on 18 February 1947, stated that it was “faced with a

conflict of irreconcilable principles” and that “the only thing remaining for it to do was to submit the problem to the judgement of the United Nations”.

60. Since then, the international community has been constantly involved in the Palestine question—initially, because it endorsed, by General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, the Plan of Partition that formalized the injustice committed against the Palestinian people; and, subsequently, because it had been unable over the years, despite all the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, to bring about the solution that was sought.

61. The reasons for that, of course, are many and varied, but the responsibility of the United Nations, stemming from its Charter, remains entire.

62. In the report he addressed, two days before his assassination, to the Secretary-General, Count Folke Bernadotte wrote:

“It would be a dangerous illusion to believe that it would be possible to establish a State of Israel overnight without taking into account the underlying political considerations involved as they are understood in the modern interplay of politics among nations.”

63. We all know the scenario that had been prepared, the pressure exerted and the steps taken from the end of the nineteenth century after the first meeting of the Zionist congress. There were various stages which were to lead to the achievement of the objectives laid down at that congress.

64. First of all there was the Balfour Declaration, which Sir Edward Montagu, the only Jewish member of the British Government at the time, himself denounced. That was followed by the implementation of the policy and practices of the Zionist organization on the basis of the slogan: “A land without people for a people without land.”

65. The terror campaign of Haganah and the Stern and Irgun gangs were to do the rest. That campaign was denounced in the British Parliament by Sir Winston Churchill in the following terms:

“If our dreams for zionism are to disappear in the smoke from assassins’ pistols, and if our efforts to build a future for zionism are to bring forth a new generation of gangsters worthy of Nazi Germany, many of us, including myself, will have to go back on the positions we have taken.”

Those are the words of Sir Winston Churchill.

66. Referring to the pressures and campaigns of which he himself was the target, former President Harry Truman of the United States wrote in his memoirs:

“In fact, not only was the United Nations subjected to unprecedented pressure, but the White House also was itself the target of a veritable barrage. I believe I have never been the target of such a virulent campaign.”

Those are the words of Harry Truman, former President of the United States.

67. Thus, in spite of all these facts, Israel was established; but no restraint was placed upon its aggrandizement and no safeguards or guarantees were established for the rights of the Palestinian people, the victims of one of the worst injustices of the twentieth century.

68. The expulsion of the Palestinians from their homes and their land has been a long-standing Israeli

policy. It became a systematic policy of Israel from the time of its creation. Ben Gurion described the ultimate objective as that of "a purely Jewish and much larger State, thanks to Haganah".

69. From 1948 onwards, Israel has striven to impede the implementation of the territorial provisions of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, to strengthen its hold on the territories it controlled and to thwart resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

70. Since 1948, the Palestinian people have been condemned to dispersion and wandering. This situation deteriorated dangerously in 1967, after the military occupation of what remained of Palestinian territory and the implementation of the Israeli strategic plans with regard to the West Bank of the Jordan, the Gaza Strip and the eastern part of Al-Quds al-Sharif.

71. Studies and analyses carried out by the relevant United Nations organs on Israel's policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territories concur with regard to the racist, colonialist and expansionist nature of Israel.

72. Ever since its creation, Israel has pursued simply a policy of *fait accompli*, violation of the rights of the Palestinian people and defiance of the international community and the United Nations, the organization to which it owes its very existence.

73. Invoking the theory of the chosen people, Israel intends to leave no room in a land it considers to be unpopulated except for Jews; and this aim is justified by every possible means, including the expulsion and deportation of Palestinians, whether they be Christians or Muslims; denial of their right to return to their homes and the land of their ancestors; arrests and ill-treatment of the civilian population; expropriations under the pretext of public utility or military security; demolition of houses and shelters; restraints on religious freedoms and practices; violation of respect for family rights and customs; the policy of Judaization, which does not even spare the holy places; the geographic and demographic transformation of towns and villages; and rules and laws imposed by Israel. These are all examples of the practices and the excesses of the Israelis in the occupied Palestinian territories.

74. As for Israel's colonialist and expansionist character, this is confirmed by the occupation and annexation of territories and the establishment of settlements in those territories and in towns such as Al-Quds and Al-Khalil.

75. The practice of Israel in the occupied Arab territories now consists of tightening the noose around the Arab habitation centres, swelling the settlements already established and creating others, so that, by 1987, 175 settlements will have been created, accommodating about 250,000 Jews.

76. In carrying out this policy of rampant expansionism, the Israeli leaders place stress on the fundamental strategic role of the settlements. They have stated more than once that these settlements strengthen Israel's security and provide a solid basis for its case for maintaining peace with defensible borders.

77. In defiance of international law and of United Nations resolutions, Israel persists in pursuing its policy of occupation, aggression, expansion and the establishment of illegal settlements not only through-

out the Palestinian territories but also in Al-Quds, the status of which it is bent on changing.

78. In violation of Security Council resolution 478 (1980), which was adopted after the promulgation of the "Basic Law" by Israel, certain countries decided to transfer their embassies from Tel Aviv to Al-Quds. Such an illegal, scandalous measure could only encourage Israeli annexation and gravely compromise the general recognition of the special status of Al-Quds by the international community and the undertakings of the United Nations itself on this subject.

79. The Israeli practices in the establishment of settlements and violation of rules of law and international conventions, as well as fundamental human rights, have constantly been a source of profound concern to the international community. They are likely to become even worse as a result of the carrying out of the Ben Porat project relating to the reinstallation of Palestinian refugees, which would constitute, if put into effect, a further link in the chain of criminal actions against the Palestinians, designed to marginalize their struggle.

80. This whole policy, it is claimed, is carried out in the name of Israel's security, a concept largely belied by the various military adventures undertaken by Israel in the course of the past four decades.

81. In view of its offensive military potential and the commitments of its allies, Israel, far from being threatened, in actual fact is posing a constant threat to the Palestinians and their neighbours.

82. Rather than accepting the compromise offered to it many times, to settle the problem peacefully on the basis of international law, United Nations resolutions and recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people—the right of return, and the right to self-determination and the right to create its own independent State—Israel has systematically pursued a policy of rejection, obstruction and defiance, giving rise to constant tension in the Middle East and throughout the world.

83. The British historian Arnold Toynbee has written that: "The Palestinian tragedy is not just a local tragedy. It is a tragedy for the whole world, because it is an injustice which threatens the peace of the world."

84. In deciding in 1947 on the partition of Palestine, the United Nations recognized the right of the Palestinian people to sovereignty and to establish its own independent State.

85. Reduced to the level of a refugee people, it was forced to have recourse, under the guidance of its sole legitimate representative, the PLO, to armed struggle to assert its rights.

86. The United Nations did justice to the Palestinian people by recognizing fully and formally its inalienable right to self-determination without outside interference, to independence and to national sovereignty, as well as the right to return.

87. In 1974 the United Nations recognized the justice of the struggle of the Palestinian people, the central place of the Palestinian question in the Middle East conflict and the representative nature of the PLO.

88. But, true to the image it had always held and preferring the pursuit of its predetermined plans to the search for a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem, Israel not only closed the door

on a peaceful solution based on international law but engaged with even greater determination in an attempt to eliminate the Palestinian people and its representative, the PLO, in the hope of imposing its own partial and separate solutions and carrying out its hegemonist plans in Palestine and in the countries of the region.

89. In so doing, Israel reduced the chances of establishing peace in a region which had been ravaged by five wars. It pretends not to realize that no force, however sophisticated, can overcome the nationalism of a people determined to pursue its struggle to fulfil its aspirations to dignity, justice and freedom.

90. If the practices of the Nazis, the deportation camps and the cremation ovens stimulated and heightened Jewish nationalism, how could it be otherwise in the case of Palestinian nationalism? By a curious paradox, yesterday's victims have today become the butchers and the countries which yesterday defended the Jewish people are today, through their aid and assistance, encouraging Israel in its persecution of the Palestinian people.

91. In his message of 29 November 1984, on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, President Habib Bourguiba expressed Tunisia's profound concern at the obstinacy and intransigence of Israel and reiterated our position on the Palestinian question. He said:

“Reaffirming our commitment to the Arab peace plan adopted at the Fez summit, we believe that all international efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East deserve the support of all the members of the international community.”

92. At its thirty-eighth session, in resolution 38/58 C, the General Assembly welcomed and endorsed the call for convening an international peace conference on the Middle East. We pay a sincere and well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to bring about this conference, but we must note that obstacles to convening it are continuously being created. While we are used to the Israeli attitude of rejection, obstinacy and intransigence, it is regrettable that certain countries which bear special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security continue to show reluctance about the convening of this conference.

93. The numerous peace initiatives of the past two years constitute a noteworthy contribution to the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem and to the problem of the Middle East. They testify to the imperative need, as we approach the end of the twentieth century, to put an end to a situation which not only is anachronistic but seriously threatens international peace and security.

94. Tunisia reaffirms its commitment to and support for any initiative which could lead to the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and a solution to the Middle East problem, and remains convinced that the convening of an international peace conference would be a step towards the beginning of a peace process in the region. The conference would have the advantage of the full backing of international law, would provide for the participation of all parties to the conflict, without any exception, and would constitute an appropriate framework for determining all the condi-

tions for a comprehensive peace in the light of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the most recent proposals for comprehensive settlement.

95. In this way, the United Nations will have done its duty and fully shouldered its responsibilities regarding the solution of a conflict that has lasted for four decades. It seems to us that the time is ripe for such action.

96. In its determination to block the achievement of peace and the restoration to the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, Israel is making a serious mistake in believing that it can perpetuate its supremacy in the region. It should understand that ultimately the balance of power will no longer be in its favour. In 10, 20 or 30 years, the Arab countries will have achieved a technological, military and human potential which could bring about fundamental changes in the situation.

97. On my country's behalf, I urge that all possible efforts be made to seize this new opportunity to solve the Middle East problem once and for all and to enable that region at last to enjoy the peace and security in which it can devote itself to development and to the progress of its peoples.

98. Next year the international community will celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. For all of us, that commemoration will provide an opportunity to reaffirm the noble ideals on which the United Nations was based and its Charter written. It will also inspire us to redouble our efforts to ensure the triumph of those ideals. That commemoration will be a sign of renewal for all those that have pinned their hopes on the United Nations and expect it to restore their rights. Let us hope that the international community will fully discharge its obligations to them and see to it that their aspirations are fulfilled in justice and peace.

99. If 1986 is to be declared a year of peace, it must not be so in words alone.

100. Mr. LING Qing (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation has listened attentively to the statements by the representatives of the PLO and some Arab countries. I wish to take this opportunity to voice our firm support and pay high tribute, in the name of the Chinese delegation, to the heroic Palestinian people who are fighting for the restoration of their national rights and the realization of a lasting peace in the Middle East.

101. The question of Palestine is the crux of the Middle East issue, having a direct bearing on the peace and stability of the Middle East. It is, in essence, a question of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples resisting Israeli aggression and expansion and fighting for the restoration of their national rights. In defiance of the norms of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, the Israeli authorities have long trampled upon the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and have forcibly occupied large tracts of territories of neighbouring Arab countries on the pretext of Israel's right to security. They have always obdurately refused to recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to enter into a dialogue with the PLO. Their extreme arrogance and utter defiance of world opinion are inseparable from the connivance and backing of a super-Power. We hope that this super-Power will change its position of siding with Israel and make efforts towards achieving a fair and reasonable settlement of the Palestinian question.

Mr. Gumucio Granier (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

102. The heroic Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, their sole legitimate representative, have waged long years of extremely arduous struggle against the Israeli aggressors, thus winning world-wide sympathy and support. The PLO, too, has gained recognition and support from an increasing number of countries.

103. It is 37 years since the United Nations started its consideration of the question of Palestine in 1947. In the past decade, the United Nations has adopted a series of resolutions upholding justice. In particular, General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) reaffirmed the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, and resolution 3375 (XXX) invited the PLO to participate in all efforts for the realization of peace in the Middle East. The Geneva Declaration on Palestine,² adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva last year, called for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations in conformity with the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations. Other international organizations and countries have also put forward suggestions and proposals for a comprehensive and just solution to the Middle East problem. Of those proposals, the plan embodied in the Final Declaration adopted at Fez on 9 September 1982 by the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference⁶ merits particular mention, for it contains reasonable and realistic propositions and can form the basis for the settlement of the question.

104. China supports such reasonable suggestions and proposals and appraises highly the efforts made by the Arab countries and all the other justice-upholding countries for a settlement of the question of Palestine. I wish to reiterate that all efforts made on a similar basis that are conducive to the recovery by Arab countries of their lost territories, the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people and the achievement of a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question will receive endorsement and support from the Chinese Government. China has held all along that the key to a settlement lies in the restoration to the Palestinian people of their inalienable national rights, including the right to self-determination, the right to return to their homeland and the right to establish their own State in Palestine; and in Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Arab Jerusalem. The PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, has the right to participate on an equal footing with other parties. This is the only way to a comprehensive settlement and a fair solution of the Palestinian question, to the enjoyment of peace and of the right of all countries in the Middle East to existence and to the gradual realization of peace and stability in the region. We call on all peace-loving countries and peoples to make concerted efforts for an early and just settlement of the question of Palestine.

105. *Mr. ENDREFFY (Hungary):* My delegation had the opportunity a little while ago to take part in the deliberations on the situation in the Middle East. In our statement [75th meeting], we tried to focus attention on the larger context of the problem, the effects the unresolved issues in the Middle East have on the international situation. We were obliged to state with much regret that at the present time we are

not a bit closer to a solution than we were a year ago. This implies that we did not make any progress either on the key issue of the Middle East crisis, that is, the Palestinian problem, which is the topic of our present statement.

106. The most fundamental human, political and national rights of the suffering Arab people of Palestine continue to be trampled underfoot. Israel continues to occupy Arab territories and with its aggressive, expansionist policy further complicates an already tense situation.

107. Throughout the year we have been confronted with reports on the continuation of the Israeli policy of establishing illegal Jewish settlements or enlarging those already existing in the occupied territories. This policy more often than not involves conflict and violence. The evacuation, deportation and expulsion of Arab inhabitants, the destruction and demolition of their homes and the confiscation of Arab property cannot be achieved otherwise. Often, Arab protests are followed by shooting and even killing or at best by mass arrests and the detention of the demonstrating Arabs.

108. Without going into further detail, let me just mention here that at its fortieth session, earlier this year, the Commission on Human Rights adopted no less than five resolutions dealing with the situation in the occupied Arab territories and condemning the Israeli policies and practices I have described.

109. And it is not only human rights that are denied the Palestinians. The Israeli policies designed to promote, protect and develop the illegal settlements have a direct economic effect on the Palestinian population as well, resulting in structural changes in the economy of the occupied territories.

110. We have repeatedly stated that the Israeli measures are clearly aimed at deliberately changing the geographical character, the demographic nature and even the legal status of the occupied territories, flagrantly violating the established norms of international law and specific United Nations resolutions.

111. This policy must not be allowed to go on. It has to be stopped, not only because it is lawless and inhuman, but also because it is dangerous; it perpetuates tension in the region with all its well-known adverse effects on international peace and security.

112. Israel cannot hope to achieve the much-desired peace through illegally occupying other people's territories. Its security cannot be exclusive. There can only be common security achieved through negotiations with all the parties involved in the conflict.

113. The overwhelming majority in the United Nations has consistently advocated a peaceful, political solution to the question of Palestine—and rightly, since there is no rational alternative.

114. The basic step in this direction should be recognition of the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine: the right to self-determination, including the establishment of an independent sovereign State of their own; the right to return; the right to compensation; and so on.

115. The just settlement of the Palestinian problem, based on recognition of the rights to which I have referred, would constitute the most significant contribution to a comprehensive settlement of the whole Middle East question. It could be achieved by meeting the other well-known conditions of a settlement, namely: the withdrawal of Israeli forces from

all the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the region, including Israel.

116. It goes without saying that all the parties concerned should take part in the process of settlement on an equal footing, including the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arab people. It is also generally recognized that the support of the major Powers, especially the Soviet Union and the United States, is essential if a lasting settlement is to be achieved.

117. It is obvious that renewed international efforts are needed to create the necessary conditions to set this process of settlement in motion and to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East.

118. We are well aware of the fact that there is a long and difficult road ahead of us.

119. It is necessary to improve the international climate so that it becomes more conducive to negotiations. It is also necessary to strengthen the unity of the Arab countries, as well as of the Palestinian movement, so that lack of unity cannot be used further to delay talks and negotiations. And it is also necessary for the parties concerned to be realistic. We agree with the Secretary-General when he states in his report:

“It seems clear to me that none of the parties to this historic and tragic conflict can hope to attain its maximum demands if there is to be a state of real peace in the region. In the changes of fortune, the shifting balance of power and the inexorable development of underlying trends in the Middle East, no party can view the future with equanimity, nor will the world escape the repercussions of continuing violence in this unique area.”
[A/39/600, para. 43.]

120. Let us not allow this to happen. Rather, let us work together, both here in the United Nations and in our bilateral diplomacy, for a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the question of Palestine, for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

121. Mr. OVINNIKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): Exactly 10 years have passed since the General Assembly, at its twenty-ninth session, adopted the fundamental resolution 3236 (XXIX). That resolution clearly set forth the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without outside intervention and to national independence and sovereignty.

122. At subsequent sessions of the General Assembly, including the seventh emergency special session, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were reaffirmed. Together with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, these resolutions constitute the generally recognized basis for a just solution to the problem of Palestine, within the framework of a comprehensive Middle East settlement, taking account of the legitimate interests both of the Arab people of Palestine and of the State of Israel.

123. However, the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people have not yet been implemented. The Arab people of Palestine continues to be deprived of a homeland. That people has been forced to live hand-to-mouth or to endure the daily yoke of military occupation in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian lands. The reason for this is crystal clear: Israel

continues to pursue an implacable, chauvinist policy of total disregard and non-recognition not only of the national rights of the Palestinian Arabs but also of the very existence of the Arab people of Palestine.

124. As a result of arbitrary expropriations and requisitions of Arab land on the West Bank of the Jordan and in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli occupiers have been able to set up about 200 settlements. Tel Aviv continues to hatch its plans of sharp increases in the number of Israeli settlements in coming years. With respect to the indigenous Arab population, the occupation authorities are pursuing a policy of naked terror and violence. Behind all this is a desire to drive out the Palestinians from their ancestral lands and to carry out the total annexation of Palestinian territories.

125. The expansionist policy of the Israeli leaders has frequently been strongly condemned by the General Assembly and the Security Council. The practical steps taken by Israel within the context of its policy of *fait accompli*—the annexation of east Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, the activities of settlers in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip—have repeatedly and unambiguously been described by the international community as illegal and null and void.

126. Israel, however, does not wish to recognize a single United Nations resolution on the Palestinian question. It stubbornly refuses to comply with such resolutions both with respect to withdrawal from the occupied Arab lands and with respect to the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Tel Aviv completely denies the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, as well as its right to establish its own independent State.

127. Does Israel have any grounds for such a policy? There can be no such grounds, and there are none. As everyone knows, General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 provided for the creation in the former Mandated Territory of Palestine not only of a Jewish but also of an Arab State. Is it really possible to dismember, to cut up that decision and to recognize one part of it while denying another? By not recognizing the rights of the Palestinian people to set up its own State, the Israeli leadership is rejecting resolution 181 (II), and it is precisely that resolution which constitutes the legal basis for the existence of Israel itself.

128. It is a matter of public record that the Israeli leadership makes clever and constant use of the concept of security for its own State. It would seem that such an obsessive concern for its own security should prompt the Israeli authorities to seek a common language with their neighbours and prompt them to try to coexist and normalize relations with them, as well as to seek mutually acceptable peaceful solutions on a reasonable basis. But exactly the opposite is true: in the course of all these years, Israel has been promoting not a programme of peace, but a programme of expansion and annexation, and has been committing more and more acts of aggression against the Arabs.

129. It is very clear that Israel would never have dared to conduct itself so presumptuously and cynically had it not been for outside support and assistance. Therefore, responsibility for the many years of conscious obstructionism in finding a solution to the problem of Palestine, as well as the entire range of problems involved in a Middle East settlement, must be borne not only by Israel; it is also the

responsibility of the United States. It is precisely the systematic political, economic and military support for Israel provided by Washington that has made it possible for Tel Aviv for many years to trample underfoot and usurp the rights of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples and to disregard the relevant resolutions of the United Nations on the Middle East.

130. American policy in the Middle East has a lopsided pro-Israel tilt, and on the Palestinian question it is aimed at preventing the Palestinian people from exercising its national rights. That is the essence of all the notorious American plans, beginning with Camp David and continuing with the "Reagan plan" of 1 September 1982,⁷ which, it would seem, it now wants to take down from its dusty shelf and present in new wrappings.

131. However, the many years of experience and the development of events in the Middle East indisputably show that the Middle East conflict and its core, the Palestinian problem, cannot be solved by separate deals and behind-the-scenes manoeuvring and machinations. There are more and more champions of the just cause of the Arab people of Palestine in the world. Their political support, including support within the United Nations, serves as a guarantee for success in the struggle for a just solution of the Palestinian problem within the context of a comprehensive Middle East settlement.

132. Of course, it goes without saying that of decisive significance is the struggle of the Palestinian people itself, the political vanguard of which is the PLO. It is extremely important to strengthen the cohesiveness of the Palestinian ranks on an anti-imperialistic patriotic basis. It is extremely important to maintain close co-operation between the PLO and the Arab peoples and countries, taking a very firm principled position in countering the expansionist plans of the United States and Israel, and that would make it possible for the Palestine resistance movement to overcome the difficulties it has been experiencing and to thwart the designs of imperialism and Zionism in the Middle East and of all those who are working against the realization of the national aspirations of the Palestinian people.

133. The Soviet Union consistently backs the struggle of the Palestinians for their inalienable rights. This is borne out in the proposals made by the Soviet Union on 29 July 1984 [see A/39/368], taking account of the incontrovertible fact that the Palestinian problem is the key element in the entire range of problems in a Middle East settlement.

134. Based on the desire to promote the establishment of peace in the Middle East, the Soviet Union—and we feel it is necessary to recall this—has stated that the following principles are necessary for a Middle East settlement.

135. First, there should be strict compliance with the principle of the inadmissibility of acquisition of foreign territory by aggression. Consequently, all territories occupied by Israel since 1967 should be returned to the Arabs. This means the Golan Heights, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as Lebanese lands. The settlements established by Israel in the Arab territories after 1967 should be eliminated. The borders between Israel and its Arab neighbours should be declared inviolable.

136. Secondly, there must be effective guarantees of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestin-

ian people, whose sole and legitimate representative is the PLO, as well as of its right to self-determination and to the establishment of its own independent State on Palestinian territory, liberated from Israeli occupation. This means the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip. As provided for in the decision adopted on 9 September 1982 by the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez,⁶ and with the consent of the Palestinians themselves, these regions could be transferred by Israel, for a short, transitional period not exceeding several months, to United Nations control.

137. After the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, that State would of course, by virtue of the sovereign right belonging to every State, determine the nature of its relations with neighbouring countries, including the possibility of forming confederations.

138. Palestinian refugees should be given, in accordance with United Nations decisions, the opportunity of returning to their homes or receiving appropriate compensation for the property they left behind.

139. Thirdly, East Jerusalem, which was occupied by Israel in 1967 and which includes one of the major Muslim holy places, should be returned to the Arabs and should become an integral part of the Palestinian State. In all of Jerusalem there should be free access to the holy places for believers of the three religions.

140. Fourthly, there should be real guarantees of the right of all States in the region to a secure and independent existence and to development. It goes without saying that there should be full reciprocity; genuine security cannot be provided for some when the security of others is neglected.

141. Fifthly, the state of war must be ended and peace must be established between the Arab States and Israel. This means that all parties to the conflict, including Israel and the Palestinian State, should undertake to respect each other's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. They must settle peacefully, by negotiations, any disputes that may arise between them.

142. Sixthly, international guarantees for the settlement must be worked out and adopted. The role of guarantor might be played by, for example, permanent members of the Security Council or by the Security Council as a whole. The Soviet Union, for its part, would be prepared to participate in that process of guaranteeing the settlement.

143. I turn now to the ways of reaching a settlement on the basis of the principles I have just set forth. Experience shows very, very clearly that the only correct and effective course in this regard is that of collective efforts, with the participation of all sides concerned. This means negotiations within the context of an international conference on the Middle East, specially convened for this purpose.

144. All Arab States having common borders with Israel, as well as Israel itself, should have the right to participate in the work of such a conference. The PLO, too, should be a full-fledged participant in the conference. The Soviet Union and the United States should also participate in the conference as States which, because of circumstances, play an important role in Middle East matters and which were the co-chairmen of the 1973 conference on the Middle East.

145. The course of the discussions on the entire set of Middle East problems shows that this point of

view is shared by an overwhelming majority of delegations. There is every reason to state that there is broad international agreement on the need to hold an international conference on the Middle East. This is also confirmed by the Geneva Declaration on Palestine, adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held in 1983.² It is particularly significant that the General Assembly itself, in resolution 38/58 C, very clearly pronounced itself in favour of such a conference.

146. The Soviet Union is in favour of a truly just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. If such a settlement were worked out, there would be no need for even Israel to worry about its security. Merely by returning what does not belong to it, by returning what it has usurped, it could gain security and peace.

147. A just solution of the Palestine question, within the context of a comprehensive Middle East settlement, would be a significant contribution to the cause of stability and solid peace in the region. Furthermore, it would lead to an improvement in the international climate as a whole.

148. Mr. McDONAGH (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the ten member States of the European Community.

149. The Ten remain deeply conscious of the importance which the Palestinian problem has for the future peace and security of the Middle East. Each year that passes without a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict makes its achievement more difficult, since attitudes of hostility become more entrenched and further problems are added to the existing ones. The Ten consider that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) set out fundamental principles for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a settlement must, further, take account of both the right to existence and security of all States in the Middle East, including Israel, and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination with all that this implies. These views of the Ten have been elaborated in the declaration published at Venice on 13 June 1980⁸ and their subsequent statement on this issue. In their declaration on the Middle East adopted at Brussels on 27 March 1984 [see A/39/161, annex] the Ten called on all parties to draw the necessary consequences from these principles and to start the negotiations necessary for their implementation.

150. The Ten's commitment to the right of Israel to live in security and peace is fundamental and unwavering. In parallel, they further confirm that there can be no real peace or stability in the region unless the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are recognized. In particular, self-determination for the Palestinian people, with all that this implies, remains a key issue which must be taken into account in the context of a comprehensive, just and durable settlement of the conflict. Thus, the essence of such a settlement must be a full, just and lasting accommodation between the State of Israel and the Palestinian people, so that they can live together in peace and security. A climate of confidence and understanding is an important element in the search for a comprehensive peace settlement. The Ten believe that such a climate can only be achieved by the parties concerned taking positive steps towards this goal, by ending acts of violence and by showing willingness to compromise. In the Ten's view, furthermore, a

process of negotiation must involve mutual recognition of the existence and the rights of the parties in the conflict.

151. The Ten have repeatedly stressed their conviction that Israel will only obtain the security and recognition to which it has a right by seeking a negotiated settlement and in particular by satisfying the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. The Ten wish to see the Palestinian people in a position to pursue their demands by political means, and they consider that the achievement of these should take account of the need to recognize and respect the existence and security of all. The Ten continue to believe that it is neither wise nor just for one party to seek to deny the other the rights that it claims for itself.

152. Resolution of the problems between Israel and its neighbours should be based on the principles, widely accepted in the international community, of non-recourse to the use of force and of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. In accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), Israel must put an end to the territorial occupation it has maintained since the conflict of 1967.

153. The Ten are convinced that negotiations are the key to the problem and that it is for the parties concerned to negotiate a lasting settlement. A negotiated settlement will require the continuing and independent expression of the will of the Palestinian people.

154. The Ten have noted the recent meeting of the Palestine National Council at Amman. They continue to believe that the PLO must be associated with peace negotiations.

155. The Ten express their concern that the hopes engendered in September 1982 by certain converging and promising peace initiatives have been largely dissipated. The European Council, at its meeting held at Dublin on 3 and 4 December 1984, emphasized that it is vitally important that renewed efforts be made towards negotiations for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Ten note with satisfaction expressions of interest by both sides in a process of movement towards negotiations, and they hope that this declared interest will be further built on. In order to find a lasting solution, no amount of effort by third parties can be a substitute for direct negotiations among the parties themselves—the Arab States, Israel and the Palestinian people—which must recognize mutually one another's existence and rights. They call on all parties fully to implement the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). They renew their call for an end to the illegal policy of settlements in the occupied territories.

156. In the past, the Ten have consistently offered to assist in any way open to them in attempts to identify common ground between the parties. The Ten, both collectively and individually, have maintained contact with all parties. In continuation of this policy, the Ten, as stated by the European Council on 4 December 1984, consider that such contacts should be developed with a view to seeking ways of promoting movement towards negotiation and improvement of the situation in the region.

157. The Ten have repeatedly indicated the principles on which they base their position concerning the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, in

particular the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war. The Ten reaffirm that the provisions of the Hague Convention of 1907⁹ and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,¹⁰ are applicable to all these territories until such time as an end is put, within the framework of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, to the territorial occupation which Israel has maintained since 1967. The Ten are deeply concerned that Israeli policies in the area have led to mounting tension and continued unrest. In particular, the Ten remain profoundly concerned by the Israeli policies on settlements. They again confirm their position that these settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, as well as any change in the status and demographic structure of these territories, are illegal under international law and constitute a serious obstacle to peace efforts. Continuation of these policies can only undermine the necessary basis of dialogue and trust, which is an essential prerequisite for any constructive negotiation aimed at achieving a comprehensive peace settlement. Moreover, the Ten reiterate that the Israeli policy concerning East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights is contrary to international law and, therefore, invalid in their eyes. The Ten reaffirm their serious concern at the distress of the Palestinian civilian population and hope that the relevant international organizations will be allowed to assist this population without hindrance.

158. The Ten take note of the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People [A/39/35]. The views of the Ten and such reservations as are maintained by them in regard to the Committee are well known. At the same time, the Ten have noted with appreciation the reference to their efforts which appears in the Committee's report.

159. In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm the Ten's support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Recognition of these rights remains one of the fundamental principles which, in the Ten's view, must guide the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East.

160. Mr. VONGSAY (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from French*): The optimism, albeit cautious, that marked our discussion last year on the question of Palestine, which has been on the agenda of the United Nations since its founding, seems now to have disappeared as the General Assembly deals with this serious and distressing problem again. It was with a certain amount of relief that the international community noted the adoption by the General Assembly last year of resolution 38/58 C, relating to the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, at which the Palestinian problem, which is at the very heart of all the Middle East conflicts, would find an equitable and lasting solution. The principles that should guide that conference are contained, as we know, in the Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights, adopted by consensus at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983.² Among those cardinal principles is, of course, recognition and the effective exercise of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return to their homes and to recover their property; the right to self-determination and to create their own indepen-

dent, sovereign State in their fatherland, Palestine; and the right of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, to take part on an equal footing with the other parties in all the efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East; as well as the withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and recognition of the right of all States in the region to live in security within secure and internationally recognized borders.

161. It is clear that General Assembly resolution 38/58 C is the mainspring of a machinery which sets out realistic ways and means for building just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, in which all the parties directly concerned, including the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, are justly served. It is encouraging to note that since the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, world public opinion has become more acutely aware of the specific features and the gravity of the question of Palestine and of the urgent need for the world community to arrive at a just and lasting solution. This is demonstrated by the fact that this very year, under the auspices of the United Nations, specifically of its Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, of which my country has had the honour to be a member, a number of seminars and round tables were organized in various parts of the world. Eminent jurists, parliamentarians and representatives of non-governmental organizations participated in these meetings. The participants were unanimous in their recognition that the question of Palestine is a fundamental element for any settlement of the Middle East conflict, and they concluded that it is necessary to convene, as soon as possible, an international peace conference on the Middle East in accordance with the spirit and the letter of resolution 38/58 C. Those are the legitimate hopes of all segments of the international community which cherish peace, justice, freedom and progress.

162. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is following with special attention the consultations being carried out by the Secretary-General, under the mandate entrusted to him by the relevant resolution, with members of the Security Council and the representatives of Governments of countries directly concerned in the Arab-Israeli conflict, aimed at learning their views and suggestions regarding the organization and convening of such a conference.

163. Reading the Secretary-General's report [A/39/130 and Add.1], we were genuinely disappointed to learn that the United States Government, unlike the Soviet Government—whose peace plan is, in essence, very close to the guiding principles adopted at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine—is persisting in its arrogant and negative attitude towards this fundamental problem. It should also be stressed that the Final Communiqué adopted at the Meeting of Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York from 1 to 5 October 1984 [see A/39/560], also condemned the negative stand taken by Israel and the United States. We should not be excessively surprised at this obstructionist move by the United States Administration, for it is in keeping with its global strategy of expansion and domination over that region and over the entire world. Everyone knows that it is because of the unconditional and

varied support—political, military and economic—provided by United States imperialism and by a number of its other allies that the illegal racist Pretoria régime has been able with impunity to pursue its criminal policy of *apartheid* against the black majority population of South Africa and its illegal occupation of Namibia, in flagrant violation of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

164. With regard to the Middle East—a region where, as we know, the conflicts have their deep-seated origins in the shocking injustices committed for decades by the Zionist forces and their United States sponsors against the Palestinian people—my delegation considers that the Arab world must form a united front to fight the common enemy. It is in the aggressive and expansionist nature of zionism and imperialism never to countenance the enjoyment by the Middle East, or any other part of the world, of lasting peace and security. In order to carry out their sinister designs, these dominating, oppressive forces are working actively to sow division and hatred among the nations and peoples of the Middle East, nations and peoples which, however, share a rich common historic, cultural and religious heritage. It is no secret that United States imperialism will do everything in its power to help Israeli zionism, its “strategic ally”, achieve its demonic dream of building a Greater Israel, which, obviously, would embrace not only the Palestinian and Arab territories already occupied since 1967, but also those of other States of the region.

165. How many resolutions have been adopted on the burning and painful question of Palestine and the Middle East since the founding of the United Nations? We only know that they are beyond counting and that the Zionist State, with the blessing of its imperialist protectors, has chosen to defy them and has done so with total impunity. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People informs us in its detailed periodic reports about the brutality and inhumanity of the aggressive and repressive measures which the Zionist forces of occupation have taken and continue to take every day against the defenceless Palestinian and Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories. We are also informed about the extremely heroic way in which the Palestinian people, under the vigorous leadership of the PLO, its sole legitimate representative, has mounted armed resistance against the occupation forces in a struggle which has always enjoyed the sympathy and solidarity of the entire international community. Moreover, there is every reason to believe that the Zionist forces are still frenetically pursuing their diabolical plan to establish and develop settlements in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Jerusalem, in defiance of fundamental principles of international law declaring all acquisition of territory by force to be null and void. The invasion of Lebanon by the Zionist forces in June 1982, followed in September of that year by their massacre of Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, showed the world how barbarous and formidable zionism is.

166. Are we to conclude from all this that the international community, and the United Nations, whose primary responsibility with regard to the question of Palestine has been recognized, remain powerless to find a just and lasting solution to this distressing problem? We do not think so, for an adequate framework or machinery for a settlement

has already been found, as is shown by the provisions of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. An international consensus has already emerged on this question. As we all know, the stumbling-block is the negative attitude of the United States and its “strategic ally”, Israel. The international community and the United Nations must redouble their efforts to overcome that stumbling-block by all the means available to them, so that the international peace conference on the Middle East may be organized and convened under United Nations auspices as soon as possible. At stake is peace, stability and harmonious co-operation in the region, which, of course, cannot be separated from world peace and security. At stake, above all, is the triumph of the sacred cause of the heroic people of Palestine, a cause to which the Lao Government and people have always lent their unswerving support.

167. Mr. WIJEWARDANE (Sri Lanka): Sri Lanka follows a number of speakers in this debate on the question of Palestine and many more speakers have put down their names to participate in the debate. I shall therefore be brief. Each year this debate takes place, and the question of Palestine is no nearer settlement than it was when the General Assembly discussed it the previous year. The region of the Middle East continues to be a region of “festering conflict and wrongs unrighted”, as the Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Gauci, described it this morning [88th meeting]. This should not instil in us a sense of cynicism or apathy. The continuing lack of a settlement should sharpen rather than discourage our will to seek a solution.

168. In reviewing developments in the past year, we see that the fate of the Palestinian people has undergone tragic vicissitudes. Last week, the General Assembly discussed the related item of the situation in the Middle East, and developments in the region as a whole were reviewed. Virtually every speaker concurred in the view that the situation remains dangerously explosive and complicated, not only acting as a deterrent to the peaceful development and security of the States in the Middle East region, but also, in a broader sense, threatening international peace and security. While we recognize that, as in any other region, there are certain unresolved issues in the Middle East, these are extraneous to the central issue of Palestine with which we are now dealing.

169. Whatever the disputes that affect the region, the basic features of the situation in Palestine have remained unchanged. In other words, the root causes of the tension, insecurity, suffering and death in the region, as well as the key to a possible way out of the impasse, can be clearly identified and addressed.

170. We repeat ourselves when we say that the question of Palestine is the crux of the unrest in the Middle East. This is a repetition that is necessary and one which is, in fact, pivotal to our discussion. There are other sources of tension in the Middle East, but the central issue, without the solution of which no peace is possible, is the question of Palestine. At the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi in March 1983, the heads of State reaffirmed that the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the usurpation and denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

171. The solution of the Palestine question hinges on two basic conditions: the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force; and the restoration of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people. These rights include the right to return to their homeland, the right to self-determination without external interference, and the right to a sovereign national State in Palestine.

172. While continued strife in the Middle East exacts a terrible toll of all Arab peoples, it is the Palestinians who have suffered most. As a people, as a nation, they have been tragically dispersed virtually throughout the world, with many of them in refugee camps. Attempts have been made to dismiss the Palestinians as some sort of permanent refugee population and to deny their specific identity as a people and a nation.

173. The experiences of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories are known to members of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories. The report of the Special Committee [A/39/591] speaks for itself. The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has given an exhaustive account of the plight of the Palestinian people. We thank Mr. Sarré, of Senegal, and members of the Committee for their devotion and for the comprehensive report [A/39/35].

174. The establishment of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories is illegal and a serious obstacle to a just and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine. All steps taken in these territories to effect changes in their political, cultural, religious, demographic, physical and geographic character are null and void and illegal. The Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949¹¹—in particular, the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War—and Additional Protocols 1 and 2,¹² adopted in 1977, should be applied to the occupied territories.

175. Despite their untold suffering, the Palestinian people have continued their struggle. The PLO has succeeded against massive odds in uniting and channelling this struggle. The PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and, without doubt, the organization which should represent the Palestinian people in any negotiations affecting their future. The PLO should participate as a full and equal party in any conference or settlement process. Sri Lanka has accorded full diplomatic recognition to the PLO, whose mission in Colombo enjoys full embassy status.

176. What is most ironic is that, although the essential elements necessary for a settlement of the Palestine question have now been recognized and are part of a near-universal consensus, positive steps to give effect to them have not been taken. The Arab States themselves, including the Palestinians, at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of African Unity [OAU], the Commonwealth, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and other organizations, have reaffirmed those features, which are the *sine qua non* of any just and lasting settlement. It is for the international community now to redouble its efforts, through the United Nations, particularly the

Security Council, to bring about negotiations for a settlement and to usher in conditions of peace and tranquillity to a region which has for far too long known neither.

177. Mr. OULD BOYE (Mauritania) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Palestinian people continues to struggle for its very existence as a nation, for its right to self-determination and for the right to set up its own independent State on its national soil. This struggle is an integral part of the struggle of the peoples of the world against colonialism, foreign domination and aggression.

178. The Palestinian people is the victim of the greatest imperialist and Zionist conspiracy which the twentieth century has witnessed.

179. At a time when colonialism in its earlier forms has begun to disappear under the continuous assault of the peoples, when the socialist revolution has become stronger in various parts of the world and when democratic public opinion in Europe and America has made itself felt and is exerting pressure against colonialism and in favour of the right of peoples to self-determination, the neo-colonialists are seeking to preserve their selfish interests.

180. In the Middle East, in particular, neo-colonialism has come to an agreement with world Zionism, which sought a country to colonize and where Zionist capital could be freely managed.

181. Great Britain, which needed Zionist assistance, was convinced of the importance of this project. After visiting various third-world regions, it chose Palestine for the implementation of the Zionist plot. The reason Palestine was chosen was explained by the President of the World Jewish Congress, Mr. Nahum Goldmann, in 1947, at Montreal:

“The Jews could have chosen Uganda, Madagascar or other countries to establish their national homeland, but they wanted Palestine, not because the Dead Sea, if it was drained, could supply minerals and salt of an estimated value of \$5 billion, not because the subsoil of Palestine, it was said, contained oil reserves greater than those of the entire American continent, but because Palestine is a crossroads of routes linking Europe, Asia and America, the real centre of force and of world political power, that is, the strategic and military centre for domination of the world.”

182. Zionism undertook a vast campaign to convince Jews throughout the world of the usefulness of this plan and, to justify its designs, it invented historical myths, conjuring up a kingdom stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates; and it called Palestine the promised land. Zionism aroused the feelings of some Jews and mobilized them on false premises.

183. That is how the plot was carried out. Despite national, cultural and linguistic differences, Jews were uprooted from their countries of origin and used as a weapon is used to commit a crime. Thus the Haganah was called upon to spill the blood of the Palestinian people at Deir Yassin and elsewhere, an unprecedented event in the history of mankind.

184. Zionism continued its manoeuvres and pressure to make world public opinion accept the *fait accompli* of the creation of Israel. These events took place in 1947, and everyone knows about them.

185. Since its creation, Israel has used violence against the Palestinians and aggression against the

neighbouring countries. All the reports submitted to this session of the General Assembly prove this.

186. Israel applies collective sanctions by imprisoning whole families, demolishing houses, ejecting people and depriving them of the right to work, imposing excessive taxes and refusing to grant the most basic social rights. Israel practises corporal punishment and physical and moral torture against detainees and deprives the sick of medical care by closing down hospitals and health-care centres. This arbitrary policy has resulted in increasing the mortality rate and the number of mentally sick.

187. Israel has seized Palestinian land and has driven out the inhabitants in order to establish Zionist settlements. In addition, it prevents the Arab population from having access to drinking water and water for irrigation. That is why Israel has laid its hands on the waters of the Jordan and of the Golan Heights and the West Bank and is trying to change the course of the Litani River in Lebanon.

188. However, this is not enough. It is trying to quench the spirit of an entire people by dispossessing it of its archaeological and cultural heritage in the occupied territories, changing education programmes, banning national newspapers, imposing restrictions on artists and writers and preventing the entry into the occupied areas of any worthwhile work of art.

189. This has but one purpose: to cause the economic, cultural and social collapse of the Palestinian community and to drive the Palestinians into exile so that Israel can implement its plans.

190. This racist policy is quite in keeping with what Herzl wrote in 1902: "We must campaign against foreigners. We must have only Jews in this place of Jewish settlement."

191. In 1967, Golda Meir reaffirmed this when she said: "The Jews have occupied the West Bank to settle there for good. There must be as few Arabs as possible in the area."

192. Any State or entity that carries out acts of aggression and resorts to illegal and inhuman practices such as these, must not benefit from any right within the framework of the international community. On the contrary, the international community, individually and collectively, must punish such a State or entity. In 1967, General de Gaulle adopted a courageous position because he had become convinced of the aggressive intentions of Israel: he prohibited the export of weapons to Israel. That position should serve as an example to all countries that cherish peace and stability in the world.

193. The question of Palestine is not, as Israel claims, a question which concerns the Arabs and the Jews alone. It is the cause of a people struggling against colonialism, against which the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America have struggled and are still struggling to regain their dignity and exercise sovereignty in their own lands.

194. As the late President Nasser said in July 1964 at the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Cairo:

"What is happening to the people of Palestine is similar to what the African peoples have undergone. Foreign settlers have come into their country, invoking racist supremacy. They have stolen the land, and driven out its owners, and they have

been helped by the colonialists, whose agents of various kinds they have become."

195. It is the duty of all free men throughout the world to stand at the side of the Palestinian people, the Namibian people and the people of South Africa in their struggle against Zionist and racist colonialism.

196. The General Assembly and many other United Nations organs have adopted resolutions on the question of Palestine. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the OAU have done the same. But Israel has rejected or defied all those resolutions.

197. The intransigence of Israel, its insults addressed to representatives of the United Nations, and sometimes its assassinations—as in the case of the international Mediator, Count Bernadotte—have had adverse effects on the credibility and the influence of the United Nations and the effectiveness of its resolutions.

198. Mauritania, like all States that cherish peace and justice, places great hopes in the United Nations as an instrument for the application of the principles of the Charter, which are based on respect for human rights, justice, equality and the law. Mauritania believes that in order to recover its effectiveness the Organization must apply strict sanctions against Israel to compel it to respect human rights; otherwise, Israel will just continue to practise terrorism, aggression and expansionism.

199. My country once again associates itself with those that condemn Israeli aggression and believe that it must withdraw unconditionally from all of Palestine, including Jerusalem, and all the Arab territories. Similarly, my country condemns the Israeli settlement policy, which it considers to be contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and to all international rules and standards. We condemn the acts of oppression and brutality perpetrated by Israel against the people of the occupied territories. We strongly condemn Israel for carrying out the massacres in Sabra and Shatila.

200. Mauritania believes that the question of Palestine is the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that the PLO is the principal party in the struggle against Israeli aggression. Therefore, negotiations aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the problems of the region must not take place without the participation and the agreement of the PLO.

201. Today, the course of history is moving in the direction of the triumph of the Palestinians and against the usurpers, because it is for a just cause that the Palestinian people have resorted to revolution. However long the night may last, day must finally dawn, and every time Israeli terrorism is stepped up the struggle becomes greater and the day of liberation in Palestine comes closer. The Mauritanian poet Ahmed Weld Abd El-Khader was right when he said, after the outbreak of Palestinian armed revolution: "Miracles are accomplished by the masses, and injustice gives birth to freedom. From arbitrary acts and oppression in Palestine is born the revolution that is worth any sacrifice."

202. The most violent aggression of our time has been committed against the Palestinian people, the people made up of a whole generation of fedayeen, who have no fear of death and who rely on their indomitable will and the strength of all peoples that cherish peace and justice and the entire international

community, which has recognized their inalienable, historical rights, including the right of return, to self-determination and to establish their own independent State on their national soil, under the leadership of the PLO, their sole legitimate representative.

203. Mr. OYOUÉ (Gabon) (*interpretation from French*): The General Assembly is once again discussing the question of Palestine. Thus, despite the passage of time and the great changes in our world since the Second World War, some very important questions have not, regrettably, developed so satisfactorily.

204. One of those questions, the Palestine problem—another unfortunate legacy of the League of Nations—remains one of the tragedies of our century; it cannot be discussed without indignation.

205. This indignation that we feel when we take up the present agenda item demonstrates the extent of our solidarity with the Palestinian people, which for almost half a century has been deprived of its legitimate rights. Never in the history of modern societies has a people been confronted with such a serious situation, whose scope increases day by day.

206. Next year the United Nations will commemorate its fortieth anniversary. My delegation believes that the international community must use that occasion to reflect on the sad fate that history has meted out to the Palestinian people, who continue to endure the monstrous effects of the Balfour Declaration.

207. It is now more than 10 years since, in 1973, the Government of Gabon, concerned at the tragic fate of the fraternal Palestinian people, solemnly demonstrated its devotion to the ideals of justice and peace by breaking off diplomatic relations with Israel.

208. Today, 6 December 1984, when the United Nations is discussing this question, as it has done for very many years now, my delegation wishes to express once again the solidarity of the people of Gabon with the Palestinian people, which is waging a struggle the justness of which need not be proved.

209. In my delegation's opinion, the present debate should be, for all of us, a time of deep reflection and of awareness of what has come to be called the "Palestinian tragedy". This should be so despite the diversity of our origins and the differences in our political preferences and views.

210. None of us can be insensitive or indifferent to the genesis of the Palestinian people. The importance of the events certainly warrants a brief glance at the past in order better to understand that since 1947, faced with the Hebrew State's intransigence and stubborn refusal to accept the United Nations partition plan, the Palestinian people has been wandering throughout the world, seeking a land and a country.

211. The establishment of the Palestinian resistance in 1956, leading in 1964 to the birth of the PLO, unfortunately did not result in any concrete solution to the problem. On the contrary, it was followed by the settlement of Arab territories by Israel, after the so-called six-day war in June 1967.

212. Israel committed one misdeed after another; its malevolent and cynical behaviour reached its highest point in 1982 with the massacres at Sabra and Shatila, during which thousands of Palestinians met atrocious deaths. Another event, no less crimi-

nal, was the mass poisoning of Palestinian students in the occupied territories.

213. We cannot but be convinced that this squalid attitude on the part of the Hebrew State is a reflection of its notorious refusal to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to be different, its right to independence and self-determination. Israel takes this attitude despite the many resolutions, recommendations and decisions of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in favour of a negotiated solution to this problem.

214. Gabon, which supports the positions taken by the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, believes that this refusal by Israel to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people is a serious obstacle to détente in the region.

215. In our country's opinion, there cannot be any doubt that the climate of tension in the Middle East is the result of Israel's intransigence in pursuing an aggressive and annexationist policy against the Palestinian people, which has been deprived of its inalienable right to exist on its national territory. Israel's constant use of force makes more difficult the establishment of a real process of peaceful settlement of the Palestinian problem, which so seriously affects international peace and security.

216. Hence, it is not surprising that all the peace initiatives that have been undertaken recently have encountered difficulties. It also is not surprising that the relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly have not been implemented.

217. From that standpoint, we can only, most unfortunately, accept the fact that the Palestine problem has a very wide scope and also, and above all, that the situation in that part of the world is unstable. In this connection, I recall the words spoken on 10 October from this rostrum by Mr. Martin Bongo, Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of the Gabonese Republic, in reference to the situation prevailing in the Middle East:

"In the Middle East . . . the Gabonese Government is convinced that a settlement that would not take into account the deeply felt aspirations of the Palestinian people cannot be a lasting one. In this connection, we reaffirm the right of the Palestinian people to a peaceful existence and to remain permanently within secure and recognized boundaries, like all other peoples in the region. Once again, we call upon the Government of Israel to put an end to its settlements policy in the occupied territories, a policy that is endangering the chances of an overall settlement of the conflict." [29th meeting, para. 132.]

218. Thus, for my delegation, Palestine is at the heart of the thorny problem of the insecurity in the Middle East and, at the same time, it is the nub of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

219. Therefore, just and lasting peace, and, what is more, an equitable solution to this conflict, will not be possible in Palestine and the Middle East unless Israel renounces recourse to force, which, unfortunately, it has always used as a means of deterrence or to settle its disputes with the Arab world.

220. As far as Gabon is concerned, the international community must be further convinced of the need for a clearer reaffirmation of the inalienable rights of

the Palestinian people, led by the PLO, its only legitimate representative.

221. On the basis of its support for the United Nations resolutions, my country joins the international community in stating that the time has come for us to realize that peace in the region can be based only upon the complete withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, and the restoration of the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to establish a State of its own.

222. My delegation believes that such a process is the only one that could lead to peace. Hence, Israel must end its policy of establishing settlements, the consequences of which are serious even for the neighbouring countries of the region, which are faced with the situation of not being able to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

223. I cannot end this statement without paying a warm tribute to the Secretary-General, who has made unceasing efforts in support of the just cause of the Palestinian people. Here I should like to emphasize that some of his initiatives in this context are capable of bringing about a peaceful settlement of this dispute. Lastly, I wish to commend the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people for the quality of its report [A/39/35].

224. My delegation has faith in the future and maintains the hope that all the steps taken within the United Nations and in various other international

bodies will soon bring the international community to the point at which it can compel Israel to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, which, like all other peoples in our civilized world, aspires to dignity, self-determination and independence.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

NOTES

¹See A/38/132 and Corr.1 and 2, appendix III.

²See *Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I.

³See A/38/132 and Corr.1 and 2, annex, sect. I, para. 83.

⁴*Ibid.*, para. 98.

⁵*Ibid.*, appendix II.

⁶See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-seventh Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1982*, document S/15510, annex.

⁷See *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1982), vol. 18, No. 35, p. 1081.

⁸See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-fifth Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1980*, document S/14009.

⁹Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 100.

¹⁰United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

¹¹*Ibid.*, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.

¹²*Ibid.*, vol. 1125, Nos. 17512 and 17513.