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PROVIS IONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 30 November 1989, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)
later: Mr. JAYA (Brunei Darussalam)
(Vice-President)
later: Mr. SALLAH (Gambia)
(Vice-President)

- Programme of work
- Question of Palestine [39] (continued)
 - (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
 - (b) Report of the Secretary-General
 - (c) Draft resolutions

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: I should like to remind delegations that yesterday afternoon they were informed of the tentative programme of work until Wednesday, 6 December. I wish now to inform delegations of the remainder of our programme of work.

On Friday, 8 December, in the morning, the Assembly will take up the reports of the Special Political Committee. It will also consider the reports of the Third Committee.

On Monday, 11 December, in the morning, the Assembly, under agenda item 91, will hold a commemorative meeting for the observance of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development. In the afternoon of the same day, the Assembly will take up agenda item 17 (h), Appointment of the members of the Joint Inspection Unit, and agenda item 11, Report of the Security Council, and agenda item 38, Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations.

As members know, from Tuesday 12 December to Thursday 14 December, we shall hold the special session on apartheid and its destructive consequences for southern Africa. During this period - those three days, 12 to 14 December - there will be no plenary meetings of the forty-fourth regular session but its Main Committees may and should continue to hold meetings as required.

On Friday, 15 December, the Assembly, at its forty-fourth regular session, will resume its plenary meetings. On that day, the Assembly will consider the reports of the First Committee. In the afternoon, after considering the reports of the First Committee, it will then take up the reports of the Third Committee.

The reports of the Second and Fifth Committees will be considered when they become available.

(The President)

This tentative schedule I have just announced will appear in the verbatim record of the meeting as well as in the Journal summary. In the meantime, if there are any changes I shall of course keep the Assembly informed.

AGENDA ITEM 39 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/44/35)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/44/731)
- (c) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/44/L.43 TO A/44/L.45, A/44/L.50)

The PRESIDENT: In connection with this item, four draft resolutions have been issued as documents A/44/L.43, A/44/L.44, A/44/L.45 and A/44/L.50; draft resolution A/44/L.50 was circulated this morning.

Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): The question of Palestine, which is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is that of a people who have been expelled from their homeland by force and every form of violence, whose rights have been usurped and whose resources have been plundered. It is the question of one of the worst calamities in history. The Palestinian people have been able to withstand the onslaught and the myriad manoeuvres and plots hatched against them. The aim of all this was nothing less than the physical liquidation of that people and a final solution to their problem. Notwithstanding, the Arab Palestinian people have been able to preserve their Arab Palestinian identity and by their lengthy and bitter struggle against the forces of world Zionism have been able to prove that no one will be able to break their will and that they remain committed to liberate their land and regain their inalienable rights, at whatever cost and regardless of the enormous sacrifices they will have to make.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab
Republic)

The Secretary-General has highlighted this fact in his report on the situation in the Middle East (A/44/737) of 22 November 1989, where he states:

"The intifadah in the occupied territories will soon enter its third year. In contrast to the nuances of the diplomatic process, the message of the intifadah is direct and unequivocal, namely, that the Israeli occupation, which has now been in effect for 22 years, will continue to be rejected, and that the Palestinian people will remain committed to the exercise of their legitimate political rights, including self-determination".

(A/44/737, para. 36)

That is a fact the international community must never lose sight of.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

The intifadah has posed new postulates. It has shown Israel for what it is: a settler-colonialist enterprise that was hatched by a racist movement at the end of the last century on the wave of settler-colonialist ventures which were all the rage at the time and that the ultimate aim of the settlement of Palestine was the realization of the Zionist dream of Greater Israel. The intifadah has shown unequivocally the determination of the Palestinian Arab people to liberate its land from Israeli occupation.

Peace and security in a very tense and sensitive region such as the Middle East can be achieved only through the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories. The Palestinian people must be enabled to exercise their inalienable national rights, including the right to self-determination, the right of return and the right to establish their own sovereign independent State on their native soil, Palestine. Any talk of peace and security in the region without the fulfilment of these two fundamental conditions is an exercise in futility and is absurd.

Feverish attempts have been made and continue to be made to liquidate the question of Palestine in one way or another; attempts have been made and continue to be made to undermine the Arab struggle against Israeli occupation and expansionism. However, such attempts have been doomed to failure from the very beginning because the Arab nation is determined to continue its just struggle, thanks to the assistance and support of all peace-loving peoples of the world.

Those who believe that concessions by the Palestinian people will help to achieve peace in the Middle East are wrong; they are wrong in the light of bitter experience which shows that concessions will only make it more likely that Israel will dig in and persist in its policy of aggression, expansion and settlement. Indeed, it has become clear that pressure on the Arabs to make concession upon

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

concession has only ensured great gains for Israel, rewarded aggression and war and moved the situation not one single step forward towards peace.

One cannot but feel concern and dismay at the events in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories because of the daily violations of the human rights of the people of those territories, and the escalating role now being played by Israeli settlers in the barbaric repression practised by the Israeli forces of occupation. This development alone shows the extent of the insanity which seems to have taken hold of the leaders of the Tel Aviv régime, whose highly placed officials declare openly and in defiance of both international public opinion and the human conscience that they are determined to use every means, especially the most vicious and barbaric, to crush the intifadah. There is abundant evidence that clearly shows that the role assigned to Israeli settlers was not a matter of coincidence or of reacting to the situation, but a deliberate act in the context of an official design of state-terrorism, supervised by the forces of occupation, to carry out acts of sabotage and murder in the Arab towns and villages of the occupied territories.

Those who used to believe that the intifadah was just a passing phase have made a grave error of judgement. The intifadah - in addition and side by side with the heroic resistance and steadfastness of our people in the Syrian Arab Golan and in occupied southern Lebanon, both in its dimensions and its objective - is a great popular uprising against Israeli occupation and settlement. Over the past two years, this revolution, like the national resistance in the Golan and in southern Lebanon, has demonstrated its effectiveness and its ability to withstand the Israeli onslaught and, indeed, to continue under its own steam. The intifadah has demonstrated the deep-rooted determination of our Arab people in the occupied territories to liberate their land and their holy places from Israeli occupation in

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab
Republic)

all its military and settler forms. That revolution can now be exchanged for nothing but complete liberation.

No one can close his eyes to the acts of repression now being practised by the Israeli authorities of occupation against the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories; nor can one close one's eyes to the many other practices which violate the most basic of human rights. Over the past two years, the General Assembly and the Security Council have intensified their efforts through the adoption of many resolutions, to force Israel to abide by the stipulations of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, but to no avail. On the contrary, Israel has escalated its acts of repression in the occupied Arab territories in an attempt to crush the heroic intifadah and then to settle those lands, and has continued to use every barbaric means it could think of to achieve those objectives. It has crushed the bones of young children and youths, committed acts of premeditated murder, resorted to expulsion of people from the territories, demolished houses and made their owners homeless, starved whole communities and laid siege to them. All these acts are in flagrant violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of our Arab people in those occupied territories. They also violate the Fourth Geneva Convention.

As an example of the violation of the stipulations of that Convention, let me mention article 33 on collective punishment, such as the imposition of curfews on entire areas and collective detentions, as well as the violation of the first and sixth paragraphs of article 49 through the expulsion of Palestinian civilians from the occupied territories and the building of settlements on that land. As for article 53, it is being consistently violated through the demolition of houses and dispersal of their owners.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab
Republic)

The international community here represented is called upon, once more, to adopt urgent and effective measures to ensure strict respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Arab occupied territories, ensure the protection of their Arab inhabitants and stop the cycle of death and destruction unleashed by Israel as it rides roughshod over those territories. The Parties to the Convention must also shoulder their responsibility and ensure the implementation of their commitments according to article 1 of the Convention, which provides:

"The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances".

If the present conditions continue in the occupied land of Palestine and the other Arab occupied territories, with the attendant deterioration of the overall situation in the territories, and if the international community continues to stand by and take no action to deter Israel, such as the application of Chapter VII of the Charter, that would force Israel to heed United Nations resolutions which call for an end to the acts of oppression against the people of those territories and the withdrawal of Israeli forces, the situation will deteriorate further and pose a direct threat to peace and security, both in the region and in the world.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

Israel's persistence in its acts of oppression, harassment and repression against the people of the occupied Arab territories and its continuing settlement of those lands close the door in the face of any just solution to the question of Palestine and make peace in the region a farfetched dream. Consequently, one cannot discount the possibility of further deterioration of the situation in this most sensitive of regions; nor can anyone discount the seriousness of the consequences as far as international peace and security are concerned.

A just solution to the question of Palestine, which is the core of the crisis in the Middle East, can be achieved only through the convening of an international conference under United Nations auspices and in accordance with its relevant resolutions. The Syrian Arab Republic, in its reply to the Secretary-General's note of 21 September 1989, reaffirmed the need to continue efforts towards convening the International Conference, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the permanent members of the Security Council, with a view to achieving a just and comprehensive peace based on the principles of the Charter and United Nations resolutions relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict and on, first, complete Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem and, secondly, a guarantee of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

Mr. KAGAMI (Japan): It has been almost two years since the Palestinian intifadah started in the occupied territories. The violence and destruction in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip continue unabated and demand our serious attention. The world realizes that the intifadah will not be quelled until the basic issue, namely, the Israeli occupation, is addressed. No people can be expected to accept permanent subjugation by a foreign Power without any hope of liberation.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

The Government of Japan holds the view that permanent occupation by one nation of the territory of another nation cannot be justified under any pretext, including that of self-defence. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip are Palestinian, not Israeli, territories; Israel's occupation, much less annexation, of those territories cannot be justified.

Moreover, the Government of Japan has repeatedly expressed the view that Israel, as the occupying Power, must bear the responsibility for protecting the civilian population in the occupied territories. Once again I cannot but express my Government's grave concern over the excessive use of force against Palestinian civilians by the Israeli authorities. The Government of Japan condemns violence wherever and whenever it occurs. Let me make it clear once again that under international law every State has obligations and that Israel has an obligation to comply with the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Furthermore, the Government of Japan regards the violation of the premises of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the detention of its personnel by the Israeli authorities as indefensible. It urges Israel to refrain from any action that might disrupt UNRWA's important activities.

The duration and undiminished fervour of the intifadah are a measure of the Palestinian people's desire for liberation. That desire cannot be suppressed by force. If a comprehensive peace in the region is to be attained, the vital interests of the parties concerned must be considered. The ending of the occupation, however, should be given highest priority in all our efforts to find a solution to the question of Palestine. In this respect, it is essential that Israel acknowledge that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are occupied territories and that they must be returned to the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

A peaceful solution to the question of Palestine can be achieved only through a process of negotiation among the parties concerned. A prerequisite for any negotiating process is the establishment of common ground among the parties. Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination provide that common ground.

The Government of Japan has long insisted that peace in the Middle East should be achieved as quickly as possible through the following: first, the withdrawal of Israel's armed forces from all territories it has occupied since 1967; secondly, recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including the right to establish an independent State; and thirdly, recognition of Israel's right to exist.

The Government of Japan wishes to stress that careful consideration must be given to the legitimate security requirements of all the countries, including Israel, and to the aspirations of all the peoples in the region, including the Palestinian people. It is my Government's view that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) represents the Palestinian people, thus it is essential that Israel and the PLO recognize each other's position and that the PLO participate in the peace process. Indeed, any attempt to achieve an enduring peace through negotiations will be meaningless if the PLO is not involved in those negotiations.

In this respect, the efforts being made by the PLO to demonstrate that it is a responsible party in the negotiating process should be highly commended and further encouraged. Subsequent to the meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers last November significant progress towards peace has been made. The Government of Japan appreciates in particular the initiative which PLO Chairman Arafat took during the meetings of the General Assembly in Geneva last December. Among other

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things, the PLO's clear acceptance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), its recognition of Israel's right to exist and its renunciation of all forms of terrorism attest to the commitment of the PLO to working towards a peaceful solution of the question. It is time, then, that Israel recognized the role to be played by the PLO in the peace process. Any peace effort that disregards the PLO's role will be an exercise in futility.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

In the meantime Japan would like to see the PLO continue its efforts, with patience and perseverance, to achieve real and substantive progress in the peace process and hopes that it will resist the temptation to seek temporary political gains. Any action taken out of despair cannot be successful. Once the essential problem is solved, the PLO should be able to achieve any legitimate goals it may have.

In particular the Government of Japan is concerned about the suggested draft resolution on the status of "Palestine" in the United Nations. It strongly hopes that it will not be pressed to a vote, for that would not serve the higher cause, namely, the process towards a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine.

As we are all aware, serious efforts are now being made by all the parties concerned to initiate a dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians as a first step towards a comprehensive settlement. The Government of Japan joins other Member States which support and encourage such efforts.

At the same time, I wish to reiterate my Government's support for convening at an appropriate time an international conference to provide a framework for negotiation on this issue and its hope that such a time will come as soon as possible.

Although Japan is geographically located far from the Middle East, it maintains friendly relations with all the countries in the region. It is all the more distressing, therefore, that the question of Palestine seems to remain intractable. Japan feels compelled to help promote the peace process, however limited its political influence may be. Recently, at the invitation of my Government, we had a visit to Japan by Chairman Arafat of the PLO and, later, a visit by Foreign Minister Arens of Israel. While their visits unfortunately did not achieve a breakthrough in the peace process, I believe they were useful in

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helping to keep alive the momentum for peace through the serious exchange of views that took place between them and our Government leaders. In particular, leaders within the Japanese Government were deeply impressed with Chairman Arafat's reaffirmation of the realistic and moderate policy of the PLO.

As various efforts to attain a peaceful settlement of the problem continue, we must not forget the present needs of the Palestinian peoples living in the West Bank and Gaza.

The intifadah, which has rendered life in those territories even more difficult, has also drawn the attention of the international community to the need for increased economic assistance to the Palestinian people. The Government of Japan would like to stress the importance of such assistance as a stabilizing factor. For, in addition to providing humanitarian relief, it contributes to fostering conditions that will be conducive to a political settlement. Accordingly, Japan has been extending substantial support to the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on behalf of Palestinian refugees in the region. This year, in addition to its regular contribution to UNRWA, my Government has decided to make a special contribution of approximately \$7 million for the Agency's emergency programmes in the occupied territories.

Over the years, the Government of Japan has been making contributions of both cash and food. And in the hope of fostering the development of Palestinian human resources it has been extending technical co-operation by providing vocational training opportunities in Japan and by despatching Japanese experts to a vocational training centre in Jordan.

Further, as part of its activities related to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), last year Japan established the Japan-Palestinian Development Fund to promote economic and social development in the West Bank and Gaza.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

The Palestinian people are heir to a rich and centuries-old tradition. The fact that many of them are living in exile and many others in the occupied territories are experiencing great hardship and are deprived of their basic human rights is a cruel and senseless turn of fate. There is, of course, no simple solution to the question of Palestine. But it is my Government's earnest hope that all parties concerned will do their utmost to see to it that the Palestinian people are accorded the opportunity to embark on a new and brighter chapter in their long history.

Mr. TREIKI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): I feel confused. In fact, I greatly hesitated before deciding to speak on this item before the Assembly. I refrained from speaking on the previous item, the situation in the Middle East, because after 40 years we still find ourselves saying exactly the same thing with regard to a tragic question, the problem of a people ejected from its land, of children whose bones are broken daily, of women against whom are used internationally prohibited gases which cause abortions; of millions of people living in tents, waiting for the United Nations to solve their problem; of a people that yearns to be allowed to return and, like other peoples, determine its own future.

For 40 years now we have continued to hear the screams and cries of Palestinian women and children. Every year we adopt a new resolution; every year we see more refugees; and every year we see more Israeli settlements in the occupied lands. We continue to adopt resolutions with absolute majorities, only to file them in the archives of the United Nations. Those resolutions have accumulated, have become a burden on the United Nations.

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

The Arab nation has invoked the Security Council - the body, at least as we, a small nation, understand it - which is entrusted under the Charter with the maintenance of international peace and security. Every time we do so, however, we run up against the right of veto; the Security Council fails; and we call anew on the General Assembly to adopt more resolutions - and all this to no avail.

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

I repeat that it was only after much hesitation that I came to this rostrum. Perhaps my statement will be but a repetition of what has been said by the representatives of other States. However, I decided to contribute, even if only by words, by putting forward some ideas which may awaken mankind's conscience - if it still has one.

We, as small nations, have lost faith in the United Nations, despite its importance, because, as small nations, we are powerless. The only strength we have lies in our membership of the Organization. Unlike super-Powers, we do not command fleets or wield military might or economic power. We cannot threaten, let alone commit aggression, and thereby be able to rely on ourselves.

What is taking place in the Arab region, particularly in the occupied Palestinian territory, is a blatant example of the failure of the community of nations to solve that problem. It cannot be denied that the United Nations has made successful efforts on other fronts, and we fully appreciate the achievements of the Organization and the international community with regard, for example, to the independence of Namibia. Indeed, no one will be happier than we to welcome Namibia next year as a sovereign Member of the Organization. It also gives us great satisfaction to note the measures that have been taken and are being taken by many States to bring pressure to bear on the racist South African régime.

However, we see different standards of conduct. In one case, pressure is exerted on South Africa to put an end to apartheid; in another the Israelis are encouraged to perpetrate State terrorism: the demolition of houses, the killing of children - more than 1,000 Palestinian children have been killed in the past two years - displacements, and mass expulsions. If that is not State terrorism, what can it be?

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

Day after day, the danger escalates. The Israelis are now acquiring nuclear weapons; they are now in possession of long-range ballistic missiles. This is a threat posed not to Palestine or the Palestinians alone but to the entire Arab nation and even to Africa.

We are aware of the extent of Israeli co-operation with South Africa in the nuclear field and the manufacture of weapons. This is a threat to southern Africa as a whole. We know that the Israelis are training drug-trafficking gangs in Colombia, thereby posing a threat to Central and Latin America. In fact, the Israeli threat is an international threat. We are all aware of the consequences of the Israeli armed aggression against the Iraqi nuclear reactor, which was constructed for peaceful purposes.

The Palestinian is called upon to make more concessions: to give up his land and his right to life. Otherwise he is regarded as a terrorist, and his blood is shed by the use of the very sophisticated weapons that are sent to Israel.

Today everyone sees how much of a fuss is made when a Palestinian child clamours for his rights. Such a child is even called a terrorist.

Sometimes we witness hypocrisy in the international arena. That hypocrisy is a threat to the Organization. A few weeks ago, when the Group of Arab States raised the question of expelling the Zionist entity from the United Nations, we were asked what the motive was behind our request. Our reason is that Israel has annexed the Arab territories by force. The Israelis have annexed the Golan Heights and Jerusalem and have violated all the norms of international law. The United Nations has a Charter to abide by unless, of course, there are two charters: one for the Israelis, and another for the non-Israelis. We were told that the request to have the Zionist entity expelled was very dangerous and was contrary to the principle of the universality of the Organization. We cherish the universality of

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

the United Nations, and we are very happy that it encompasses most of the peoples of the world. But what of the Palestinians? Are they not a people? Do they not have a right to become a Member of the Organization? Is the Palestinian people destined to be perpetually represented as an observer mission or an observer State? Even when we requested that the designation Palestine be changed to the Palestinian State we were told that it was a threat to the United Nations, and that such a request would not help the budgetary problem.

What kind of democracy is this? We understand democracy to mean that if there is a draft resolution that is unacceptable to us, we can vote against it; we may lobby in favour of or against it. But to have matters dictated to us is indeed a dangerous precedent.

What would become of the Organization if one of the super-Powers demanded that a Member State be expelled from the United Nations under the threat of withholding its contribution? But making contributions is subject to the rules laid down by the Charter. We cannot tolerate financial threats. We, as small nations, are the Members most dedicated to serving the interests of the Organization and we cannot possibly allow the incidents that take place in the Security Council to be repeated in the General Assembly.

We should ask ourselves then: what use is the United Nations? What is the role of the Organization? In these circumstances, we are not to blame for its failure.

We welcome the rapprochement between the super-Powers and are happy that there is agreement in the quest for peace. However, we are afraid that if that rapprochement were to be at the expense of our freedoms - as small nations - or, indeed, at the expense of what we deem to be our fundamental rights, such as the right to self-determination - then it might lead to a new division of the world.

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

We are all for international rapprochement and peace. We as a people have suffered more from war than any other people. Libya has lost more than half its sons in defence of its freedom against the Italian fascists. We know full well the value of peace. However, peace can never be achieved without justice.

Let me speak frankly. We in the Arab nation are hurt because we are not being treated as human beings. We are treated as if we were sub-humans. We are not against Jews. Jews are closer to us than any other people. They are our cousins. We have protected the Jews from European persecution because we, too, are Semitic. We want to be treated just like everyone else. We want the right to life, and we want peace. However, we do not want peace that is imposed by force, the peace of Phantoms, the peace of destruction.

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

A great fuss is being made over the Soviet Union's reluctance to allow Jewish emigration. We believe in freedom to emigrate. But why should we make this freedom the exclusive right of one group of people? What about Soviet Armenians, for instance, or any other group of Soviet citizens? Why should we not call for their emigration? And why, when agreement is reached on emigration, should obstacles be raised to compel those Jews, who are allowed to emigrate, to go to Palestine? Why should millions of dollars be lavished upon them so that they may build more settlements and replace more Palestinians who are thrown out to make room for them and denied the right to have their own State or even to have the name of a State on a name-plate? That is the democracy of might; that is the democracy we are talking about here.

What is happening now is truly painful. When we speak out, it is not out of hatred that we do so. It is not out of any desire to muddy the waters of détente. We speak of the very real injustice that we suffer, of the human tragedy that we live. We speak out because our brethren in Palestine are being denied the right to life, are being killed even in their last refuge. We speak out because we witness the raids on Tunis against the Palestine Liberation Organization and the assassination of Palestinian leaders.

Israel has acquired nuclear weapons, and nuclear and chemical technology. This, in the case of Israel, is permissible. But when any Arab State even tries to obtain technology, this is called terrorism, a threat to peace, a threat to world security. "You Arabs have to remain backward; no technology for you. You must be under Israel's yoke, you must be under Israel's heel". That is democracy; that is humanity - the humanity of super-Powers, the democracy of arrogance.

We do not need to incur the animosity of the United States of America. We have no desire to be its enemies. What we need most is to have good relations with

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Jamahiriya)

the United States. However, we perceive that the biased position of the United States does not serve the cause of peace, nor can it serve the cause of freedom, that famous freedom that is greatly praised in the United States Constitution, which starts with the words "We, the people" and bestows on the Government of the United States of America the right to defend the right to self-determination of other nations. All we we ask for is a positive attitude. We do not want a position that is biased in our favour. We want a stance on the side of justice. We want a posture that stems from the belief that the Palestinians are as human as the Israelis and the black man in South Africa is as human as the whites.

We should take into account that unless the tragedy of the Palestinians is dealt with quickly and fairly, the plight of the Palestinian people can very easily become the plight of many other peoples. Let us not forget that the Israeli map embraces all of the land extending from the Nile to the Euphrates. The Golan Heights have been annexed. Jerusalem has been annexed. What next? Will it be Jordan or perhaps Iraq? Why not Saudi Arabia, Egypt or Libya? We are all on the list.

We were all against Hitler and nazism. The whole world waged a holy war against nazism. It had to save itself from nazism. The time has now come to take the same brave stand against racist zionism.

It is not just a question of Palestine: it is a question of peace and security, of the very life of many peoples. Southern Lebanon has been occupied. Beirut has been bombarded by Israeli aircraft. The Balkanization of Lebanon is now afoot through the drive to divide that country into religious enclaves. The aim is to fragment it into statelets and thus make the Zionist State the strongest and mightiest in the region. That plan is being implemented today, and we will be its first victims.

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

Enough of resolutions: it is time now to take a positive stand. The responsibility for peace in the region is not the responsibility of the United States or of the Soviet Union: it is the responsibility of the entire world.

The time has passed when the world was divided into large and small States. The United Nations must now shoulder its responsibility and rectify the mistake it made in 1948. It must give the Palestinian people the opportunity to exercise its right to self-determination and the right to have a State on its own soil. That is logic. We have taken a collective stand to impose an economic blockade on South Africa. That stand has led to the independence of Namibia. It has led to the beginning of the end of the apartheid system. That was a good experiment. We were very happy indeed when the United States Congress imposed an economic boycott on South Africa. How happy we would be if that same Congress were to take the same brave stand one day and if the members of Congress were to decide in favour of peace and justice.

We can discuss and debate as much as we like. We can go on and on for hours. But what will the end result be? More resolutions to clutter the United Nations archives; a heap of dead letters?

Let us take a serious stand. Let us implement the Articles contained in Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. That alone will turn back the forces of evil. That alone will deter the forces of tyranny and evil. That alone will force them to accept the notion of peace and make them concede the right to self-determination to the Palestinian people. It will not be long before we see a Palestine not in that little forgotten corner down there but occupying its rightful seat in this very Hall, like any other nation. History has taught us that the will of the people cannot be defeated, because it derives from the will of God.

Mr. NYAKYI (United Republic of Tanzania): Both in the general debate at the beginning of the General Assembly and during the present debate speaker after speaker has reminded this Assembly that of all the major conflicts threatening world peace and security the Arab-Israeli conflict, and specifically the question of Palestine, its root cause, remains unaffected by the relaxation of East-West tension and the readiness of the United States of America and the Soviet Union to co-operate in the search for solutions to regional conflicts. With the exception of apartheid, no other question has been on the agenda of the General Assembly for such a long time. That this should be the situation after 40 years of alternating war and stalemate is a sad commentary on the commitment of the international community to the search for a just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic
of Tanzania)

What is so frustrating about the dangerous situation in the Middle East at the moment is that movement towards a solution has been prevented not by any lack of ideas about the way forward but by the lack of political will of two major players in this tragic situation. With the exception of Israel and, to some extent, the United States of America, the international community is unanimous in the view that the time has come for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. This is the conclusion we draw from the report of the Secretary-General (A/44/731) dated 16 November 1989, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 43/176, of 15 December 1988.

The time has seldom been more opportune for the search for a comprehensive solution to the conflict in the Middle East. Until almost exactly one year ago the implied acceptance by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) was regarded by Israel as insufficient for the purpose of initiating a process for a comprehensive peace settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Among the reasons advanced was the claim that the PLO espoused terror and refused to accept Israel's right to exist within secure borders. The historic decisions announced by the Palestine National Council at its Algiers meeting in November last year, and elaborated upon by President Arafat in Geneva weeks later, should have removed any doubt there might have been about the readiness of the PLO to accept the existence of Israel and to engage in a peace process. Quite rightly, hopes were raised that Israel would feel able to come forward and accept the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation on an equal footing of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, and all the permanent members of the Security Council.

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic
of Tanzania)

Yet, what has been the response of the critics of the PLO to what everybody else agrees has been a major act of goodwill on the part of that organization? The International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as envisaged by the United Nations, remains as distant as ever. Such talk and effort as there have been on the matter have now taken a shape that would exclude the PLO from the peace process. This, in our view, is a deviation from the correct course set out by our body. There can be no meaningful discussion of the Middle East question without the participation of the PLO, the sole, authentic representative of the Palestinian people.

To its credit, the United States of America has moved. It is now talking to the PLO, which is a significant move from its original position of non-recognition of and not talking to the PLO. But it has a long way to go to bring its great influence in the Middle East to bear on the situation. While commending it for this first move we must urge it to do more. Unfortunately, statements attributed to the United States Government this week suggest that, instead of developing and enhancing its new policy, it could even be slipping.

But as far as Israel is concerned the position has not changed. All we have seen is the same old game of moving the goal posts to respond to the new situation. Israel refuses to recognize the PLO and vows never to negotiate with an organization which the international community has recognized as the sole and authentic representative of the people of Palestine. At the same time it continues its futile attempt to choose Palestinians with whom to negotiate.

As the Secretary-General has observed in his report, time is running out and opportunities that have emerged in the past 12 months might slip away. Tanzania therefore calls on Israel to match the goodwill and magnanimity shown by the PLO

(Mr. Nyakvi, United Republic
of Tanzania)

and accept an international peace conference called under the auspices of the United Nations. Tanzania further calls on the entire international community, and especially those with influence over Israel, to make it clear to Israel that continued refusal to talk to the PLO can only prolong the agony in the Middle East, which benefits no one.

Israel's defiance of the international community has not been limited to its refusal to recognize and negotiate with the PLO. The repression and denial of human rights in the occupied territories revealed every year in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People have become so commonplace that they have ceased to shock the world community. The repression has been particularly brutal since the Palestinian uprising in Gaza and the West Bank two years ago. As the intifadah has intensified, so has Israeli repression, resulting in the killing and wounding of many Palestinians, including children. Detentions without trial, the blowing up of homes, collective punishments, mass arrests, deportations, mass charges and sentences, torture and desecration of Holy Places, on top of the discriminatory and restrictive practices we have come to associate with Israel in occupied Palestinian territory, have become the order of the day in the occupied territories.

The report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories (A/44/599) reveals an astounding escalation of atrocities committed by Israel against the Palestinian people. It reads like a litany of horrifying brutalities carried out not only by the military but by the entire Israeli State apparatus using all its instruments of coercion, namely the army, the police, the judiciary and the administration.

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic
of Tanzania)

Taking a cue from the actions of the occupying Power, the Israeli settlers in occupied Palestine have joined in the intimidation and repression of the Palestinian people.

In its attempts to silence opposition to its occupation and repression, Israel has gone to ridiculous lengths, as evidenced by the detention in July this year of a mother of four simply because her three-year-old daughter allegedly waved a "V" sign at a passing military patrol.

To compound its aggression against the Palestinian people, Israel has continued its policy of setting up permanent settlements in occupied Palestine, in total and utter disregard of the call by the international community for their dismantling. Similarly, it has ignored the demand of the world community to abide by its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

In the two years since the uprising by the gallant people of Palestine began hundreds of Palestinian men, women and children have been killed. Up to October this year the number of dead was as high as 782, of whom 20 per cent were aged 16 years and under. At this rate the cost of resisting occupation and repression and demanding human dignity, freedom and the right to self-determination can be said to be at least two Palestinians dead each passing day, to say nothing of the dozens that are wounded and permanently maimed in the process of the struggle. That is a high price.

(Mr. Nyakyl, United Republic
of Tanzania)

Tanzania salutes the Palestinian people for their heroic resistance against oppression and repression. No one could have demonstrated more convincingly than they have done in the last two years that no power on Earth can suppress man's yearning for his dignity and humanity.

It is an illusion for anyone to believe that lasting peace and justice in the Middle East can be brought about without adequately addressing the problem of Palestine, which is the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict. A comprehensive peace in the Middle East must therefore accord the highest priority to the restoration and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return and the right to self-determination and to the establishment of its State.

The essential elements for a comprehensive settlement were set out in General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988 and include the following: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947; resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions; dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and, finally, guaranteeing freedom of access to holy places, religious buildings and sites.

The international community has a duty and a responsibility to work with all parties to the conflict for the achievement of these objectives. As always, Tanzania will continue to lend its full support towards their attainment.

Mr. RAKOTONDRAHBOA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): For nearly two years now the question of Palestine has taken on special importance because of the courageous uprising of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, the proclamation of the State of Palestine and the Palestinian peace initiative announced by President Yasser Arafat at the meetings of the forty-third session of the General Assembly held in Geneva in December 1988. Notwithstanding over 40 years of occupation and repression, the Palestinian people has thus demonstrated to the international community its resolute determination to achieve peace through negotiation. Broad-ranging consensus has, for that matter, emerged the world over in recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination without outside interference, to independence and national sovereignty, and to the establishment of its own State in Palestine.

However, Israel's obstinacy in closing its eyes to reality does not give rise to optimism. Ever since the intifadah began, not a day has gone by without our hearing and seeing media reports of brutal and arbitrary measures taken by the occupying Power to suppress the peaceful and non-violent demonstrations by Palestinians in the occupied territories. We may pick out especially the unbridled recourse to the firing of live bullets, the raids and mass arrests, the dynamiting of houses, the expulsions and the evermore frequent practice of administrative detention and collective punishment. Such practices remind us of the worst violence of a day and age we thought behind us, except in South Africa, where those wielding the power of that anachronistic apartheid régime have, in any event, been the long-time allies of the Zionists. The toll taken by this intensification of repression has climbed to several hundred dead and thousands injured or arrested. In this connection, the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People offers irrefutable data on the repression in the occupied territories.

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

The gravity of the situation is attested to by the fact that in less than two years the Security Council has had to meet eight times to take up the matter. If the courage and determination of the Palestinian people to free itself from the yoke of oppression compel admiration, the inefficacy and paralysis of the Security Council, because of the singular jockeying of one of its permanent members, are most disappointing. And yet the General Assembly has already spelled out in numerous resolutions, the latest of which is resolution 43/176, adopted on 15 December 1988, the way to achieve a settlement of the question of Palestine, which is at the very core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

There is no longer need to recall that Israel and the United States are the only countries outside the international consensus for convening an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all parties concerned, on an equal footing, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestine people.

Although, we now have substantial improvement in international relations and a positive turn of events as regards certain main elements of the question of Palestine - an evolution which, in our view, militates in favour of more decisive action within the Security Council with a view to starting a process for settling the matter peacefully - Israel has chosen other methods which really seek only to win time and cling to the status quo. While confidence-building measures among the parties concerned are necessary with a view to smooth and effective negotiations, the Israeli occupation must also come to an end. In this connection, we firmly support the position expressed by the representative of Palestine before the Assembly on 6 October last that:

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

"Free and democratic elections under neutral international supervision could thus be held as a stage in a comprehensive integrated settlement that would include negotiations between the parties to the conflict, within the framework of an international peace conference in which the five permanent members of the Security Council would participate." (A/44/PV.23, p. 91)

(Mr. Rakotondramboa,
Madagascar)

In other words, what have been claimed to be bilateral initiatives are doomed to failure so long as Israel does not recognize the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the right of this Organization to participate on an equal footing with all the other parties to the conflict in every phase of any settlement.

In his latest report on the activities of the Organization the Secretary-General has highlighted the fact that

"it is the political aspects of the problem that have to be addressed if an end is to be put to the confrontations that occur almost daily throughout the occupied territories." (A/44/1, p. 8)

He urges all the parties concerned to start without delay a genuine process of negotiations on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). My delegation fully shares his viewpoint and appeals to the members of the Security Council to consider the measures necessary for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a Preparatory Committee.

While waiting for the Preparatory Committee to be set up the Security Council should study without delay the measures required to ensure the security and protection of the Palestinian people under occupation. In our opinion the call on Israel to abide by the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 - a demand rejected by the Israeli authorities - is not in itself sufficient to guarantee the security of the Palestinians. Consideration should also be given to the possibility of placing the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under temporary United Nations supervision as part of the peace process. The General Assembly

(Mr. Rakotondranbon,
Madagascar)

recommended such action to the Security Council last year in resolution 43/176, and we are certain that it would contribute to alleviating the suffering of Palestinians living under occupation, particularly women and children.

We conclude from the foregoing that it is urgently necessary to prevent a deterioration of the explosive situation in the Middle East. For the Democratic Republic of Madagascar the question of representation of the Palestinian people is settled once and for all. We are proud to have been one of the first countries to recognize the State of Palestine and we agree with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People that the Palestinian State should take its rightful place in the international community and within the United Nations. Our Organization has a special responsibility to the Palestinian people to redress an injustice that has lasted far too long. We must step up our efforts to ensure the beginning of negotiations, with the participation of all the parties concerned, with a view to bringing about a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

That is why my delegation supports the recommendations in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/44/35) and appeals to the permanent members of the Security Council to use their influence to ensure that those recommendations are implemented.

Mrs. SAVADOGO (Burkina Faso) (interpretation from French): For more than 40 years the question of Palestine has remained serious and at the heart of the Middle East crisis. It is the unshakeable will of the martyred Palestinian people to obtain recognition of their national rights, the assistance that other Arab peoples give to their struggle and the solidarity of the world public that have led to the Palestinian factor being considered an essential element in the solution of the problem of the Middle East.

(Mrs. Savadogo, Burkina Faso)

Throughout recent decades the Palestinian people has struggled indomitably and heroically, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to re-establish its legitimate national rights. In the past two years the struggle against the Israeli occupation has increased and spread, benefiting from the sympathy and the support of all the peoples of the world and of the international community as a whole. At the same time it has breathed new life into the Middle East peace process.

As in the past, Burkina Faso unconditionally supports the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people and other Arab peoples to put an end to the aggression against and the occupation of Arab territories and to restore fully the legitimate national right of the Palestinian people to a free and independent homeland. True to its consistent position of support for the just cause of the Palestinian people and its right to an independent State, Burkina Faso recognized the Palestinian State proclaimed by the Palestine National Council. We shall give our firm support to all legitimate efforts by the Palestinian people and other Arab peoples to ensure the restoration of their legitimate national rights and the establishment of true peace and security in the Middle East region.

The Palestine National Council has called for a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict and provisions to guarantee the security and peace of all the States of the region. That historic declaration provides a favourable opportunity for the convening of an international conference. We hope that it will open the way to serious negotiations to resolve the conflict on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The international community must seize this opportunity to give peace a chance in the Middle East.

(Mrs. Savadogo, Burkina Faso)

We believe that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned, is the best way of achieving a just and lasting solution.

It is regrettable that, whilst the Palestinians have had the courage to express clearly their firm desire to achieve peace through negotiations - an initiative that is recognized as positive and supported by the international community - no positive response has yet been received from Israel. The Israeli Government has adopted a hostile attitude; it has rejected the positive measures taken by the PLO and suppressed more mercilessly than ever the struggle of the Palestinian people against the occupation: the intifadah.

The facts show that the obstinacy and intransigence of the Israeli authorities are now the main obstacle to the settlement of the question of Palestine. However, everything points to its being high time that Israel assessed the situation and gave a positive response. The stubborn struggle of the Palestinian people has sounded the death knell of the Israeli occupation policy. The declaration of independence attests explicitly to the readiness of the PLO to coexist with Israel. In its political statement the PLO has agreed that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the guarantee of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people should serve as a basis for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The beginning of an American-Palestinian dialogue is important, but it should not be limited to contacts without outcome. It is regrettable that Israel refuses stubbornly to face reality and to engage in a dialogue with the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, we think it is time to begin substantive consultations within the framework of the Security Council on the launching of an initiative on stable

(Mrs. Savadogo, Burkina Faso)

and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this respect, the statements made by delegations in the General Assembly will help the Security Council to define the basis for the beginning of a political solution to the conflict in the Middle East and the question of Palestine, in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

Mr. TANASIE (Romania): More than four decades have passed since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 181 (II), of 1947, and over 20 years since Israel occupied the Palestinian territories during the war of 1967. Despite such a long period and the many efforts made by the international community, the question of Palestine, which is the core of the Middle East conflict, remains unsolved. The Palestinian people is still prevented from exercising its inalienable right to self-determination, including the establishment of its own independent State.

Romania has on many occasions expressed its long-standing and constructive position and undertaken positive action to contribute to a settlement of the question of Palestine consistent with full observance of the national rights of the Palestinian people and the right to a free and independent existence of all the nations in the region.

Romania has directed its efforts in this connection both through bilateral relations and dialogue with the parties concerned and within the framework of the United Nations, in particular through its membership of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Romania shares the deep concern of the international community regarding the deteriorating situation in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel. The documentation submitted to the General Assembly and the introductory statements made at the beginning of our debate on this agenda item indicate that the situation

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

remains dangerous and, indeed, has further deteriorated as a result of the repressive measures against the Palestinian people, which are resulting in an increasing number of casualties.

We commend the considerable efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to promote and ensure implementation of its recommendations, including measures to heighten international awareness of the facts relating to Palestine.

There is no doubt that the roots of this dangerous situation reside in foreign occupation and its maintenance by force of arms. The determination with which the Palestinian people reject the foreign military occupation confirms again the historical truth that it is not possible to build and safeguard peace and security by the threat or use of force or by denying other people the right to free existence and independence. So long as Israel continues to deny the Palestinian people the rights it claims for itself, there cannot be the lasting peace that enables all States in the region to live in harmony.

From the very beginning Romania has expressed its profound conviction that the settlement of the Middle East conflict can be achieved only by political means. The evolution of the situation since 1967 and current events prove that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region can be achieved only through the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories occupied in 1967 and respect for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to establish its own independent State, and by ensuring for all States and peoples of the area the right to existence, independence and sovereignty. Pending the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the achievement of a settlement, there is a strong need for Israel to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinians in the occupied territories in conformity with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

Consistent with this position of principle, Romania hailed the decision of the Palestine National Council at its Algiers session in 1988 to proclaim the State of Palestine. Romania has recognized the new Palestinian State. We also welcome the political declaration adopted at that time expressing willingness to resolve the problems of the Middle East by political means, in the spirit and on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), in a way that would include recognition of the State of Israel, as well as recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to establish its own independent State.

In the view of Romania, the proclamation of the independent State of Palestine provides new and favourable conditions for the just settlement of the problems in the Middle East.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

There is growing awareness and near unanimity among the Members of the United Nations that the way to achieve comprehensive, a just and lasting solution to the Middle East problems is the convening of an international conference, under United Nations auspices. The President of Romania has advocated the need for such a conference since 1978.

We believe that in the present circumstances it is all the more urgent to make every effort to organize such a conference, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the State of Palestine and Israel, as well as the permanent members of the Security Council. It is important to act resolutely with a view to realizing the earliest possible convening of such a conference.

In view of the incontestable urgency of convening a peace conference, we believe that priority should be given to the prompt establishment of a preparatory committee to take the necessary steps for the organization of the conference. To that effect, every effort should be made to bridge differences and strive to find appropriate solutions in conformity with the vital interests of the peoples of that part of the world, through negotiations and dialogue among the parties concerned.

Romania highly values the activities undertaken by the Secretary-General in the search for solutions to the complex problems of the Middle East and his efforts to bring about the convening of an international peace conference. We believe it is particularly important further to involve the Secretary-General, with the support of all States, in the efforts to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East without delay.

Undoubtedly, the United Nations can and should play a more active role in endeavours to solve the Palestinian question, especially since the General Assembly has called for overall negotiations aimed at a just and lasting peace in the

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

region, so as to respond fully to the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of that area and of all the peoples of the world.

We believe that the Security Council, which has a very important role to play in the convening of the international conference, should do all it can to remove the remaining obstacles and use its authority in the settlement of the Middle East conflict, which threatens international peace and security.

The Romanian delegation is firmly convinced that, on the basis of current debates, the General Assembly will take appropriate measures to advance peace and contribute to the solution of the long-pending question of Palestine.

Mr. NIETO (Colombia). (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation is today taking part in the debate on the question of Palestine with a deep sense of disappointment and frustration. There is perhaps no subject more threatening to international peace than the conflict between Arab countries and the Israelis over Palestine.

Peaceful coexistence among peoples and promoting friendship among nations based on mutual respect and the principle of equality and free self-determination for peoples are the bedrock of the Charter. These principles are the underpinnings as well of General Assembly resolutions 181 (II), which provides for the establishment of two States - one Arab, the other Jewish - and the right to live within secure borders.

Over 40 years of negotiations within this Organization on the existence of a Palestinian State have progressively drawn more and more basic parameters, such as the principles enshrined in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), unanimously adopted on 22 November 1967, and 338 (1973) of 23 October 1973, both of which have always been firmly supported by my country.

(Mr. Nieto, Colombia)

We have always believed that the situation in the Middle East, so fraught with danger, will move in a direction of greater promise to the extent that there is a return to the spirit and the letter of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which, 22 years after its adoption, continues to be the point of departure for ensuring peace in the region.

We have also always supported the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices, with the participation of all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the five permanent members of the Security Council, as a prerequisite for bringing about a just and lasting peace in the region.

(Mr. Nieto, Colombia)

That is why we read the Secretary-General's report with sinking hearts. Once again he states that sufficient agreement still does not exist either within the Security Council or among the parties to the conflict to permit the convening of the Conference. We share the Secretary-General's disappointment that, although the General Assembly last year demonstrated almost unanimous support for the convening of the Conference, the Secretary-General could not obtain the agreement necessary to do that.

It is still a source of great concern to my delegation that Israel continues to occupy Palestinian territory, and in particular that it refuses to implement the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. We have constantly rejected the excessive use of force by the occupying authorities, which is clearly in violation of article 27 of the Convention, which provides that everyone must always be treated in a humanitarian way.

On various occasions we have voiced concern over Israeli practices in the occupied territories which fly in the face of international law and violate the human rights of the inhabitants of those territories. People around the world are familiar with the brutal, discriminatory measures engaged in against the civilians in the occupied territories, leading to deaths, physical injuries and massive and arbitrary detentions. The public of the world feels consternation and revulsion at the suffering of the civilian population as a result of the violent repression and the fact that the authorities have not managed to restrain the hand of the security forces.

The occupying Power has openly spelled out the nature and purpose of its policy: to crush the opposition by the use of physical force against civilians.

Collective punishment, including the demolition of houses, has become the order of the day. Deportations continue, and arbitrary economic decisions are

(Mr. Nieto, Colombia)

imposed against the people. No less serious are the provocative and at times lethal steps taken by the armed settlers against the inhabitants of Palestine.

We have always maintained that the international community cannot accept such practices on the part of the occupying authorities because they are immoral and illegal, and politically counterproductive.

Finally, I repeat that Colombia has always recognized the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination, and the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, the need to withdraw Israeli troops from all the occupied territories - which entails ending all hostilities - and, of course, respect for and recognition of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States in the region and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from the threat or the use of force.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): The world is moving now to a state of détente; the peoples demanding freedom, prosperity and security are proceeding to settle the problems they face in fulfilling their aspirations; and all the countries in the world are pausing today and looking forward to an era of rationality, a sense of responsibility for humanity and international legality. This is true everywhere except in Palestine. Palestine, the cradle of prophets and divine messages, of spiritual and ethical principles, is passing through the worst stages of injustice, the darkest periods of a tyranny and the most odious practices of man against man. All international laws and practices are violated in Palestine. The facts of history are distorted by the Zionist misdeeds in the Arab land of Palestine, where the rights of a whole nation are being violated. A homeland has been usurped from its people and the worst crimes are being committed against humanity within earshot and under our very

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

eyes. Palestine is calling you. Will you respond to this call? It is calling you. Will you comply with your obligations under the Charter?

We have dealt with the question of Palestine in previous years, exposed the injustice inflicted on its people and identified the transgressions and crimes against humanity committed by the Zionist authorities. We have reviewed the legal principles violated by those authorities and the human rights infringed by them. We have dealt with the question in the context of a series of errors on the basis of which the Zionist entity was established in Palestine, and the disasters that have mounted up as a result. We have kept track of the fundamental contradictions on which Israel survives. We have referred to the Arab positions and the sacrifices they have accepted in an effort to achieve a peaceful solution that would preserve stability in, and security for the peoples of, the region, despite all the violations that Zionism has committed and the obstacles it has set up. But the situation has only continued to deteriorate and Israeli oppression has only increased, in its disregard for human values and international covenants and its abuse of the very life of the Arab people on the land of the Arabs in Palestine.

The audacity of the Zionists reached the point only a few years ago where their leaders denied even the existence of the Palestinians; they claimed that they did not exist. Then a year and some months ago, their Prime Minister boldly compared the Palestinians to insects implying that he would crush them as he would crush insects. What an evil thing to say. What an evil situation the Palestinians have to confront.

Today we face a new reality in the Palestinian arena, a reality that will decide the future of Palestine and determine the destiny of its coming generations, whether Zionism accepts or refuses it. Today Palestine is a State, recognized by

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

more than 95 members of the international community out of respect for justice and in compliance with their obligations under the Charter. Today and for the last 23 months the winds of freedom have been sweeping over the land of Palestine. It is an overwhelming revolution, a revolution of men and women, children and the elderly, a revolution in which one could say that the very trees and stones of Palestine have taken part, a revolution that springs from the conscience of a people who had been patient in the face of injustice until it began to be assumed that they accepted injustice. There prevailed in the past an illusion that the Palestinians had capitulated to darkness and to so-called stark reality, that their problem was only raised outside the country. Then the people revolted, the Palestinian people, the owners of the land; and the very elements, earth and rocks and water flows were moved to revolt with the people, so to speak. The people are resisting with rare courage. With God's help they will defeat oppression and the oppressors, no matter what the tools of terror and war machinery are used. The conscience of people all over the world has awakened since the beginning of the revolution; it has been awakened by those who demand their rights and condemn the terrorism of the Israeli authorities and expose the hypocrisy of the whole Zionist machine.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

However, regrettably Zionist propaganda and Zionist terrorism, because of the exclusion of the world media, are still largely succeeding in blinding people to the reality of the crimes perpetrated in the land of Palestine. The world media have capitulated, the media that, otherwise, are never silent. Where are those who lament, who weep for freedom of expression, the rights of peoples, human rights, international treaties and conventions and humane standards? What are they doing about what is happening in Palestine today? Are Zionism and Israel permitted to do what the international community, with all its members, may not do?

The rights of the Palestinian people are being violated today as they have always been violated. All kinds of crimes are being committed against the Palestinian people - children and young people, the old, men and women. There is no right on the face of the earth that the Israeli authorities do not violate in their actions against the Palestinians on their land and in their homes - within earshot and before the eyes of the peoples.

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People states the following:

"The Committee protests in the strongest terms the intensification of repression by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including children, particularly the liberal use of live ammunition, random beatings, raids and mass arrests, the increased use of administrative detention, deportations and collective punishment. The Committee condemns the unchecked violence by Israeli settlers. It also condemns the measures taken by the occupying Power to deprive the Palestinian population of their right to education, as well as administrative, economic and other measures taken to control all aspects of Palestinian life and to prevent the development of autonomous socio-economic structures." (A/44/35, para. 116)

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

Is there still, in the twentieth century, a human-rights scale that segregates people according to race, language, religion and colour? Such was the situation in the past, but we declared that that time had passed irrevocably in the age of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Why do some of us keep quiet when Israel commits its transgressions and crimes? Why is Israel permitted to commit these crimes against humanity and to enjoy immunity from accountability and punishment?

What is happening in the land of Palestine today has broken all human and inhuman limits - and it is happening within earshot and before the eyes of the peoples. It challenges us. It challenges the United Nations and all the basic principles of the Organization's Charter. The report of the Committee states further:

"In order to suppress the intifadah, the Israeli troops have resorted to excessive and indiscriminate use of force, which was reported to have been condoned and even encouraged at the highest level of government, with the apparent intent to punish and intimidate the population, resulting in an extensive and unprecedented range of human rights violations." (ibid., para. 22)

The world media communicated the beginnings of the last tragedy 23 months ago. Then it was decided that there should be a cover-up, that the crimes of Israel should be concealed from the news media - because it is Israel. They hid their heads in the sand; they thought that the reckoning of the world conscience had ceased. But the crimes did not stop; rather, they increased in ferocity, exactly as happened in South Africa when the world media were prevented from reporting actions there. But this did not deter the people of South Africa.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

The Israeli violations have increased; they have not decreased. Their ugliness has increased; it has not diminished. Their scope had widened; it has not shrunk. The Zionist leaders no longer fear the reckoning of world public opinion; they think that the world does not hear or see. On the pretext of keeping order they continue to commit crimes in violation of all the rules. Some people say that they have a basic responsibility to keep order. But what of the human rights that other countries are asked to respect? Is it all right, in keeping order, to destroy human life? Is there a separate standard for Israel, that some dare not touch it?

Those countries which, by using their veto power, paralyse the Security Council, rendering it incapable of taking action in respect of activities that endanger peace and security in the context of Palestine, bear a grave responsibility. The founders of the United Nations, those that drew up the Charter, did not prescribe the veto power for the purpose of giving Israel immunity while violating the security of other countries or ignoring the provisions of the Charter. It is a tragedy that, in contravention of the United Nations Charter and without any justification in terms of the logic of the Organization, one country repeatedly uses its veto power against the Arabs and against the rights of the Palestinian people.

Even worse are the attempts to extend the power of veto to the General Assembly. That would be contrary to the Charter. Worse, too, is the terrorizing of Members of the United Nations as a whole by threats to withhold contributions, although Members have an international obligation to pay their contributions, if a particular draft resolution that offends the sensitivities of the Israeli authorities is passed. We have always supported the struggle of peoples for independence and freedom. We have rejected terrorism in all its forms, and we

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

reject this financial blackmail as a means of terrorizing the General Assembly in order to prevent it from considering resolutions independently and with freedom of choice.

The Palestinian people are determined to regain their rights. Having proclaimed their State, they will set the scale themselves and bring into line the machine of oppression and terror. Zionist terrorism will only strengthen their determination to end the terror of the establishment by attacking it at its roots. Three million Israelis want to alter the path of history in a region inhabited by hundreds of millions of people, in a land that rejects them, and under skies that lour over them. But, by God, they will not be able to realize their dreams. The Zionists have not yet learnt that security in the land of Palestine cannot be for them alone. They do not yet understand that only the owners of the land can make security, for themselves and for others, prevail in that land. The Zionists cannot comprehend that without the owners of the land there will be no security; that security at the expense of the rights, security and safety of others is not possible.

The Arabs proposed at the Fez summit a formula for the solution of the question of Palestine and the Middle East, although it involved many sacrifices. But the Israelis did not understand it; they did not comprehend or appreciate it.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

They failed to see the Arab sacrifices in that formula, made for the sake of the future of security in the region. They were blind to the basic elements of the very question of Palestine. Then the Palestine Liberation Organization presented an initiative based on major sacrifices and we saw the leaders of Israel eagerly and persistently trying to find schemes and pretexts to obstruct it and hinder the process. They will regret it when it is too late for regret; when - if this obstruction continues - the Palestinians impose their rights through their sacrifices and steadfastness: however long or however short a time it takes, the inevitable will happen.

Here we must repeat our warning and call attention to the great dangers and perils in store for the wrongs the Zionist authorities are committing and the schemes hatched by their followers against the city of Jerusalem and against the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the first of the Kiblahs and the third after the two holy shrines. Let the Zionists beware; let them realize the results of attempts to desecrate the sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem. They should know that desecration of those places - so sacred in the hearts and conscience of the Muslims - will lead to situations the ramifications of which zionism cannot comprehend. Jerusalem is the heart of Palestine; it is the very heart of every Arab and Muslim. So let zionism wake up and realize the consequences of the acts it is committing in Jerusalem; let it desist and let Jerusalem be returned to its people.

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People shows how the Zionists have dealt with all the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, how they disregard all the values which they ask other countries to respect as rights of their Jewish citizens, how they commit crimes of every kind against the Arabs and yet feel immune from all punishment. They have hermetically sealed the doors on themselves against foreign media, as if

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

punishment came only from outside the country. But punishment will be meted out to them at the hands of their victims - at the hands of the men, women, children, the young and the elderly - who are subjected to the most odious forms of torture and terror. Can anyone in the world then ask the Palestinians why they avenge themselves while the world is watching their oppressors inflicting on them the worst possible ordeal?

I express our thanks to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to its Chairman and its members, and sincere appreciation of its efforts to seek the truth and its courage in presenting that truth.

Here is Palestine, here is the Palestinian people, subjected now to practices which this Assembly condemns in principle and in practice, practices carried out by the most loathesome machine of terrorism and oppression against man known in our time. So, what are we to do?

Amnesty international notes in its June 1989 publication:

"Administrative detention in Israel and the occupied territories can [be] and has been abused to detain prisoners of conscience, held for the non-violent exercise of their right to freedom of expression and association."

The report continues:

"Since the start of the intifadah the use of administrative detention has become widespread. The number of those entitled to issue administrative detention orders has increased and detainees' rights have suffered serious erosion as procedural safeguards which did exist have been dropped."

As we meet here in this General Assembly Hall to discuss Palestine and its tragedy, while the inhabitants of Palestine, Jerusalem, the Golan and South Lebanon are suffering at this very hour the practices of the Israeli machine of oppression, facing death with bare chests, we send greetings from here to the Mujahideen in the

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

land of Palestine, the Golan and South Lebanon; greetings to the steadfast in the land of sacrifice; greetings to those who face the bullets and bombs of the Israeli authorities' terror, withstanding starvation and deprivation, withstanding oppression and challenge in their homeland, bearing injustice and unbridled aggression in the land of their heritage and the strongholds of their fathers and forefathers; greetings to those rising as heroes and dying as martyrs. And to the soldiers of the army that was conscripted in Israel to kill women and children and to prevent the supply of food and medicine we send word that those women and children will defeat them by their faith in their rights; those men and the elderly will defeat them with their vigour and their faith, God willing.

I want to say a word to the members of this Assembly. While we are here facing our international responsibilities in this Hall, we have been aware of the declaration of the Palestinian National Congress last year and later we saw and heard the President of the State of Palestine and Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization present in the international arena solutions to the problem of Palestine which represent great sacrifices, for the sake of security and peace for the region. Recognition of the State of Palestine is a recognition of the most elementary rights of the Palestinians. The Palestinians are asking only for their rights, which we all recognize.

In keeping silent while the revolution goes on in the land of Palestine, in the face of Israeli oppression and occupation, we are failing in our responsibility to God and to history and one day, if we do not act now, we will regret that we have not prevented what may be a worse calamity in the future.

Mr. JAYA (Brunei Darussalam): The opportunity that once again allows the debate on the question of Palestine to be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York augurs well for the prospect of peace around the world. This occasion reaffirms the central place the question of Palestine holds in this Assembly. The

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

entire international community realizes that failure to resolve the question of Palestine because of the recalcitrant attitude of the Israelis constitutes a humiliating challenge to, if not a moral defeat of, the credibility of this body.

Brunei Darussalam feels that the evolution of the question of Palestine over the last 40 years, especially the significant development in the past 12 months, is an important, though not a sufficient, element in the reaching of a peaceful settlement.

Brunei Darussalam believes that certain factors must prevail in order to resolve the problem: they are a qualitative change in the Israeli attitude towards the problem and consistent pressure by the international community for the implementation of all the resolutions on this issue. Israel must admit the undeniable fact that the root cause of the ongoing problem in the occupied territories began with its invasion and continued occupation of the Palestinian lands. In the course of establishing its hegemony, Israel has constantly denied the Palestinian people its inalienable right to self-determination and the right to establish a sovereign independent State in Palestine.

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

Such an affront inevitably occurs only at the expense of victimizing the Palestinians. Israel's iron-fist policy, arbitrary mass arrests, torture, and destruction of homes, in flagrant violation of human rights, seems like a normal daily routine for the régime. Despite repeated condemnations by the entire world community of the oppressive Israeli policies and coercive measures, Israel seems determined to pursue its declared courses of action - occupation and oppression.

The legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, however, have brought the Israelis increasingly untenable political, economic and moral cost. Therefore the régime has no choice but to recognize the truth that a genuine popular uprising, a national struggle, cannot be suppressed, as many precedents show.

Moreover, there is every reason to believe that the ongoing intifadah is irreversible. The Palestinians have chosen the path of peace rather than confrontation. They seek negotiations at an international conference through which an end to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the eventual establishment of a Palestinian State can be achieved. The intifadah has awakened the Palestinians, the international community and, more specifically, the Israelis. The 24-month-long intifadah differs from previous disturbances in its intensity, its pervasiveness and its leadership. In the course of the uprising the Palestinians have become better organized and have shown the extraordinary determination of the people to oppose not with arms but, ironically, only with stones and civil disobedience in order to put an end to the occupation. Furthermore, the intifadah, the peace offensive by the Palestine National Council and the proclamation of the State of Palestine have given a new momentum to the peace process. Any procrastination by the Israelis in responding accordingly will only add to the escalation of violence and tension.

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

The very nature of the uprising seems to render the Israeli authorities immobile, inconceivable though that may appear since Israel has not only a sophisticated military Power behind it but also a powerful ally. Since the beginning of the occupation the Israeli authorities have proved unable to subdue the uprising by means of military force. It is now more important than ever that Israel come to its senses. The grievances behind the uprising can be resolved only through a political solution, not by military force.

The opportune developments surrounding the Palestinian problem and the better prospects for peace cannot be ignored just because Israel wants peace on its own terms. The international scene has changed completely and irrevocably. Events during the past 24 months have given concrete affirmation of the legitimacy of the Palestinian cause and have at the same time weakened the traditional attitude towards the legitimacy of the Israeli occupation. We have reached this critical stage as a direct consequence of the consistent support of the international community. A notable aspect is the positive evolution of the policy of Western European nations, especially the 12 European Economic Community (EEC) countries. The EEC's Madrid Declaration and its positive vote for General Assembly resolution 43/176 have been significant contributions to the peace process. It is no surprise that over 90 States have already officially recognized the State of Palestine. Israel has to come to terms with this fact. The decision of the United States Administration to engage in a dialogue with the Palestinians albeit, an exploratory one, fulfils a commitment. All the members of this body place their hopes in the ability of the United States to put further pressure on Israel to engage productively in the international peace negotiations.

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

Brunei Darussalam firmly supports the resumption of the peace negotiations in the framework of an international conference. Unless the important developments mentioned above are matched by the implementation of practical steps guaranteeing an end to occupation and recognition of the right of the people of Palestine to self-determination and to establish an independent State, our debate at this session, and perhaps in the years to come, will be merely an empty ritual devoid of moral and political will.

It is within this context that Brunei Darussalam views the peace plan proposed by the Israeli authority as a propaganda gimmick that is far from addressing the core of the problem. The plan frustrates not only the Palestinians but also the progress of a true peace process as envisaged by the international community. The peace plan, in which an election in the occupied territory is proposed, confirms the motives of the Israelis. It simply states that Israel has no intention of withdrawing from the occupied territories, does not want an independent Palestinian State and does not want a dialogue with the PLO. In view of the imminent stalemate, Brunei Darussalam appeals to the members of this body, especially the members of the Security Council, to work on Israel with a view to expediting the convening of an effective international peace conference. At the same time Brunei Darussalam requests those that have influence with the Israelis not to remain indifferent to the plight of the Palestinian people.

Brunei Darussalam once again reaffirms its stated belief that the appropriate way to bring about a solution to the Palestinian problem is through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as stressed in resolution 43/176, of 15 December 1978, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation, on an equal footing, of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the five permanent members of the

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

Security Council, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

We strongly believe that, while numerous human lives and much treasure are sacrificed to safeguard the rights of people elsewhere, much less is required to help Palestinians to regain their rights.

In conclusion, I wish to commend the Secretary-General and the Chairman and members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their unceasing efforts in mobilizing international support and opinion and in the search for a just and durable settlement to the question of Palestine.

The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Kuwait who will also introduce draft resolution A/44/L.50.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): I have pleasure in introducing, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/44/L.50, which has five preambular and two operative paragraphs.

The first preambular paragraph recalls resolution 3237 (XXIX), of 29 November 1974, which is the resolution in which the General Assembly extended a standing invitation to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate in the work of the General Assembly and of all conferences convened under the auspices of the General Assembly or any other organs of the United Nations.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

This paragraph also recalls General Assembly resolution 43/160 A, in which the Assembly authorized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) to circulate their communications as official United Nations documents. It also recalls resolution 43/177, in which the Assembly acknowledges the proclamation of the State of Palestine and decides that the designation "Palestine" should be used in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organization".

In the second preambular paragraph the Assembly would take into consideration the decision adopted by the Palestine National Council at its nineteenth session, in November 1988, which conferred upon the Executive Committee of the PLO the powers and responsibilities of the Provisional Government of the State of Palestine until such time as a government was formed.

Under the third preambular paragraph the Assembly would note the increased number of States Members of the United Nations that have recognized the State of Palestine. It is appropriate to point out in this connection that we are talking here of the majority of States Members of the United Nations, since over 85 have recognized the State of Palestine and a great many have already established diplomatic relations with that State.

In the fourth preambular paragraph the Assembly would take note of the decision of the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade from 4 to 7 September 1989, to welcome the State of Palestine as a full-fledged member of the Movement.

In the last preambular paragraph the Assembly would take note of the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. That Committee is composed of 23 States Members of the United Nations and is engaged in a praiseworthy, indeed significant, effort aimed at achieving the objectives of the task mandated to it by the General Assembly.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

I turn now to operative paragraph 1. The Assembly would decide that the designation Palestine shall be construed, within the United Nations, as the State of Palestine, without prejudice to the acquired rights of the Palestine Liberation Organization in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and practice. By all accounts, this paragraph, while developing the status of the Observer Mission of Palestine, retains the recognition of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the State of Palestine within the United Nations. It is thus clear that this paragraph in no way deals with the issue of membership of the State of Palestine in the United Nations, as some circles would have us believe. The Member States sponsoring the draft resolution wish to make this quite clear and fully understood: in our draft resolution we do not deal with the issue of membership in the United Nations. That is another matter and this is not its context.

In operative paragraph 2, the Assembly would request the Secretary-General to implement the present draft resolution. As we all know, this is a traditional paragraph that appears in General Assembly resolutions adopted under similar circumstances.

In conclusion, I should like to ask all Member States to support draft resolution A/44/L.50 and to vote in favour of it.

Let me add that the sponsors of the draft resolution, as well as all those States that trust in the United Nations and its Charter and the noble principles enshrined therein hope that the draft resolution will be voted on solely on the basis of its contents, objectives and purposes, and not on the basis of any wrong or fallacious interpretations or exaggerations thereof.

By the same token, the sponsors hope that the vote will not be subjected to any threats or blackmail, which may be injurious to the standing of the Organization. We do not accept threats. Threats are not the democratic answer in

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

the case of such a draft resolution. In the United Nations, the world parliament, we vote under the umbrella of democracy and must abide by its rules and observe its dictates alone. The yardstick of democratic practice must be kept in sight, without coercion.

In God we trust.

Mr. NOOR (Afghanistan): The question of Palestine, as we all know, constitutes the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has already lasted for over four decades. It is a great, an irreparable tragedy of multifaceted dimensions, affecting the Palestinians as a nation and other Arab people in the occupied lands as a whole.

The Israeli Zionists, who are carrying on an unabated policy of aggression, intimidation, strangulation, repression and genocide directed mainly against the Palestinian people, have deprived that people not only of its homes and property but of its inalienable right to live in its national territory and homeland.*

As a result of this policy, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are scattered in neighbouring Arab countries and throughout the world as recognized refugees. Those who continue to live in the occupied Palestinian lands have been subjected to savage repression, mass arrests, torture and the complete denial of their fundamental and elementary human rights.

The continuing historic intifadah of the Palestinian people in the occupied lands is a demonstration of the monolithic will and determination of the Palestinian people to liberate their homeland and restore their freedom and

* Mr. Jaya (Brunei Darussalam), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Noor, Afghanistan)

independence. We salute the intifadah, which marks a glorious phase in the struggle of this cross-section of the people of Palestine for freedom, independence, democracy, peace and justice and against repression by Israeli Zionists as the occupying Power.

(Mr. Noor, Afghanistan)

We strongly condemn the illegal acts of the Zionists, aimed at altering the political, cultural, religious, demographic and other distinctive features of Palestine and other Arab territories. We also denounce the Israeli policy of forceful displacement of Palestinians and the confiscation of their lands for the purpose of establishing Israeli settlement. These practices and policies of Israeli Zionists continue in gross contravention of Security Council resolution 465 (1980) and other relevant resolutions of the world Organization. Recent Israeli practices of laying siege to Palestinian towns and confiscating property of those who refuse to pay illegal taxes levied on them by the occupying Power are particularly deplorable.

In the light of these deplorable practices perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, my delegation reaffirms the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. The General Assembly and the Security Council are expected to adopt all the measures necessary for the provision of international protection to the Palestinian people living under the notorious iron-fist policy of the occupying Power in Palestine.

The key element in a political and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine and the protracted Middle East problem has been very clear for a long time. The ways and means towards ensuring peace and security have been outlined and clarified in numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Notwithstanding all these positive and promising developments embodying the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of the nations of the world, the Palestinian issue still remains unresolved and the Middle East continues to be a hotbed of tension and a serious threat to international peace and security. This

(Mr. Noor, Afghanistan)

dangerous situation emanates solely from the aggressive policies and the policies of occupation pursued by the Israeli Zionists.

On the contrary, it is common knowledge that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, along with other Arab countries, has come forward time and again and demonstrated in practice its readiness to achieve a peaceful settlement of the situation prevailing in the Middle East. The political communiqué of the Palestine National Council of 15 November 1988, the statement made by President Yasser Arafat during the forty-third session of the General Assembly, in Geneva, and other significant initiatives taken by the PLO offer a positive, indeed unique, contribution to the efforts aimed at achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace to the volatile Middle East issue, with the question of Palestine at its core.

The convening of the International Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations constitutes the sole practicable means towards meeting at long last the well-founded desire of the world for peace and stability in that part of the world. A prerequisite for the success of the Conference is it should be attended by all the parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing and with equal rights, as well as the permanent members of the Security Council.

I take this opportunity to reiterate, once again, the fraternal solidarity of the people and the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan with the people of Palestine in their just and heroic struggle for the liberation of their land and the restoration of their legitimate rights. The Republic of Afghanistan fully supports the all-out endeavours of our Organization to find and put into effect a just and viable solution to the Middle East problem. We are convinced that the success of these United Nations endeavours will in turn further increase its

(Mr. Noor, Afghanistan)

effectiveness and weight in present-day international relations. This is indeed fully in keeping with the fundamental and lofty objectives of the Charter to ensure lasting peace and international security.

Mr. AL-KAWARI (Qatar) (interpretation from Arabic): For the last two days the General Assembly has been considering the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East". The speakers in this debate have stressed the practices of Israel in the region as a whole. They have focused on the continued tension in that region and the fact that the region has not been affected by the present positive atmosphere in the world - an atmosphere that has led to the peaceful settlement of certain regional questions. The speakers have attributed this situation to Israel's obduracy and its rejection of all peace initiatives. At the basis of all this has been, in their opinion, Israel's expansionist philosophy, which is based on aggression, unlimited covetous strategies, and violations of the international will and international covenants. They have also attributed the situation to the military and material support that Israel receives from a major Power.

Today we are considering the question of Palestine. The question of Palestine is the core, the crux of the question of the Middle East. The question of Palestine has been discussed at the United Nations since its inception. Year after year resolutions have been adopted which express the international community's point of view and conviction. Yet all these resolutions remain a dead letter. Israel has continued to disregard them and to impose its policy of *fait accompli* through the use of force, violence and terror. Today the world is faced by yet a further escalation by Israel: its attempt to annex the territories and to expel the population by the use of inhuman means.

(Mr. Al-Kawari, Qatar)

It has become an accepted and undisputed fact that the cause of a people never dies - that even if a people endures injustice for a certain time, it is nevertheless preparing during that time to rebel against and put an end to injustice, tyranny, oppression and occupation. This applies to the Palestinian people, in its heroic intifadah, just as it applies to each and every people on earth.

(Mr. Al-Kawari, Qatar)

This intifadah was not the beginning of the struggle and the sacrifices of the Palestinian people; rather it represents the peak of that struggle. It is rooted in a long history of continuous struggle, resistance and sacrifice. At the outset of the intifadah many of those that were not aware of the facts in Palestine believed that it was merely a spontaneous action or the work of dreamers unaware of Israel's strength and superiority. Therefore they thought that the intifadah would soon subside and matters would soon resume their previous course. But the continuance of the intifadah, its ability to renew its methods and the increased readiness of the people to make sacrifices have made those sceptics reconsider things they had taken for granted.

The intifadah has salvaged the question of Palestine from the archives of long forgotten questions and imposed it on the attention of the whole world. It has introduced the word intifadah into all languages and made the question of Palestine an everyday concern in all parts of the world.

There are many admirable aspects of the intifadah that make it worthy of respect and capable of compelling the world to shoulder its responsibility and put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people and to Israel's violations of human rights. Children in Palestine have confronted sophisticated weapons and advanced technology with such primitive weapons as stones. They have managed to reveal to the world the lie that it had been deluded into believing for a time, that is, the lie about the democratic nature of the Zionist régime. That régime has been exposed as a racist régime that does not hesitate to use all forms of oppression, detention, collective punishment and deportation.

Among the inalienable rights of all people is their right to choose their representatives. The people of Palestine have chosen the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as their sole, legitimate representative. The whole world has

(Mr. Al-Kawari, Qatar)

endorsed that choice. Any attempt to ignore or bypass that fact would be tantamount to denying the Palestinian people one of their legitimate rights.

The struggle of the Palestinian people through its heroic intifadah has been crowned by the declaration of the State of Palestine. That State has become a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States. It has been recognized by the majority of the States of the world. It is high time for the General Assembly to take this development into account, thus taking a further step towards the consolidation of the status of the Palestinian people and its State in the international Organization.

The United Nations has a moral responsibility to Palestine and the Palestinian people and by its conduct the United Nations has made clear its awareness of that fact. This was clearly reflected in the way the General Assembly last year rose to the challenge and, when the host country refused to issue a visa for the Palestinian President, Yasser Arafat, moved the session to Geneva, where the militant leader was able to address it.

This year the United Nations is to be put through another test of the democratic character, traditions and work customs within the Organization. A major Power is threatening to withhold its assessed contribution should the General Assembly adopt a resolution reaffirming the resolution it adopted last year in Geneva on the question of Palestine. We do not dispute the right of that State to object to the resolution, vote against it or attempt to persuade its friends to stand with it. But this can be done only in accordance with the rules of procedure and the modus operandi approved by the Charter and followed by the United Nations. We are confident that the United Nations will face this challenge in such a manner as to maintain the independence, traditions and rules of procedure of our international Organization.

(Mr. Al-Kawari, Qatar)

Various initiatives have been taken at both the Arab and the international level in putting forward new ideas for dealing with the question of the Middle East and the crux of that situation, the question of Palestine, by peaceful means. But all these initiatives have fallen on deaf ears in Israel. That is because Israel has no thought of peace; Israel desires expansion, settlement and the imposition of its will by force.

The international community as represented in our international Organization has expressed its will through various resolutions, and the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties involved, including the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, is the internationally accepted framework for the just solution of this question. There can be no just solution without Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination and to establish its independent State and its capital, Al Quds, in its homeland.

It has become clear to the whole world who it is that wants peace and who it is that wants war. It is high time for the world to take a position consonant with the lofty principles which lie at the basis of our international Organization, foremost among which is the right of peoples to freedom and self-determination. It is admitted that self-determination is the legitimate right of all peoples, and the principle of resistance to occupation is inseparable from that right. The will to receive justice cannot be broken by force of arms, even if that force is in the hands of the Zionist authorities. A stone in the hand of a Palestinian child armed with faith can oppose the most sophisticated weapon in the hesitant hand of an apprehensive adult.

Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea): The General Assembly is once again considering the situation in the Middle East. The tragic events in Lebanon in recent weeks and the sustained Palestinian uprising - intifadah - in the occupied territories underscore the need for peace and harmony in this volatile region where anarchy and violence are the order of the day.

Despite numerous attempts to involve the United Nations, which has been instrumental in forging a consensus for peace in other regional conflicts, the Organization, sadly, has been left on the periphery of the peace process in the Middle East. While we agree that there are merits in pursuing bilateral negotiations to resolve the Middle East conflict, we also believe that, if one wants to emerge from a conflict with honour, the United Nations and its Secretary-General can provide the best possible way.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

Papua New Guinea firmly believes that the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict remains the Palestinian question. This painful struggle, which has dragged on for the past 40 years, is over the problem of the expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland. Papua New Guinea believes that there must be a realistic and human understanding that the conflict is a tragedy for both sides, and that while the Arabs are seen as Israel's adversaries and enemies they are also Israel's allies in the struggle to end the conflict.

Papua New Guinea wishes to reiterate that the key to peace in the Middle East is a change in attitudes by all parties to the conflict. Both parties must be willing to make concessions in order to reach an agreement.

In this regard we would appeal to the Israelis to recognize the rights of the Palestinians to self-determination, including that of establishing a Palestinian homeland. Equally, we appeal to the Palestinians, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), to recognize the State of Israel to exist within safe and secure borders. Neither people can claim its human and political rights at the expense of the other's.

While Papua New Guinea welcomes the five-point peace proposals for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, as announced by the United States Secretary of State on 1 November, we are none the less sceptical about this proposal's chances of success without the involvement of the PLO. Papua New Guinea is convinced that the PLO will have to be involved in any negotiations leading to a long-term settlement in the occupied territories. We believe that any attempt to drive a wedge between the PLO and the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza is doomed to fail.

Papua New Guinea appreciates the Israeli position on negotiations with the PLO. However, it is our firm belief that there has been a profound and sincere

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

evolution in the Palestinian position. Therefore, Israel must recognize the role of the PLO and must accept the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Allow me to share some of Papua New Guinea's practical experiences during its decolonization process.

From the period up to Papua New Guinea's self-government and independence our leaders were considered as extreme radicals and a threat to accepted United Nations decolonization principles and practices. Furthermore, some feared that we might massacre anyone who was not a genuine Papua New Guinean. Such fear was so widespread that many people left the country. But at independence there was no bloodshed, no political turmoil and no recriminations. In fact, a lot of people who were considered to be terrorists and radicals turned out to be quite responsible when they got into power and into responsible positions. In the words of our first Governor-General, Sir John Guise, "We lowered the Australian flag with dignity and honour; we did not tear it down".

In this regard, we believe that the only real and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict will come not from military might, but from a negotiated settlement based on justice and a shared recognition of the aspirations of all parties. This calls for a compromise by both parties.

We are aware that the suspicions, fear, hatred and distrust of one another which have built up over the years are hard to shake off. But for the sake of peace and harmony in the region, and to end the suffering of its people, both parties should endeavour to achieve a genuine settlement. Therefore, the Israelis must involve the PLO in any settlement negotiations, despite the hostility of many who suffered from its activities and hated all it stood for. This may sound impossible, but we believe that if there are ever to be any sort of productive negotiation it must include the PLO.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

On 9 December the intifadah will enter its third year. We see the intifadah as a phase in a continuing Palestinian struggle for the Palestinians' national identity as a people that wants a homeland in which to live in peace. Its ultimate goal - Palestinian independence - has been advanced by the intifadah - the uprising of young Palestinians who have given irrefutable proof of the sacrifices they are willing to make for their cause.

Like any liberation struggle, that of the Palestinians has contributed something to facilitate peace-making. The Israelis must realize that peace in the Middle East, especially in the occupied territories, cannot be advanced by imposing more and more demands.

Papua New Guinea has great admiration for Israel's achievements, its courage, talent, determination and patriotism; and successive Governments have upheld Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized boundaries. But we could not regard Israel as having a monopoly of right, nor the sentiments of the Palestinians as being without justice. It is our firm belief that ultimately no good can come from being blind to all causes but one's own.

We are grieved by the suffering of the Palestinian people whose human rights are being violated by Israeli authorities in the West Bank and Gaza. At the same time, we are grieved by the dilemma in which the Israeli people now find themselves. Papua New Guinea reads the policy of the current Israeli Government as being in sharp contradiction to Israel's founding principles.

To conclude, I wish to reaffirm that the basis for a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is found in the provisions and principles of Security Council resolution 242 (1967). The most important provision of resolution 242 calls for withdrawal of Israel's armed forces from territories occupied in 1967, and recognition by all the States in the region of Israel's right to exist and the right of all States to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

Papua New Guinea believes that the Camp David agreements were concluded on the basis of Security Council resolution 242 (1967). The significance for Israel of these and the peace treaty was that they were intended to be a first step towards a peace agreement with other Arab States.

The change in the international climate which was initiated by the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, is of incalculable importance and provides a firm basis for a consensus for peace in the Middle East. We encourage Israel and the Arab States to take advantage of this favourable political climate.

Mr. TRINH XUAN LANG (Viet Nam): The question of Palestine has been high on the agenda of the international community and of the United Nations over the last four decades. It constitutes the core of the Middle East crisis, which remains unresolved and continues to be a source of tension and a flashpoint, threatening international peace and security and depriving the nations of the region of a life in peace and stability for development. The long failure to put principles of international law into effect in the region and to resolve the political issues at stake has also caused widespread and serious human suffering.

(Mr. Trinh Xuan Lang, Viet Nam)

The root cause of the problem was and continues to be Israel's policy of expansion, aggression and terrorism; its intransigence in pursuing this policy; and its rejection of entering into any viable, reasonable search for a just and lasting solution to the question. The Palestinian people have long been the victims of that policy of Israel. For four decades the people of Palestine have been denied their most sacred national right: the right to self-determination and statehood. Israel has sought, with brutality and treachery, to stifle the Palestinian national identity and to suppress any expression in this regard by that people. As a result more than half of the Palestinian population has been forced to live in exile and as refugees while the other half has languished under Israel's brutal occupation and repression.

The international community and the United Nations have repeatedly demanded over the years the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and the immediate end to their acts of repression and annexation. The magnitude and seriousness of the situation now prevailing, with all its dangerous implications for peace in the region and in the world over, urgently requires a durable comprehensive solution that guarantees the genuine exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights.

For four decades the people of Palestine have aspired to and nurtured the ardent hope that the day will come when they can be the true masters of their homeland and destiny. To this end they have struggled courageously and persistently. Their just cause has obtained the support of the entire progressive humanity.

Two years ago the Palestinian people entered a new phase in their national liberation struggle with the popular intifadah. Ever since, the intifadah has grown and gained greater momentum and impact. It reflects the resolute will for freedom and self-determination of that people that cannot be subdued by force of

(Mr. Trinh Xuan Lang, Viet Nam)

arms. In this forum Viet Nam once again expresses its most sincere sympathy with and vigorous support for the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), their sole, legitimate representative.

The intifadah has further underscored the need to bring an end to Israel's illegal occupation. If the question is left to linger on unresolved, bloodshed and suffering by the Palestinian people will continue. The course of events during the last two years has pushed to the forefront the comprehensive settlement of the question. A greater impetus must therefore be given to international efforts aimed at seeking ways to a just, practical solution to the conflict in the region as a whole.

With the recent far-reaching developments in world politics, a complex process has been unfolding in the search for political solutions to the many drawn-out regional conflicts. The process has, however, presented us with both opportunities and challenges. Resolute political will and efforts are therefore required of all parties concerned if the political settlement of a conflict is to be achieved.

Last year witnessed events of historic significance in the search for solutions to the Middle East question. At its special session held in Algiers, the Palestine National Council adopted important initiatives aimed at achieving peace that will guarantee the legitimate rights of all parties concerned. They were further reaffirmed by the Chairman of the PLO in his statement in Geneva during the course of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. The PLO peace initiatives were welcomed by people all over the world for their courage, realism and responsibility and as initiatives that could pave the way to achieve a framework for a negotiated settlement. But these met with Israel's outright rejection and continued use of force against the intifadah. Intransigence and force of arms, if continued as they have been up to now, will only increase bloodshed and the uncertainty of the situation and block the search for peace. We

(Mr. Trinh Xuan Lang, Viet Nam)

share the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his report

"that time is passing and that opportunities that have emerged in the past 12 months might slip away". (A/44/731, para. 7)

Therefore the new momentum initiated with the PLO decision on the peace process must not be lost but be maintained and strengthened. It is now up to Israel to respond through flexibility and concrete actions. Greater international pressure should be exerted in this regard.

Universally accepted principles for the achievement of a durable peace in the Middle East have been underlined over the years. Any just, lasting and comprehensive solution must be based on the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem; the guarantee of security and legitimate rights for the parties concerned; and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, including their right to return and to establish an independent, sovereign State in their homeland. Viet Nam supports the early convening of an international conference on the Middle East for this purpose, with the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO, on an equal footing. While Israel's policies remain the only major obstacle in the quest for peace in the region, the Security Council, in particular its permanent members, should exert dynamism and assume the responsibilities entrusted to them to work on and clear the way for the holding of the conference through practical steps, including the setting up of a preparatory committee.

After decades of arduous struggle, the State of Palestine was proclaimed on 15 November last year. This marked the maturity of the Palestinian people's struggle and national consciousness. On that occasion, Viet Nam soon extended its official recognition. At its Ninth Summit Meeting in Belgrade this year, the Non-Aligned Movement welcomed the State of Palestine as a full-fledged member. The fact that the proclamation of the State of Palestine has been welcomed by a

(Mr. Trinh Xuan Lang, Viet Nam)

majority of States demonstrates world-wide support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people and for the constructive policies adopted by the State of Palestine. We hope that soon they will be able to regain their inalienable national rights.

Mr. ZAFOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia): The question of Palestine has been one of the most urgent items on the agenda of the General Assembly for several years. Yet, it remains unresolved.

The intifadah, a mass uprising of the Palestinians in the West Bank, in the Gaza Strip and in Jerusalem, which has continued with unabated intensity since December 1987, shows very clearly the untenability of the status quo in the Middle East.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

It confirms the fact that the Palestinian people will never put up with the continued absence of a solution to this problem, despite Israeli efforts to use force to crush the uprising. It is the most significant factor highlighting the need for a general settlement in the Middle East. At the same time it gives a strong impulse to international efforts in the search for a practical solution to the entire Middle East crisis.

It is hardly conceivable that Israeli leaders still rely on forcible means to impose a solution of the issue of Palestine. The policy of terror, intimidation and deportations that they practise has no historical perspective. The democratic Israeli public also realizes that stability and security cannot be achieved for Israel unless the accumulated problems linked with the question of Palestine are resolved on a mutually acceptable basis. Partial steps not intended to tackle all aspects of this tangle of problems can only postpone, rather than constitute, an overall settlement.

The United Nations General Assembly has adopted a whole series of resolutions providing for the recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinians, including their right to self-determination and to establish their own independent State, and determining unequivocally the foundations of a just solution of the question of Palestine as the core of the whole Middle East crisis. So far Israel has rejected these resolutions. However, new, positive tendencies have been finding their way increasingly into the present system of international relations, a transition from confrontation to dialogue and co-operation is taking place, and universal human interests are coming to the fore. The international community will have noted substantial movement towards extinguishing many other hotbeds of tension on our earth. In many cases and to a considerable degree the United Nations has taken part in this process.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

Czechoslovakia is highly appreciative of the fact that the representatives of the suffering Palestinian population have actively subscribed to new approaches to the solution of conflict situations. This was clearly demonstrated from the rostrum of this Organization in Geneva a year ago, at the forty-third session of the General Assembly, by Yasser Arafat, the highest representative of the Palestinian people and of the proclaimed State of Palestine. The realistic and constructive course that the Palestine Liberation Organization is pursuing has received wide support throughout the world. It does not help matters that the hand offered by the Palestinians and their offer of negotiations and relaxation of tension have not so far been accepted by Israel.

In the framework of the Organization there is a fairly clear understanding of the need to carry through the process of restoring the rights of the Palestinian people. There is an unambiguous understanding of the necessity for an early, just solution of the question of Palestine. The United Nations has a great historical responsibility in respect of the Palestinian people, whose tragic fate is a heavy burden in the context of the development of international relations and casts a dark shadow on the entire international community.

We are convinced that the most viable way of resolving the question of Palestine and reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East crisis would be through an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned. Such a conference is also generally regarded as the most suitable mechanism for the peaceful settlement of the long-drawn-out regional conflict, at the core of which is the issue of Palestine. Chances of success will increase if all sides demonstrate the will to remove, through patient and constructive negotiations, the obstacles to the convening of the conference.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

A major step in this direction was taken by the Palestinians when, at a session of the Palestine National Council in Algiers in November last year, they recognized General Assembly resolution 181 (II), on the partition of Palestine, and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as the basis for a settlement of the crisis and of its core, the question of Palestine. The Palestine Liberation Organization has recognized the existence of the State of Israel, at the same time condemning all forms of terrorism. This is not an isolated Palestinian move; it has been followed by practical deeds.

The prerequisite for setting in motion the peace mechanism is that realistic action by one side be reciprocated by the other side. This is the only way to find a compromise solution to all disputed issues that rests on a balance of the interests of all participants and on respect for their legitimate rights. In saying this, we are aware that Israeli-Palestinian relations are extremely complicated. It is not easy to surmount the deep-seated injustice, animosity and suspicion of decades or to subdue mistrust. There are undoubtedly no easy solutions; nevertheless, we see real hope emerging.

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has on many occasions stated its position on the exercise of their rights by the Palestinian people. We fully support the just struggle of the Palestinian people and will continue to provide all possible political support and material assistance to the Palestine Liberation Organization in its efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to this key question of the Middle East conflict. This position was the basis of our recognition of the proclaimed State of Palestine. We support all open-minded efforts to achieve peace in that region of the world.

Mr. SALLAH (Gambia): Once again the General Assembly is called upon to consider the question of Palestine, which for well over four decades has been a major concern of the international community given the magnitude and gravity of the

(Mr. Sallah, Gambia)

threat that it continues to pose to international peace and security. That is the reason for the compelling urgency of concerted international efforts to help chart a new course for the early achievement of a permanent solution to the question of Palestine and a lasting peace in the entire region of the Middle East, which for too long has endured immense agony and suffering.

It is indeed disappointing to all members of the international community, particularly those that have an abiding faith in the noble and lofty principles enshrined in the Charter, that the question of Palestine, despite all the energy exerted and resources deployed by the United Nations, still remains, to our utter regret and dismay, a bedeviling priority among issues on our agenda at successive sessions. In spite of various peace moves and initiatives, we seem to be far from a just and lasting solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, owing to Israel's continued intransigence and the fact that it disregards utterly and with impunity the numerous resolutions and decisions of the Organization. Israel cannot continue to believe that it can ensure its own security by creating insecurity for its neighbours.

It is unfortunate that, instead of negotiating viable agreements on coexistence and the sharing of the land and the available resources in the Middle East, Israel, working on the predetermined, preconceived rationale of a Greater Israel, continues to confiscate and to dispossess, intimidate and kill Palestinians. This process is so severe that open conflict in the area is bound to continue. Armed confrontation is inevitable and war a consequence. My delegation cannot understand how a people that witnessed and experienced perhaps the worst atrocities ever perpetrated on man could, in turn, unleash on other human beings the type of brutal force that we have seen in Palestine.

(Mr. Sallah, Gambia)

The Palestinians are no different from any other people when their inalienable rights are violated. Such violations tend to arouse a basic primordial response, rooted in most human beings and elicited for the protection of their dignity and property when they are threatened. The liberation struggle of the Palestinian people, labelled by Israel as "terrorism", is no more than the struggle waged by valiant freedom fighters in South Africa or Kampuchea or by any other oppressed people when they have found it necessary to extricate themselves from the effects of tyranny. It is always the sum total of transgressions on the basic human rights of people that elicits the type of response they employ. It is the view of my delegation that the Palestinians are definitely not terrorists.

The struggle of the Palestinian people should be seen in the context of their fundamental rights and freedom from aggression and oppression, the recognition of their inalienable rights and the opportunity to exercise those rights within their own borders - as a distinct people, a viable entity, working in peace and harmony with all in the area of conflict, helping each other design their distinct destiny, like other peoples since the beginning of the human race.

Against that background and from the position of a people from a continent which has experienced tyranny, slavery, degradation and death, we realize the need for the struggle of the Palestinian people in order to achieve their inalienable rights and freedoms in the context of an independent Palestinian State and sovereign domain, which would coexist in peace with all other States in the area within secure and recognized boundaries. It is because of this cherished dream that my delegation joins other like-minded delegations in placing before the Assembly yet again the case of the people of Palestine.

In making this presentation on behalf of my delegation on this important issue today I do not intend simply to register another protest and condemnation. Such

(Mr. Sallah, Gambia)

protests and ~~condemns~~ demonstrations have already been made by my country and by many others in the Assembly and elsewhere over the years. This presentation is made because of our genuine concern about the plight of the Palestinian people and the transgressions by Israel against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories despite all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations on the subject. We do so in order to register from this rostrum a solemn appeal to Israel to end the cycle of violence against the innocent Palestinian people and to respond positively to the peace initiatives launched by President Mubarak of Egypt and others. The Gambia, as a significant part of the foremost defenders of the human rights of our people and those of others which this Organization represents, appeals to Israel to implement the resolutions this Assembly and the Security Council have already seen fit to adopt.

During the past two years the world has witnessed an outburst of popular protests in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967. The Palestine popular uprising, commonly known as the intifadah, undoubtedly represents a direct and legitimate reaction to long years of oppressive occupation and portrays in no uncertain terms a people determined in its struggle for the fulfilment of its inalienable right to self-determination.

This outcry for justice, in which unarmed Palestinian civilians lift their voices and risk their lives in heroic defiance of Israeli illegal presence on their territory, should inspire all just and peace-loving peoples to greater and more forceful efforts to put an end to the brutal use of force, as evidenced by the iron-fist policies of the occupation forces.

Israel's reaction to the intifadah has been characterized by an unprecedented degree of both brutality and confusion. In its attempts to quell the intifadah Israel has deployed thousands of troops, security forces and settlers. It has used

(Mr. Sallah, Gambia)

helicopters to attack demonstrators with tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition. Consequently, hundreds of Palestinians have been killed or wounded, with many handicapped for life. Under the guise of maintaining its security Israel has pursued a host of policies detrimental to Palestinian society. It has confiscated Arab land and launched an aggressive settlement policy which has left the West Bank and Gaza fragmented both geographically and demographically.

The most recent Israeli reaction to the intifadah, as the Palestinians were celebrating the first anniversary of the Algiers Declaration proclaiming the Palestinian State, was the brutal use of force against the unarmed civilian population, sealing off Gaza, imposing curfews and cutting off all external communications with the territory. My delegation views those developments with grave concern, and we call upon Israel to put an end to human rights violations in the occupied territories and to adhere to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The 23-month-long intifadah is indeed a consequence of the endless suffering of the Palestinian people, but the depth of the sustained will to resist, the popular scope of the unrest, its duration and the courage that the Palestinians continue to display are clearly unprecedented. The intifadah has created a strong sense of solidarity and co-operation among the Palestinians and all peace-loving peoples all over the world. Indeed it has advanced the prospects for peace, for it has educated the world community about the real nature of this seemingly intractable problem and consequently what must be done to find a quick solution to it.

The intifadah has revealed to the world the fact that the Arab-Israeli conflict persists not so much because Israel is endangered but more because Palestinian existence is threatened. The daily encounters between unarmed

(Mr. Sallah, Gambia)

Palestinian protesters and Israeli troops have proved beyond doubt to the international community that Palestinian nationalism is here to stay and that it cannot be ignored, suppressed, by-passed or sentenced in absentia.

My delegation views with grave concern the rapid deterioration of the living conditions of the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation of their territories. We therefore reaffirm our total objection to the brutal use of force against the Palestinian people. We consider those repressive and abhorrent measures by the Israeli authorities as being totally incompatible and completely at variance with the special responsibility incumbent on Israel as an occupying Power under the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and under international humanitarian law, namely, the Hague Convention of 1907.

In spite of the repeated appeals of the Security Council, especially in its resolutions 607 (1988) and 608 (1988), and the entire international community in General Assembly resolution 43/21, it is heart-rending to learn in particular from the most recent annual report of the Secretary-General of 8 September 1989, that in the occupied territories "widespread violation of human rights persists"

(A/44/1, p. 8).

My delegation takes strong exception to any further attempts by Israel to establish additional settlements in the illegally occupied territories and make any further change in the status and character of the Holy City of Jerusalem. Those measures are undoubtedly a testimony to Israel's avowed determination to maintain Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, reinforcing the critical problems which already exist. The Gambia, as a member of the Islamic Conference, subscribed fully to the views already expressed by the Islamic Foreign Ministers and the Assembly of the Heads of State on the question of Palestine.

(Mr. Sallah, Gambia)

In reasserting our call for a just and permanent settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict we would like to reaffirm our full support for the heroic intifadah, which has won the sympathy of world public opinion and drawn attention to the urgent need for Israel and the Arabs to embark on an effective negotiating process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), taking into full account the long overdue restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including above all their rights to self-determination, independence and sovereignty in their independent State of Palestine, as so eloquently stated and so fervently demonstrated by the popular uprising in the occupied territories.

My delegation sees it as in the best interest of peace in the area to demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all Arab land occupied since 1967, including the city of Al Quds Al Sharif - Jerusalem - also occupied in 1967. We humbly suggest further that the Security Council consider the adoption of mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter, in order to pressure Israel to implement all relevant United Nations resolutions.

(Mr. Sallah, Gambia)

In the global search for peace in the war-torn Middle East, we salute the constructive and realistic attitude of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as a dynamic contribution to the peace process. This is manifested in the decisions adopted by the Palestine National Council in Algiers in November 1988, in the Palestine peace initiative announced by President Yasser Arafat in Geneva in December 1988 during the General Assembly's forty-third session, and in his restated willingness to negotiate "at any time and in any place".

Israel however, while pretending to welcome negotiations, puts forward the unrealistic claim that genuine negotiations can take place only without the involvement of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Recent moves to bring about a dialogue between Israel and a so-called Palestinian delegation to prepare the ground for elections on interim autonomy in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, in accordance with Israel's own election plan, seem to plant the seeds of disunity in Palestinian ranks and exclude the PLO from direct negotiations. These and other, related tactics are geared towards frustrating genuine endeavours for peace and stability in the region.

Any attempt to impose a substitute for the PLO leadership is unacceptable to my delegation. We believe that no one has any right whatsoever to dictate to the Palestinians who should speak for them. Indeed, such attempts have been vehemently rejected by the Palestinians themselves, and we continue to support the view that the Palestine Liberation Organization remains the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The best hope, therefore, for a durable and comprehensive solution of the Middle East problem lies in recognition by Israel of the leadership role the PLO has to play in any international settlement of the question of Palestine, and in determining the priorities and concerns of the Palestinian people. No genuine and meaningful dialogue within the framework of any peace process can be conceived outside the reality of peaceful relations with the

(Mr. Sallah, Gambia)

Palestinians under PLO leadership and on the basis of mutual respect and equality between the parties directly involved in the conflict.

In the context of the prevailing international climate of ~~cooperation~~ and détente, my delegation, in keeping with General Assembly resolutions 33/58 C and 42/66 D would like to underscore the necessity of convening the ~~International Peace~~ Conference on the Middle East, and on its core, the Palestinian ~~issue~~, under United Nations auspices and with the participation of all parties to the conflict in the region, including the PLO, on an equal footing. In this connection we should like, further, to endorse the appeal to the Security Council to initiate the necessary measures for the early convening of the Conference, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, as rightly proposed by Presidents Gorbachev and Mitterrand.

Furthermore, we should like to register our support for the provision of certain safeguards by the Security Council - namely, the placing of the occupied Palestinian territories under United Nations supervision for a limited period in order to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people and to create an atmosphere conducive to the attainment of a comprehensive political settlement and the achievement of peace and security in the region.

In this regard we should also like to express our appreciation of the efforts made by friendly countries to help ensure the safety and well-being of distressed and displaced Palestinians in refugee camps. We sincerely hope that the international community will continue to respond positively to the repeated appeals by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for the generous provision, in accordance with pertinent United Nations resolutions, of the humanitarian and relief assistance so desperately needed to help alleviate the plight of the suffering Palestinian refugees and the distressed Palestinians resident in the occupied territories.

(Mr. Sallah, Gambia)

In conclusion, my delegation would like to join all the previous speakers who have requested that the full authority of the United Nations, including the Security Council, be brought to bear on the continued dangerous threat to international peace and security posed by the situation in the Middle East. It cannot, therefore, be overemphasized that the Palestinian civilians in these occupied territories are entitled to protection under international law.

We pay a tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his noble efforts in the continued search for a peaceful solution to the Middle East problem. We also congratulate the Chairman and members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on their comprehensive and useful report.

I must state once again that enough people have died in the Middle East; enough land has been destroyed; enough indignities have been suffered; enough evidence has been seen to verify and justify the claims of the people transgressed against; the Palestinians who live in fear of their lives and in fear of the loss of their property and livelihood, both within the State of Israel and in neighbouring States, and in particular within the illegally occupied Arab lands.

It is the dispersion and suffering of millions of Palestinians that cry out for termination. It is their dispossessed condition and lack of a place to call home that demand rectification. It is towards the complete and total redressing of the plight and condition of the Palestinian people, whose cause is the crux of the Middle East problem, that this statement is directed. It is towards that end that my delegation presents its position on this issue.

Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Mongolia): The aggravation of the Middle East problem and of its quintessence - the question of Palestine - stands in stark contrast to the ongoing positive changes in the world, in particular the considerable progress achieved in resolving a number of regional conflicts. Indeed, the Middle East

(Mr. Erdenechulun, Mongolia)

crisis remains the single regional conflict on which, despite the consistent and painstaking efforts of the world community, no tangible progress towards a peaceful settlement has so far been made.

The reasons for such a state of affairs have been amply articulated by previous speakers. An absolute majority holds a unanimous view that the root cause of this entrenched and highly dangerous crisis is the expansionist policy of Israel, which deprives the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination and led to the occupation of Arab territories. Today this policy manifests itself in the escalation of repression in order to stifle the heroic intifadah of the Palestinian people by brute force, and in the aggressive actions of Israeli settlers. As is noted in the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories

"the situation in the occupied territories has been marked by a dangerous level of violence and repression, which has constantly escalated since the start of the uprising of the Palestinian population against occupation in December 1987". (A/44/599, para. 329)

The intifadah in the occupied territories has once again demonstrated the determination of the Palestinian people to be free and independent. The Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization has rightly pointed out that

"it is the political aspects of the problem that have to be addressed if an end is to be put to the confrontations that occur almost daily throughout the occupied territories". (A/44/1, p. 8)

He has, in particular, drawn attention to

"the urgent need for an effective negotiating process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and taking fully into account

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including that of self-determination". (ibid.)

We fully share his view that

"The longer such a process is delayed, the greater will be the difficulties in initiating it and the more explosive the situation can become". (ibid.)

There have emerged certain dangerous developments which further exacerbate the situation in the Middle East.

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

The prospects for restoring national unity in Lebanon have once again been overshadowed by the recent assassination of the President of that country. This terrorist act has been strongly condemned by the international community and rightly been qualified as an attack upon the unity of Lebanon, and the ongoing process of normalization of the situation in the country on the basis of the Taif agreement achieved as a result of efforts of the Tripartite Committee of the League of Arab States. We hope that the newly formed Government in Lebanon will help further the process of national reconciliation lately set in motion and achieve peace and tranquillity in that country.

Speaking about the complexity of the Middle East situation, one should mention the grave fact that this region is being increasingly drawn into the arms race. The arsenals of the countries involved in the conflict are being reinforced with missiles and chemical weapons. The reported nuclear collaboration between Israel and South Africa gives rise to growing concern in the world community. The situation in the Persian Gulf remains complex and precarious.

Evaluating the present situation in the Middle East as explosive and, by and large, stalemated, we, on the other hand, are far from underestimating the important steps taken by various countries as well as active multilateral efforts undertaken to create pre-conditions for the political settlement of the Middle East problem.

The constructive step taken by the Palestine National Council at the end of last year in the spirit of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), created new conditions and opportunities for taking international action aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem. The proclamation of the State of Palestine and the support of this historic act by the majority of countries are of great importance in furthering that objective.

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

Here, we would like to note that Mongolia was among the first to recognize the proclamation of the State of Palestine and to establish diplomatic relations with it. It is only natural that the Resident Mission of Palestine in Ulaanbaatar has been upgraded into an Embassy.

We note considerable intensification of diplomatic activities undertaken of late by a number of countries in order to facilitate the resolution of the Middle East problem. One may also discern a tendency towards broadening the basis of co-operation of Arab States to this end.

The Mongolian People's Republic supports every endeavour that could help resolve the Middle East crisis. We continue to believe that a comprehensive solution to this complex and difficult problem can and should be found through a collective international effort, that is, by convening the Peace Conference on the Middle East, and Palestine, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on an equal footing. It is gratifying to note that a broad international consensus is emerging as regards the convening of such a conference. The Security Council, by virtue of its tasks under the Charter, should play an important role in this matter.

We hope that active consultations initiated by the Secretary-General, with the permanent and other members of the Security Council as well as with the parties to the conflict, will bear fruit and lay the groundwork for the practical preparation of the Conference. We note with interest a proposal to hold consultations between the permanent members of the Security Council at the level of experts, with the subsequent involvement in such consultations of parties to the conflict. It goes without saying that these do not necessarily exhaust ways and means which could promote the convening of the Conference.

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

We believe that the resolution on enhancing international peace, security and international co-operation in all its aspects in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations unanimously adopted a few days ago, gives rise to hope that the United States and the Soviet Union - the main sponsors of this important resolution - will provide fresh impetus to their efforts to resolve the Middle East crisis in the genuine interests of the peace and security of the peoples of this region.

The Mongolian delegation emphasizes anew that the comprehensive political solution to the Middle East problem is possible solely on the basis of a balance of the legitimate interests of all the parties. Such an approach implies, above all, the elimination of the root causes of the conflict, namely the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories occupied since 1967, ensuring the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States of the region, including Israel.

In conclusion, I should like to note that the Mongolian delegation commends the active endeavours of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People aimed at mobilizing international public opinion in support of the struggle of the Palestinian people for their legitimate rights and at facilitating an early and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem. My delegation fully supports the draft resolution contained in document A/44/L.43 relating to the work of that Committee.

Mr. TSOKODAYI (Zimbabwe): The current favourable trend in the international political climate has been conducive to the peaceful resolution of some conflicts around the world, which in turn has given impetus to efforts towards resolving other conflict situations. While this positive trend is encouraging and gives us hopes that threats to international peace and security will continue to be

(Mr. Tsokodayi, Zimbabwe)

effectively addressed, we nevertheless have to contend with some harsh realities of our times and acknowledge that we have yet to see some of the intractable conflicts resolved. It is in this category of intractable conflicts that we place the situation in the Middle East, at the core of which is the question of Palestine.

The question of Palestine is an issue that deals essentially with the quest for self-determination of a people in its own homeland and the accompanying full enjoyment of human rights, which can be realized only when the first condition is met. The question of Palestine has put to the test the commitment of States Members of the United Nations to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The vast majority of States Members of the United Nations, in both the General Assembly and the Security Council, have time and again expressed their unequivocal conviction that a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine can be achieved only through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation, on an equal footing, of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and the permanent members of the Security Council. Zimbabwe fully subscribes to this position, as we have always done in the past. What is needed at this time is to have the Security Council step up its efforts towards resolving this issue by working towards the convening of such a conference. In this connection, we take cognizance of the special relationship between Israel and the United States and call upon the latter to prevail upon the former to understand that piecemeal measures, which preclude the participation of the PLO, cannot give Israel the peace with its neighbours, which it purports to cherish, in the Middle East. Israel should be strongly advised that circumscribed elections in the occupied Palestinian territories will not quell the intifadah, in which the Palestinian people have shown so much

(Mr. Tsokodayi, Zimbabwe)

resilience in the face of great odds. Israel should be reminded that history has proved that the just struggle of a people for the enjoyment of their right to self-determination will always triumph. It might be stifled for a brief period of time, but such a just cause will always be realized sooner or later. The only price Israel has to pay, which is no real price at all, is to return to the Palestinians that which rightfully belongs to them, their right to self-determination.

(Mr. Tsokodayi, Zimbabwe)

Israel cannot seriously think of peace within internationally recognized borders without meeting the basic requirement of withdrawing from the occupied territories. Israel might want to introduce other formulas with the intention of sowing division among Palestinians within the occupied territories, on the one hand, and those outside, on the other. Such ploys have no chance of succeeding. We urge Israel not to burden the Palestinians and the international community with formulas that are unworkable and unrealistic. The bottom line for Israel is to agree to participate in the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and to negotiate with the PLO.

As we address the question of Palestine, the intifadah continues unabated notwithstanding the brutal and inhuman response of Israel. These inhuman Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territories are a cause for great anguish, horror and revulsion on the part of the international community.

In his statement to the Special Political Committee, on 24 October 1989, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) pointed out that the year has been a hard one for the Palestinians in the occupied territory. He said that the human costs in the intifadah were staggering and that the detentions, woundings and killings and the constant interference with economic and productive activities and the disruption of traditional family life and values were ripping the social fabric of the entire Palestinian community. In giving prompt and effective responses to the plight of the Palestinians, UNRWA has encountered barriers of red tape erected against it by Israel. He stated that the Israeli occupying forces were increasingly unco-operative and at times even hostile. Repeated raids on the premises and installations of UNRWA, the stopping of ambulances and assaults on medical staff and detention of wounded persons are some of the abhorrent practices of the Israeli military personnel.

(Mr. Tsokodayi, Zimbabwe)

The sad picture that is portrayed in that statement as well as the accompanying reports on the subject are grim reminders to the international community of the hardship the Palestinian people are experiencing. The Israeli policy is to strike at UNRWA since UNRWA's mandate is to alleviate the plight of the Palestinians. We condemn such policies and practices in the strongest terms.

The report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories gives us yet more evidence of the suffering of the Palestinians. The report chronicles policy statements by the Israeli Government over the past year regarding the occupied territories. These covered the decision to allow unrestricted use of the new plastic bullets, which doctors have equated to live ammunition, against stone throwers and demonstrators. The declared aim is to increase injuries and casualties, not in self-defence, but in order to stop the uprising and to impose a total curfew in the occupied territories.

We are told that an undercover army unit code-named "Duvdevan" was operating in the West Bank to capture Arabs throwing petrol bombs and rocks and that the unit had verbal orders to shoot to kill. A similar unit code-named "Samson", was operating in the Gaza Strip. These policies, among others, and the machinery which the Israelis have put into place to try and suppress the intifadah are reminiscent of those of the apartheid régime in Pretoria. In both cases excessive use of brute force appears to be the panacea in dealing with the forces of change. This misguided notion has earned the two régimes pariah status in the international community, and it is not surprising that the two should be collaborating in a number of areas, including the military field. Isolation of those régimes should

(Mr. Tsokodayi, Zimbabwe)

be maintained and strengthened as long as the just causes of the peoples of Palestine and South Africa remain unfulfilled.*

Last week the Special Political Committee adopted a number of draft resolutions which, one way or another, deal with the question of Palestine. Through those resolutions the Committee reiterates the positions it has maintained in the past. The thrust of the resolutions is to address the situation of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and the hardships that arise from the Israeli occupation. Their substance is largely unchanged, precisely because the situation has not improved at all. Instead, it has progressively deteriorated, and Israel, as befits a State that does not abide by the rule of law and the norms of civilized behaviour, refuses to implement the resolutions or comply with them.

The intifadah is partly the result of Israel's non-compliance with the resolutions of the United Nations. Those who want to see the intifadah cease should first ensure that all the resolutions of the United Nations are implemented pending a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question. Until then, the Palestinians can ill afford to fold their arms and lick their wounds in the face of the repressive measures being meted out against them. The choice of whether or not to bring about a climate conducive to serious and constructive dialogue lies with Israel itself. The continued use of force cannot be an option because it will merely fuel the intifadah.

The winds of change blowing around the world have left their mark on some regions. We hope that they will soon have a significant impact on the situation in the Middle East and, consequently, on the question of Palestine. We should all

* Mr. Sallah (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Tsokodayi, Zimbabwe)

seize the opportunity to help the Palestinians achieve their just cause. The Security Council shoulders the primary responsibility in this regard. As long as we fail to resolve this question, the Palestinians will continue to suffer and die at the hands of the Israelis. Zimbabwe remains committed to supporting the just cause of the Palestinian people in their struggle for their inalienable rights for human dignity, justice and peace.

Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): I am addressing the Assembly at a time when the heroic intifadah of the Palestinian people is exactly two years old, thus bearing witness to the perseverance and the resolve of the Palestinian people in its struggle to reject and to end the Israeli occupation, which has been going on since 1967. Faced with this reaffirmation of its aspirations and its inalienable rights, the international community, relying on resolutions, decisions and recommendations adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council and also on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is entitled to demand that the Palestinian people be allowed to exercise its right to self-determination without external interference; its right to independence and national sovereignty; its right to return to its homeland and to regain its property; and, finally, its right to establish an independent and sovereign State.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,
Zaire)

The Palestinian people cannot be kept apart from the progress and the positive consequences of the East-West rapprochement and the strengthening of the spirit of détente that can be seen in the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts throughout the world.

The Palestinian people cannot be isolated or excluded from the evolving process in international relations which has led to the application of resolution 435 (1978) of the Security Council in favour of the Namibian people, the implementation of the agreement of 15 April 1988 ordering the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, and the Protocol on the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Democratic Kampuchea. In short that people cannot be ignored at a time in history strongly marked by a general improvement in the international climate.

The legitimacy of its struggle is concomitant with its recognized rights as a people aspiring to peace and autonomy, as in the cases of Namibia, Afghanistan and Democratic Kampuchea.

The context of the heroic struggle for the liberation of the Palestinian people cannot be placed outside a global approach to the peaceful settlement of the conflict, as prescribed by the United Nations Charter, Article 33 of which states:

"The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice."

The Security Council is thus called upon to assume its responsibility pursuant to paragraph 2 of the same Article of the Charter, Article 33, to call upon the parties to settle their dispute by such means.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,
Zaire)

Has the Security Council not in this connection adopted its resolutions 607 (1988), 608 (1988) and 641 (1989), calling on Israel, the occupying Power, to annul the deportation orders on Palestinian civilians and to ensure the immediate return in all security to the occupied Palestinian territories of those already deported? The Security Council thus again reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, applies to Palestinian territories and to the other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem.

Israel was also required by those resolutions to refrain from deporting Palestinian civilians from the occupied territories and to respect the obligations imposed upon it by the Geneva Convention.

The tension in the Arab territories occupied by Israel has reached disturbing proportions: the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces or armed settlers has reached 537, while 212 other Palestinians have died as a result of blows inflicted on them, the inhalation of tear gas or other causes connected with the actions of the occupation forces. Those barbaric reprisals have revealed the will of the occupation forces to strike at children less than 16 years of age, whose percentage of the casualty count rose to 46 per cent in 1989 - from 20 per cent in 1988.

The occupation forces fire upon demonstrators, using combat ordnance against those armed only with stones, those who have merely raised barricades or burned tyres. The occupation forces have inflicted untold suffering upon the Palestinians and increased the violence by thus violating the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 and also, and above all, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,
Zaire)

On 10 December, the General Assembly will be observing the forty-first anniversary of that fundamental instrument which guarantees basic human rights and in its article 2 states as follows:

"Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

"Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty."

The level reached in international relations at this end of the twentieth century should no longer permit any return to the barbarous acts the world has experienced in the two world wars and throughout colonialization, with all its adverse effects, which marked the beginning of the century.

Since the United Nations symbolizes in more than one respect the result of those wars and was created to preserve succeeding generations from the scourge of war which has brought untold sorrow to mankind, the Organization has through the General Assembly attempted from the very outset to settle the question relating to the partition of Palestine.

In this connection, we should recall that at its 128th plenary meeting, on 29 November 1947, the General Assembly asked the Security Council to take necessary measures with a view to implementing the Palestine Plan of Partition. If up to now the Security Council has not fulfilled its obligations and responsibilities with respect to that Plan, which advocates a Jewish State on the one hand and an Arab State on the other, in conformity with resolution 181 (II), whereby the armed

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Zaire)

forces of the mandatory Power in Palestine, namely, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, were to complete their withdrawal not later than 1 August 1948 in order to ensure the evacuation of an area situated in the territory reserved for the Jewish State, nevertheless it is true that that Jewish State did in fact come to be, and on 11 May 1949 became a Member of the United Nations.

Was it not agreed in 1947 that the two independent States - the Arab State and the Jewish State - should come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory Power, and in any event by 1 October 1948 at the latest?

That shows how long the United Nations has delayed implementing the Plan of Partition with Economic Union set forth in resolution 181 (II) with respect to the establishment of the Palestinian Arab State - since 1948.

Thus from 1948 to this day - that is, a period of 41 years - the Jewish people has enjoyed the benefits of resolution 181 (II), and has organized itself and developed within a Jewish State, while the Palestinian people has been enduring occupation and, unfortunately, not enjoying its right, set forth in that resolution, to have an Arab Palestinian State within which it can in turn organize itself and develop. Is this the lesson of justice and equity that the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights teach us?

My delegation is of the opinion that the Security Council and the General Assembly should re-examine in depth the whole of this subject, which is certainly delicate and thorny but whose elements in legal terms remain intact, and offer the prospects for a global, just and lasting settlement of the situation in the Middle East by providing a solution to the Palestinian problem in all its aspects.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,
Zaire)

The convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on an equal footing, in conformity with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), should be considered without delay, with a view to bringing about a lasting solution to this problem, one which would affirm and guarantee the right of all the States of the region, including Israel, to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries and at the same time affirm and guarantee the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to establish its own State.

In this connection, my delegation supports all the negotiations in progress, both bilateral and multilateral.

I should like to congratulate the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the constructive initiatives and dynamism demonstrated by its Chairman, Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations. The Committee has organized conferences and symposiums throughout the world to alert international public opinion to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and deserves to be encouraged until those inalienable rights can be exercised within a Palestinian nation, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947.

Mr. THEUMBOUNMY (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): The Middle East crisis - and at the heart of this crisis is the question of Palestine - has for four decades been the subject of major concern for the international community. Despite the relaxation of tension in international relations and the progress made towards peace in several parts of the world, our

(Mr. Theuambounmy, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

Assembly is again this year considering the question of Palestine with due seriousness and a sense of responsibility.

Indeed, 42 years have passed since the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) concerning the establishment of a Jewish State of Israel and an independent Palestinian Arab State. While the Jewish State saw the light of day, the Palestinian Arab people, confronted by a policy of total annihilation as a nation, had no choice but to continue to wage a sacred struggle to regain its right to self-determination and its right to the establishment of its own independent State. In defiance of that decision, Israel had opted for an expansionist policy with regard to land, a policy which consisted, on the one hand, of preventing the formation of the Palestinian State and, on the other, of annexing its territories by every possible means of coercion, even armed conflict. By means of the 1967 war of aggression, Israel had occupied all of the territory that was formerly Palestine, together with parts of the territory of certain neighbouring Arab States, seriously disrupting the status quo in the Middle East for the first time. At present, Israel - far from complying with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly - is defiantly continuing to pursue its repressive and expansionist policy with a view to changing the physical nature and demographic composition of all the occupied Arab territories, particularly the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip, thereby gravely threatening the peace and security of the region.

The situation in the occupied territories which I have just mentioned remains a matter of the gravest concern. Indeed that area is in a state of constant turmoil because of Israeli oppression and repression. The Palestinian people has never abandoned its resolute struggle to regain its legitimate national rights. However, a régime of an "iron fist" type has been imposed on it. The people's

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uprising - the intifadah - which began almost two years ago and which is the expression of the courage and determination of this oppressed people, has given fresh impetus to the struggle against the repressive, tyrannical power of the Israelis and has earned the Palestinian people the admiration and support of peoples committed to peace and justice throughout the world.

The heroic sons of the Palestinian people who have been the victims of this repression include, since the beginning of the intifadah, several hundred dead, thousands wounded and tens of thousands who have been subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention without being charged or brought to trial. The destruction of dwellings and crops, the closing of schools, deportation and the confiscation of property, including land, buildings and livestock, are among the most common inhumane measures applied by Israel against defenceless Palestinian civilians on the land which they inherited from their ancestors.

Together with these repressive practices, the international community is powerlessly witnessing the systematic establishment of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. More than 50 per cent of the land on the West Bank of the Jordan River and one third of the Gaza Strip now belong to Jewish settlers. Israel has thus far defied all the appeals made by the international community to halt any measure or undertaking which might change the legal status of these territories, their geographical nature or their demographic composition.

This quintessential racist and expansionist policy is not only delaying and gravely undermining the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, but is also endangering the peace and security of the region and the world.

(Mr. Thauambounmy, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

My delegation joins the international community in demanding that Israel, the occupying Power, comply strictly with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and with the most fundamental norms of international law, and withdraw totally and unconditionally from all the Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, that it has occupied since 1967.

In view of the explosive situation - which continues to deteriorate - it is necessary to find as quickly as possible a just and lasting solution to the problem of the Middle East as a whole, a solution that must ensure the restoration of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in particular the right of return, the right to self-determination, and the right to exist as a sovereign and independent State in Palestine; the dismantling of all the settlements and Israel's withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem; and the right of all the States of the region to live in security within secure and internationally recognized borders.

In that connection, my delegation fully subscribes to the idea of the urgent convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, which was approved in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, in which the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, would participate on an equal footing with all the other parties directly concerned, as would the five permanent members of the Security Council, which bear the primary responsibility for ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation also wishes to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for his untiring efforts in the search for the conditions necessary to convene such a conference. Israel's intransigent refusal

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Democratic Republic)

has been the main obstacle to date to the implementation of that resolution, which, moreover, was reaffirmed by resolution 43/176 last year.

The Government and the people of my country warmly welcome the solemn proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council in Algiers in November 1988. We wish to reiterate our unswerving support for and complete solidarity with the struggling Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative. As a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Lao People's Democratic Republic fully endorses the resolutions and recommendations of the Ninth Summit Conference at Belgrade on every issue concerning the question of Palestine. My country firmly believes that through the firm and constant support of the international community, the just struggle of the Palestinian people will finally be crowned with success.

Mr. RAZALI (Malaysia): The question of Palestine has been on the agenda of the Organization from its very inception. By its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, the General Assembly called for the establishment of an Arab State and a Jewish State in Palestine. Yesterday marked the forty-second anniversary of that historic resolution. While Israelis may look upon that day with satisfaction, basking in the achievements of their nationhood that includes illegally occupying Arab and Palestinian lands, the Palestinians have an unending tale of tears and blood, deportation and repression, the tale of a people in the throes of a struggle to regain its entity, freedom and justice in its own land.

For the United Nations, the day is a stark reminder that it has yet to fulfil its responsibilities towards the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The international community must be equally conscious of how much more there is to be done to remedy an injustice and to restore to the

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

Palestinians all their rights and attributes as a people and a nation in the context of an overall solution.

As the Secretary-General stated in his report contained in document A/44/737:

"It seems to me imperative, therefore, that a fully concerted and well co-ordinated effort be made by the international community to help the parties enter into an effective negotiating process that will lead to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East". (A/44/737, para. 43)

The framework for such a negotiation process has found the almost universal support of the international community. As the Secretary-General noted in his report in document A/44/731:

"It remains my view that such a process will be meaningful only if it involves all the parties concerned and aims at a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination". (A/44/731, para. 7)

The Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), its sole and legitimate representative, has shown that it has the wisdom and political courage to make hard decisions to advance the prospects for a resolution of the problem. The watershed decisions of Algiers and Geneva last year clearly demonstrate the commitment of the Palestinians to a path of negotiated settlement in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Instead of seizing those historic opportunities to explore seriously the possibilities for a comprehensive, just and durable settlement, Israel squanders them by engaging in its ritualistic, defiant intransigence. Israel prefers to invest its energies and resources in denying the existence of the Palestinian nation and in seeking the world's acquiescence in its distortions.

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

Israel seeks to consign the Palestinians to the status of a permanently subjugated people, to change the facts of history to suit its own ambitious designs. It wants the world to view the Palestinians as a people without a distinct and separate identity, and without the wealth of historical, cultural and social legacies. On the contrary, the Palestinian national patrimony is as old as that of any other people. Before the State of Israel was created, there was a Palestine, whose society was pre-eminent in the region in its intellectual, cultural and educational achievements. The 40 years that have passed since 1947 have not diminished the very distinct attributes and identity of the Palestinians as a people in their own right. Indeed, while the immigrants went about setting down roots in Israel, the Palestinians toiled over the land of their forefathers, drawing water from the same wells that quenched the thirst of their ancestors.

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

It is that historical reality that the Israelis seek to suppress by their brutal policies of repression. For over 22 years of its occupation, Israel has pursued no other policy than that of rendering permanent its occupation of the lands acquired through aggression. So long as Israel continues to avoid addressing the fundamental questions relating to the Palestinian problem, it will remain guilty and condemned as standing against the requirements of the international community and the necessity for a comprehensive settlement. Israel makes an obsession of its concern for the security of its borders, but its policies for the last 40 years have failed to secure for itself the security it so ardently seeks. Surely it is time for Israel to open its mind to other modalities that would best secure its long-term security within the framework of a comprehensive and durable settlement.

The primary partner with which Israel must inevitably be engaged in dialogue is none other than the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The Palestinian people have decided who should speak in their name and act on their behalf in the name of Palestine. That State of Palestine has been recognized by over 80 countries; it is not an abstract illusion, or a figment of the imagination of the Palestinian leadership. To all intents and purposes, the PLO exercises the powers and responsibilities of the provisional Government of Palestine. Although the State of Palestine has yet to be established on its own territory, it has shown convincingly that it enjoys the full support of the population in the occupied territories and that, despite the best efforts of the Israelis to thwart its writ, it exercises a decisive influence on the conduct of the affairs of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Israel cannot delude itself that it could with time undermine the viability and the authority of the State of Palestine.

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

The path to lasting security for Israel must lie in the negotiating process that has won international support. It is only through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, based upon Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination, that a comprehensive negotiated political settlement can be achieved that would meet the legitimate needs of all parties in the region. Malaysia fully supports the convening of such a conference and would lend all possible support to the Secretary-General in his attempts to ensure that this is done very soon.

At the United Nations the continued and sustained support of the international community is of the highest priority. The international community cannot flag. Every action taken here, every small step, is directly related to the overall commitment to realize a Palestinian State for Palestinians. Each incremental gain won here steadily undermines Israel's illegal hold over Palestinian lands and pushes ever closer the necessity for Israel to negotiate with the State of Palestine on an equal footing, and with none other.

Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank Ambassador Absa Claude Diallo of Senegal and the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the Committee's valuable work and for the report it has submitted to the General Assembly this year. We are happy to note that the Committee has continued to give the highest priority to the urgent need to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation, and to intensifying its efforts to promote a just and lasting settlement in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

The United Nations has been seized of the question of Palestine for over four decades. Yet it is most distressing that the Palestinian people have to live either as refugees or under occupation in their own land. Over the years, the international community has reiterated that the problem in the Middle East is the failure to restore to the Palestinian people their inalienable rights - the right to self-determination, independence and sovereignty without foreign interference, and the right of all the refugees to return to Palestine.

The recognition of those rights requires the restoration of the homeland of the Palestinian people and the establishment of the State of Palestine in their own territory in conformity with principles of the United Nations. The withdrawal by Israel from the Palestinian territories occupied by it is an essential prerequisite for the exercise of those rights. Despite the efforts of the international community to persuade Israel to abandon the policy of occupation of the Palestinian territories and to restore them to the Palestinian people, Israel has continued to disregard those efforts and has adopted measures, including deportations, to suppress the will of the Palestinian people and deny them their inalienable right to self-determination.

We regard the constructive attitude of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as manifested in the decisions the Palestine National Council adopted in Algiers in November 1988, and the Palestinian peace initiative announced by President Yasser Arafat to the General Assembly in Geneva on 13 December 1988 as positive contributions to the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The widespread international support received for these peace initiatives demonstrates the recognition of these positive contributions by the Palestinian people in advancing the process for a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

Sri Lanka has expressed its solidarity with the Palestinian people and consistently supported their struggle to gain their inalienable rights. Sri Lanka has rejected Israeli aggression in no uncertain terms and called for the withdrawal of the forces of aggression. We believe that a comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine could be achieved through a dialogue between all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the authentic representative of the Palestinian people. In that context, we firmly support the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

Sri Lanka's own commitment to the Palestinian cause has been restated by my President, Mr. R. Premadasa, who, in his message this week on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, said, inter alia:

"A number of initiatives are being taken in respect of the question of Palestine. No settlement will be enduring or just unless the views of the Palestinian people are taken into consideration. Their representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, must be represented in negotiations on the question.

"Sri Lanka believes that an international conference convened under the aegis of the United Nations would be the most effective forum in which to address this issue. The United Nations is being increasingly recognized as the focal point for the settlement of vexed international issues. It is our earnest hope that the necessary political will will be exerted to bring stability to a region long denied peace.

"Sri Lanka has consistently supported the just cause of the Palestinian people. My Government was one of the first to extend recognition to the State of Palestine".

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

My delegation supports the efforts of the Secretary-General, despite existing difficulties, to explore various possibilities of promoting progress in the peace process in the Middle East and for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

We believe that the Security Council should play a more decisive role in bringing peace to the Middle East, and it is our hope that the major Powers will find it possible to work together to find a practical method of achieving a just and lasting solution to this problem. In this regard, the Security Council, with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, will most certainly have the co-operation and support of the membership of the United Nations in instituting a suitable process.

Mr. IOANNIDES (Cyprus): The question of Palestine, so closely interlinked with the Middle East problem, represents one of the most serious challenges with which the community of nations has been confronted since the establishment of the United Nations. The Secretary-General recognized this when he wrote that

"few international issues are as complex or potentially dangerous as the Arab-Israeli conflict." (A/44/737, para. 43)

The Palestine problem, which is the core of the conflict in the Middle East, has been considered by the General Assembly repeatedly for over 40 years and, through a series of resolutions, the Assembly has supported the just aspirations of the Palestinian people. However, those resolutions not only have not been implemented, but have been persistently ignored.

(Mr. Ioannides, Cyprus)

In view of Cyprus's geographical proximity to the Middle East, our friendly ties with it, and our resistance to aggression and occupation and deep concern with and commitment to a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine, we, as a people and as a country, are whole-heartedly behind the efforts to achieve a just solution to the Middle East problem as a prerequisite for peace and stability in the region.

While sharing the grave concern of the international community, we have on every occasion joined our voice to that of others in calling for a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question in accordance with the Charter and relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations. We have clearly stated our position that in order to be just and lasting any solution must entail the withdrawal of Israel from Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and from all other Arab territories occupied since 1967. We have also joined the international community in calling upon Israel to withdraw from the Golan Heights, which we consider to be an inseparable part of Syria, and from the occupied territory of southern Lebanon.

Cyprus, along with the rest of the non-aligned world, reaffirms its position that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The participation of Palestine on an equal footing is indispensable to any effort aimed at the achievement of a negotiated, peaceful, comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question, which should include the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State in Palestine.

In this regard, we consider the proclamation of the Palestinian State, which, along with the rest of the non-aligned world, Cyprus has recognized, to be an important and historic landmark in the search for a solution to the question of Palestine.

(Mr. Ioannides, Cyprus)

We also believe that the most suitable framework, attributing international significance to the negotiating process and furnishing the required guarantees of an agreed comprehensive, just and viable solution - would be an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations. The International Peace Conference on the Middle East should involve the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO, as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the permanent members of the Security Council, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1978) and all other United Nations resolutions relating to the rights of the Palestinian people and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Cyprus reiterates its support for the launching of an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. We strongly deplore the deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories caused by the continued Israeli occupation and by Israel's arbitrary policies and practices. The Israeli authorities continue to react to the heroic uprising - the intifadah - with killings, woundings and detentions, in flagrant violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people and the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. George Vassiliou, stated in his message that he firmly believed that the positive international climate and the sincere interest and increasing mobilization of the international community in the search for a just solution to the Palestinian problem could contribute to the achievement of a peaceful, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, safeguarding the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The President's message continued:

(Mr. Ioannides, Cyprus)

"Such a settlement, which would undoubtedly serve peace in the sensitive and volatile Middle East region, could be reached through dialogue and negotiation, through an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations in which all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, would and should participate on an equal footing."

As a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Cyprus has firmly supported the rights of the Palestinians, including their right to self-determination and to establish an independent Palestinian State.

The Palestinian people have been denied national existence in their own State for too long. Their tenacious struggle and sacrifices, under the leadership of the PLO, are a dynamic reality that must be recognized so that peace and justice may be enjoyed by the Palestinian people, as is the right of all peoples of the world.

The people of Israel, themselves victims of centuries of persecution, must recognize the futility of a policy that denies the aspiration of an entire people to live in its homeland in peace and dignity.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. MOHAMMED (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): My reply to the representative of the Zionist régime's statement yesterday stems from my wish to clarify an important fact which should save him a great deal of time and effort objecting to the title "representative of the racist Zionist régime" and insisting on being called "the representative of Israel". That designation is not an exercise in semantics, nor is it meant as provocation; it simply expresses the nature of the racist Zionist entity in accordance with historical evidence.

As proof of this, first, the Zionists have never bothered, since they usurped the land of Palestine, to delineate boundaries for their entity. So what is Israel and where are its boundaries? Are they the boundaries set in 1947 by the partition resolution, or are they the boundaries that embrace the territories occupied by force by Israeli troops in 1967 and after - namely the West Bank, Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon?

Secondly, has a sufficient area been covered, or is the Zionist entity not yet complete? Does it desire to expand to boundaries embracing the "Promised Land" stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates and thus fulfil the impossible dream of Zionism?

That is the logic behind the use of the word "entity"; there is nothing fixed to put a name to.

There is an easy explanation for all this. There are no limits or boundaries to Zionist ambitions. There is only the dream of expansion at the expense of the Palestinian and Arab peoples. Under the influence of that dream they pursue their Zionist policy of aggression and occupation, and thus make the question of Palestine intractable.

As for the people themselves, what is Israel? Is it, indeed, a democratic Jewish State? Here we are faced with the problem of the Zionist claim to a so-called democratic State. That problem raises two difficulties. First,

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

according to the Zionists themselves they have not yet decided who is a Jew and who is not. An intense debate is still raging in religious and political circles on the definition of who is a Jew. Secondly, the criminal practices of the Israeli occupation forces against the human rights of the Palestinians cannot be construed as measures adopted by a democracy of any kind. Clearly, the words of the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden have fairly highlighted the truth with regard to the claim to democracy. So once again we face ambiguity and lack of definition. There is nothing definite to which a definite name can be given.

As for racism, I shall simply refer the General Assembly to the resolution adopted in 1973 which rightly condemned Zionism as racism.

For all these reasons, we call that entity the racist Zionist entity. Indeed, a few days ago the representative of that entity said he was proud to be called by that title. I hope that my explanation will satisfy him and persuade him not to disturb and disrupt the work of the Assembly by jumping up and yelling on points of order.

I should like to borrow the words used by a non-Arab, fair-minded diplomat to describe what he observed in the occupied territories. I refer to Mr. Torliev Anda, the Ambassador of Norway accredited to Israel from 1984 to 1989, who has written a book entitled Intifadah: A Rebellion against Israel, which was published by Oslo University Press a few days ago. On 7 November Agence France Presse praised the book's straightforwardness and precision, adding that it was well documented and based on reports by international organizations. The author condemns the systematic brutal repression and the trampling of the basic human rights of the Palestinians. Ambassador Anda, in an interview with the Danish Berlingske Tidende on 6 November, said:

"In view of the situation prevailing in the occupied territories I have ceased to believe that Israel is a democratic State."

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

He went on:

"When I first visited the occupied territories my sympathies lay with the State of Israel; I had a naive concept of the PLO. But I soon changed my mind and revised my position. My vision was not in consonance with the reality on the ground."

He said that the majority of Western diplomats in Israel shared his opinion and that:

"They have become more critical of Israel and more supportive of the Palestinians. How can we not be so when we see what goes on there?"

The Ambassador added the following:

"The injustice meted out to the Palestinians and their treatment as second-class citizens is a conscious, deliberate policy by Israel. Israel claims to be a democratic country, but there is cause for concern when we see the conditions that prevail in the courts and the unbelievable inequities" - to the detriment of the Palestinians - "in the penal code."

Mr. Anda mentioned in particular the Shin Beit scandal, saying that:

"The secret police maintain overall supervision of the population and constitute a standing infrastructure in the service of injustice. Every Palestinian must have a permit from them to renew a driver's licence or even get a telephone."

He also talked of Israeli oppression and singled out for special condemnation collective punishment and demolition of houses.

The meeting rose at 8.20 p.m.