

Islamic Republic of

I R A N

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Statement by H.E.Mr. Mohammad Khazaee
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On Agenda Item 18: "Question of Palestine"

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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. President,

At the beginning, and on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to reiterate our solidarity with the people of Palestine in their tireless efforts and unwavering determination to pursue their national aspirations and in their courageous struggle to defend their inalienable rights.

The recent United Nations reports on the Question of Palestine, particularly the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian territories, yet again bear witness to the unfortunate reality that, in the past 12 months, the Zionist regime has continued with its crimes against the defenseless Palestinian people, and has been "systematically altering the Palestinian land through unlawful policies and practices, including settlement construction and the construction of the wall in the West Bank".

As the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People indicates, throughout the period under review, the Israeli regime has continued with its criminal practices against Palestinians through unlawful measures such as: extrajudicial killings, house demolitions, unlawful detention of Palestinian authorities, humiliating systems of checkpoints, expanding the illegal settlements, construction of the unlawful wall in contravention of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, periodic closures, sealing-off the Gaza Strip and the destruction of Palestinian civilian infrastructure and agricultural lands. These have resulted in unspeakable sufferings and losses for the Palestinian people, including the death and injury of hundreds of Palestinians, and have caused unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian society.

According to the reports at hand, since the year 2000 more than 4,800 Palestinians have been killed and some 31,500 wounded. Among them are over 950 Palestinian children under the age of 18 who have been killed by the Israeli regime in the past several years. Moreover, there are some 10,000 Palestinian prisoners in jails who have been treated in an inhuman and degrading manner.

Also, the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories puts on display other shocking aspects of the Israeli regime's policies and practices in violating the most basic principles of international law and human rights in the Palestinian territories. What happened in Beit Hanoun is a clear example of the Israeli brutality against the Palestinians in the period under review. According to the said report "Beit Hanoun was subjected to particularly vicious military action... 82 Palestinians, at least half of them civilians (including 21 children), were killed, more than 260, including 60 children, were injured and hundreds of males between the ages of 16 and 40 were arrested. Forty thousand residents were confined to their homes as a result of a curfew as Israeli tanks and bulldozers rampaged through the town, destroying 279 homes, an 850-year-old mosque, public buildings, electricity networks, schools and hospitals, levelling orchards and digging up roads, water mains and sewage networks." Moreover, according to the aforesaid UN reports "poverty and unemployment in the occupied Palestinian territories have reached their highest level; health and education are undermined ...and the entire social fabric of society is threatened".

Mr. President,

The continuation of the Israeli unlawful policies and practices in the occupied Syrian Golan not only is a source of tension in the region, but is also a matter of grave concern for the international community. The Israeli regime has made repeated attempts to alter the demographic and legal character of the area by establishing new settlements and imposing their laws on Syrian citizens in contravention of all relevant UN resolutions.

Furthermore, the said regime's constant and continuous threats against Lebanon, as well as its occupation of the Lebanese lands and daily violations of Lebanese airspace and harassment of UNIFIL forces, are clear infringement of the Security Council resolution 1701. On many occasions and as recently as 6 November 2007, the United Nations has protested to the daily air violations of Lebanese airspace, and has called on Israeli regime to stop these operations which are violating the Security Council resolution 1701 and increasing the tension in the area. As in the past, the response of the Israeli regime to these calls has been complete defiance and contempt.

Undoubtedly, the unqualified support extended by a permanent member of the UN Security Council to the Israeli regime has served to embolden it to continue with its crimes against the defenseless Palestinians and other peoples in the region, and has made it more brazen in adamantly violating and defying a host of Security Council resolutions and other UN organs' resolutions.

Mr. President,

It is evident that the settlement of the Palestinian issue is imperative and indispensable for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East. Peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved through aggression, state terrorism, intimidation and occupation. Nor can it be attained through so-called initiatives or conferences that pursue other politically motivated goals rather than realizing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We believe that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region would remain elusive until all the rights of the Palestinian people including the return of all Palestinian refugees to their homeland and establishment of a Palestinian state are fully and unconditionally restored. Solutions to the Palestinian crisis will come through genuine actions on the ground in Palestine and by the Palestinians themselves. Only through national unity and collective action can the Palestinians attain their long-awaited aspirations and goals.

In view of the past experiences, the international community cannot be misled by the politically-motivated moves, such as the recent meeting in Annapolis, that are intended to accord legitimacy to the forces of occupation and aggression. In the past few days, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the occupied territories have expressed their dismay and anguish at such moves.

Undoubtedly, and as it has been repeatedly stressed by the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a durable peace in Palestine and the Middle East will only be possible through justice, full restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people, end to discrimination, end to occupation, the return of all Palestinian refugees, and a democratic mechanism through which all inhabitants of Palestine as well as Palestinians driven out of their homeland would have the possibility to determine their future in a democratic and peaceful fashion.

Before concluding, Mr. President, I wish to extend our appreciation to you for having convened this meeting and to the Chairman and members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their tireless efforts to address the torment and onerous circumstances of the people of Palestine and for their informative reports in this regard.

Thank you.
