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November 23, 2015, UN Headquarters, New York

**374th Meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People: Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

CHAIR, SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ISRAELI PRACTICES: Mr. Chairman, His Excellency, Mr. Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I'm honored to speak today in my capacity as the chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israel Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is marked on 29 November, the day the UNGA in 1947 adopted resolution 191 on the establishment of the states of Palestine and Israel. Therefore, this day is a reminder to the United Nations and the international community of a goal which is yet to be achieved, and of our continued responsibility to find a peaceful and just solution to what is being referred to as -- and I quote -- "the Palestinian question." In essence, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

On this day, we stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine, who despite great challenges and suffering for more than five decades, have not given up hope to attain their legitimate rights. The aspirations of the international community are sustained and renewed by the determination and the resilience of the Palestinian people.

Last week I presented to the Fourth Committee, the 47th report of the Special Committee comprising Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Senegal, examining the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan.

During our mission to Aman in August 2015, the committee was serious disturbed by the situation of human rights in the occupied territories as evidenced by the testimonies we heard from civil society representatives, victims and witnesses of Israeli violations, as well as by Palestinian and United Nations officials.

Some of the key concerns brought to the attention of the committee during its mission including continuing settlement activity, settler violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, excessive use of force by Israeli forces, tensions surrounding the Al Aqsa mosque, the situation of Palestinian detainees in Israeli custody, corporate involvement in the settlements and the occupied territories, in particular the exploitation of natural resources in these territories in violation of international humanitarian law and the human rights situation in Gaza.

It was evident from the testimonies heard by the committee in August that the continuing policy of settlement expansion and the climate of impunity relating to the activities of the settlers contribute to the escalating violence. The committee heard that settlement activity was continuing in both the occupied Palestinian territories and the occupied Syrian Golan.

In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the committee was informed that settlement expansion was aided and abetted by restrictive planning policies for Palestinians, demolition orders on what are called "illegal" Palestinian homes, settler violence, as well through legislation used to confiscate private Palestinian property.

The committee's report refers to disturbing testimony concerning numerous incidents involving the excessive use of force by Israeli security forces in the occupied Palestinian territories. In this regard, the committee called on Israel to take immediate steps to ensure compliance with international standards for law enforcement and to ensure accountability for excessive use of force.

The rising tensions surrounding Al Aqsa mosque, which have escalated in recent months was also brought to the attention of the committee. The committee's report called on Israel to remove all movement restrictions within East Jerusalem and immediately cease all excavations works below or near the Al Aqsa compound, which may potentially cause harm to the Al Aqsa mosque.

The situation of Palestinian detainees, including women and children, remains a matter of serious concern of the Special Committee. Statistics received by the Special Committee in August 2015 indicated that there were an estimated 5,000 Palestinian detainees held in Israeli custody, including 160 children under 18 years of age.

Administrative detention is only exceptionally permitted for short periods of time under international law, but regrettably in the occupied Palestinian territories, it remains the norm.

The committee also reported on information received in relation to the role of companies who do business and profit from the maintenance or confiscation of settlements -- or construction of settlements or exploit natural resources in the occupied West Bank or the occupied Syrian Golan. The Special Committee hopes to maintain increasing international attention and growing awareness among companies of the potential financial, legal and reputational risks of doing business in occupied territories.

The blockade of Gaza continues to be a key obstacle to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights of Palestinians. A year after the deadly escalation of hostilities in Gaza, reconstruction lags far behind, in part due to a lack of funds, but also as a result of the continuing Israeli blockade of Gaza.

As of August 2015, only one third of the $4 billion pledged by the international community in Cairo in October 2014 had been dispersed. NGOs noted that up to 100,000 Palestinians remain displaced and live in precarious conditions, struggling with access to basic services, such as electricity, water, sanitation and medical services.

It is thus imperative that the international community use its influence to end the blockade of Gaza and for donor countries to honor the pledges made in Cairo and to urgently disperse funds to facilitate the ongoing reconstruction efforts.

The committee also called on donor countries to guarantee the unimpeded flow of funds to UNRWA to effective discharge its mandate in the occupied territories.

Mr. Chairman, sustainable peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians alike can only be achieved by bringing about real accountability and by addressing the root causes of the conflict. The international community must not lose site of the overarching goal of the two-state solution, two states living side by side in peace and security with the human rights of their people at the core. I thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: I thank Mr. Perera for his important statement. We are very appreciative of your committee's continued contribution to our meeting, as well as for your country's participation in our committee's activities as an active observer. Thank you again, Commissioner.

I now give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Ahmad Fathalla, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, who will read out a message from His Excellency, Mr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary General of the Leagues of Arab States. The floor is yours.