

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR GJ MTSHALI
DURING THE 6TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ON THE
HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN PALESTINE AND OTHER OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES**

Mr. President,

Let me from the outset align my delegation with the respective statements delivered by Egypt and Cuba on behalf of the Africa Group and the Non-Aligned Movement on this subject. We wish to thank the President and the High Commissioner for their reports to the Council.

In 2006, the Human Rights Council convened two Special Sessions with the aim of considering grave violations of human rights by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It is regrettable that Human Rights Council Resolutions S-1/1 and S-3/1 have yet to be implemented. South Africa would like to reiterate its concern at the failure by the Government of Israel to abide by these resolutions. It is incumbent upon all Member States to honour the decisions of this august body. My delegation would therefore urge the Israeli authorities to implement the said resolutions.

Mr. President,

My government expresses serious concern about the continued violations of human rights and humanitarian law in occupied Palestine by Israel. The humanitarian crisis experienced by the Palestinian people has resulted in the gross violations of their human rights.

The dire consequences of ^{the} ~~such~~ continued occupation ^{of Palestine} is outlined in the report by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory dated 29 January 2007 (A/HRC/4/17). In his words:

[QUOTE] "The Occupied Palestinian Territory is the only instance of a developing country that is denied the Right of self-determination and oppressed by a Western-affiliated State. The apparent failure of Western States to take steps to bring such a situation to an end places the future of the international protection of human rights in jeopardy as developing nations begin to question the commitment of Western States to human rights" [UNQUOTE].

My delegation would urge the Council to heed the warning of the Special Rapporteur. We are of the view that the international community cannot allow the status quo to go on unchallenged.

In this regard, South Africa would like to reiterate the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Necessarily, this would entail jump-starting the peace process, by reviving the Road Map towards its implementation, without preconditions.

We therefore call for the implementation of the Road Map, which guarantees the establishment of a sovereign Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side-by-side with a secure Israeli State.

In closing, my delegational wishes to commend the Council for its continued engagement with the Israeli-Palestinian issue until its peaceful resolution.

I thank you