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STATEMENT

BY

HON'BLE MR. ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
AND  
MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION

ON

AGENDA ITEM 33 :  
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE  
ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS  
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS  
OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

AT THE

62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK

NOVEMBER 13, 2007

Mr Chairman,

India appreciates the opportunity to discuss the 39<sup>th</sup> report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs in the occupied territories.

The report describes the “serious deterioration” of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the Syrian Golan. It highlights the people’s despair that their rights will not be defended. While the financial embargo against the Palestine Authority is being lifted—after wreaking great economic harm and social damage—it is of little comfort because this measure owes more to disunity in the Palestinian ranks. Continued economic hardship and deterioration of the human rights situation only creates fertile ground for extremism, which, in turn, generates violent action and reaction. As history shows, the cycle of violence and counter-violence is self-perpetuating, and ultimately defeats efforts to address complex issues, such as those in the Middle East, through peaceful dialogue.

Mr Chairman,

India unequivocally condemns all acts of terrorism, as well as any provocation and incitement to violence in the strongest terms. Equally, we have always criticized harsh and disproportionate retaliatory measures, and any measures that suggest collective punishment. We believe that the world should collectively exhort all parties to exercise utmost restraint, shun violence, and take forward the ongoing negotiations to evolve a peaceful solution. The contours of a solution are well-known: the goal is to achieve, in a reasonable time-frame, a sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian State, within well-defined and secure borders, living side-by-side and at peace with Israel. We are hopeful that meaningful forward movement can be achieved in the weeks ahead.

Mr Chairman,

The Report of the Special Committee focuses on the human rights of the Palestinian and Other Arabs in the Occupied Territories. What emerges from the report is a clear statement outlining measurable failure to raise human rights standards of these people under nine essential areas, including the Right to Life. The list of measures that affect these rights is long, and the lack of measures to address these hindrances is depressing. Thus despite the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, Israel continues to construct the illegal separation wall. Indeed, two hundred kilometers of the wall have been built *after* the Court rendered its opinion. While the wall continues to be built, creating new facts on the ground and alienating more fertile Palestinian lands, restrictions placed on daily life (including upon movement), and on access to the occupied Palestinian territories, have increased.

There is therefore need, as the report recognizes, for the Government of Israel to stop the construction of this separation wall and to stop alienating more Palestinian lands; to stop the expansion of settlements in the Occupied

Territories; to restore the freedom of movement for Palestinians, as well as to expand access to and from these territories. Recent reports of a decision to limit crossings in Gaza to one border point would only worsen access and exacerbate shortages. The UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs had underscored the fact that it was "difficult to see how security concerns could justify the hardship" that such measures were causing. Similarly, the use of mass arrests, arbitrary detentions, curtailment of basic services and disproportionate force must cease. Such steps only empower extremists at the costs of moderates on all sides. We also hope to see an early restoration of international assistance, and a rightful share of tax and other revenues, to the Palestinian National Authority. This is essential if it is to provide effective governance to a people who have already suffered far too long.

At the same time, the report notes the need for all Palestinian parties to comply fully with the requirements of the road map, as elaborated by the Quartet, and to effectively prevent indiscriminate attacks against civilians. Separately, we see the need for action by all Palestinian groups to resolve their internal differences.

Mr. Chairman,

It is not only essential for us to collectively publicize the lamentable situation of human rights in the Occupied Territories, as suggested by the report, but also to find ways of effectively addressing this growing crisis. We cannot but be concerned at the humanitarian crisis, with its potentially-devastating consequences in an unstable region. We support giving the Special Committee a renewed mandate "in line with current realities". Such a mandate should take into account the deep-rooted frustration of those living in the occupied territories, and the need to address these matters before it is too late to do so.

Mr Chairman,

We hope that in the weeks ahead, the Quartet and the regional parties will help de-escalate the situation, bring an end to the cycle of violence and counter-violence, stop taking actions that alter the situation on the ground, and work to remove restrictions and access controls that contribute to despair and frustration in the Occupied Territories. We also hope to see early infusions of assistance and funding, so that effective governance is delivered. Lastly, we hope to see an early resolution of the divisions within Palestinian society and polity. All of these, taken together, will help create an atmosphere conducive to resuming direct negotiations with a time bound solution that brings peace to this sorely troubled land.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.