

**STATEMENT BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. DESRA PERCAYA**

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COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS  
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

Question of Palestine  
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Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, let me thank all the delegations, and you personally, Mr. President, for your active participation in the this morning's Special Meeting of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The messages and statements of support we heard this morning, and received from world leaders, speak with one voice of the strong will of the international community to achieve a just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine, that sees two states living side by side in peace.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are meeting at a time when the world is entering a very dangerous phase. The shadows of war and terrorism are swirling over the region, and beyond. Our sympathies go out to all the innocent victims of the barbaric atrocities that continue to occur in several parts of the world. As we mourn the victims, and coordinate our strategies to confront expanding threats, it is important to not lose sight of the centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Violent extremists worldwide have often used the story of this never ending and unacceptable occupation as an effective recruitment tool.

Seventy years ago the United Nations was created by countries just emerging from the trauma of World War II, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reaffirm faith in human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, to ensure respect for international law, promote social and economic progress. However, in the case of the Palestinian people these lofty statements of the Charter ring hollow. Fast-forward to today, and the Palestinians are still regularly affected by the scourge of war, three times in the last 8 years. Their fundamental human rights are trampled upon, and dignity, worth as humans and freedoms are abstract concepts to Palestinians who endure the daily humiliations of the military occupation, with its checkpoints, barbed wires, permits, walls, cages, arbitrary arrests, violence, and extrajudicial executions. The United Nations reports documenting the violations of international law and

human rights norms in occupied Palestine could fill the General Assembly hall, most recently the report on the Gaza war of 2014, still with no accountability for the perpetrators.

This year, at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, world leaders inaugurated the Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 goals to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice. However, it must be openly acknowledged that occupation and the SDGs are mutually exclusive. Better standards of living remain elusive goals when most of the land in the West Bank is off limits to Palestinian development, and Gaza is blockaded and under siege, as a result of which GDP per capita in Palestine barely reached one tenth that of Israel just over the Green Line.

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the first orders of business of the newly born United Nations was the peaceful settlement of the Palestine question. The partition plan adopted on 29 November 1947 by the General Assembly envisaged a Jewish State and an Arab State. However, the ensuing war sent hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into perpetual exile and seemingly closed the door on the Palestinian State. Thanks to their bold leadership, Palestinians, a marginalized population of refugees scattered around the region, found their voice on the international stage and the Palestine issue was put back on the United Nations agenda. Forty years ago, our Committee was given a mandate by this Assembly, to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty; and the right of Palestinian refugees, who now number over 5 million, to return to their homes. This is a daunting task, and this responsibility remains with us to this day.

This year our Committee concentrated our programme of conferences on key issues. We dedicated a conference in Vienna to efforts to move the stalled Gaza reconstruction forward. We then went to Moscow to discuss efforts to find a political solution to this conflict. Our conference in Brussels concentrated on settlements as an obstacle to peace and the responsibilities of third parties in this regard. Our next conference in Jakarta will tackle Jerusalem, a key final status issue and a perennial flashpoint of conflict. Tonight, we will inaugurate a photo exhibit on Gaza's children in the visitors' lobby, to which you are all invited. We are grateful to our partners, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States, to OCHA, UNRWA and UNICEF, civil society, and to all of you who took part in our events throughout the year. I would like to commend the governments of those States that supported the initiative to raise the Palestinian flag at the UN. This is a true sign of commitment by the international community to support the Palestinian people in exercising its inalienable right to self-determination. But much more needs to be done.

Regrettably, this past year did not bring tangible progress to the Palestinian People. On the contrary, we are gravely concerned by the latest escalation of violence in Jerusalem and the West Bank. Leaders have a responsibility to prevent incitement and respect the status of holy sites in word and deed. We strongly condemn measures of collective punishment and excessive

use of deadly force against unarmed protesters. We equally condemn random attacks against innocent civilians.

I would like all of us to leave this hall with a sense of great urgency and renewed commitment. The fallout of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict affects every country in this Assembly in very negative ways, and the risk of escalation is high. The Palestinians are desperate and the Israelis are terrorized. We are one major provocation in Jerusalem away from a descent into a religious war the likes of which the world has not seen. The trust between the parties has reached a new low, and there are no new peace initiatives on the horizon coming from the United States for at least a year. The time for symbolic steps, half measures and sterile debates is over. Ours is a small committee with limited resources, and we are doing all we can to raise awareness of the issue and keep it on the front burner in the international arena. Our Committee firmly believes that the United Nations should continue to maintain its permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is effectively resolved in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The Committee calls on the Security Council, a revitalized Quartet and regional players to take serious steps to salvage what remains of the two-State solution. The Committee for its part will continue to fulfil its General Assembly mandate.

Our Committee has been a strong supporter of the two-State solution, and we intend to continue playing a constructive role in that regard. There is no daylight between us and the rest of the General Assembly membership on the substance, as your overwhelming vote for the Peaceful Settlement resolution attest. Nevertheless, some Members still harbour old reservations about the Committee. Perhaps some of our discussions are seen as lacking balance by some Member States. But our doors are open and we welcome all views. By absenting themselves from our discussions, some Members of this Organization only ensure that their views are not reflected. Advocating for the two-State solution should be accompanied by supporting the only body set up by the General Assembly within the United Nations devoted to that goal, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this context, I would like to introduce to the Assembly the four draft resolutions approved by the Committee and circulated under this agenda item, namely A/70/L.10, A/70/L.11, A/70/L.12 and A/70/L.13. These drafts have been consulted with regional groups and approved by the Committee.

The first three drafts are related to the work of the **Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**, the **Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat**, and the **Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information**. They reaffirm the important mandates entrusted to these entities by the General Assembly. As in the past, the Committee intends to make sure that resources available to it are employed in a cost-effective manner.

Allow me to highlight a few elements in these resolutions.

As you will note, the draft resolution renewing the mandate of the Committee, contained in document **A/70/L.10** notes with appreciation the efforts of UNCTAD to compile a report on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, and calls for the exertion of all efforts to expedite the conclusion of the report.

The second draft resolution, in document **A/70/L.11**, renews the mandate of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and requests the Secretary-General to provide the Division with the necessary resources to ensure the implementation of all mandated activities. The resolution on the special information programme of the Division for Public Information, in document **A/70/L.12**, renews the mandate of DPI to continue its initiatives that effectively support an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and peace efforts.

The fourth draft entitled **“Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,”** contained in document **A/70/L.13** reiterates the position of the General Assembly with regard to the essential elements of such a settlement and includes references to the developments of the past year. It calls for respect of the historic status quo at the Holy Places of Jerusalem, in word and practice and for immediate and serious efforts to defuse tensions. It also recognizes that security measures alone cannot cope with the recent rise in violence and calls for full respect for human life and establishment of a stable environment conducive for the pursuit of peace.

I hope these and other provisions of the texts will meet your strong support.

Thank you.

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