

Tenth Emergency Special Session

Agenda item: 5-[ES-10]: Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Statement by: H.E. Ambassador Masud Bin Momen
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Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Group

Venue and Date: General Assembly Hall, 13 June 2018, New York

Mr. President,

I am honored to address the General Assembly today in my capacity as the Chair of the OIC Group at the United Nations. We thank you for convening this 10th Emergency Special Session. Bangladesh currently presides as the Chair of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC and recently hosted, in May of this year, the 45th session of the Council in Dhaka, where once again the Question of Palestine was among the central issues addressed and the Organization's core positions, which are firmly rooted in international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions, and our principled, longstanding solidarity with the Palestinian people and their just cause, were clearly reaffirmed.

Mr. President,

The OIC remains extremely alarmed about the grave situation being endured by the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as a result of the ongoing illegal and repressive policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power. In recent weeks, we have witnessed anguishing scenes of human suffering, especially in the Gaza Strip, as the Israeli occupying forces have continued with a violent onslaught against unarmed Palestinian civilians peacefully protesting against the Israeli occupation and blockade and calling for respect of their inalienable human rights.

We condemn such deliberate, systematic and unlawful use of force against civilians, which has resulted in the killing of at least 129 Palestinians, among them 16 children, and caused injury to more than 13,600 civilians, many of them permanently disabled. This crisis has caused further trauma to the Palestinian people and has further exacerbated the already-dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where poverty, food insecurity and unemployment levels have reached extreme levels and the health, sanitation and energy sectors are near collapse, creating a completely unsustainable, inhumane and explosive situation.

We have heard repeated warnings in this regard and this compels us to act responsibly and urgently in line with international law and our humanitarian obligations. The OIC therefore once again calls for measures to be taken, on the basis of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, to ensure desperately-needed international protection to the Palestinian people. As Israel persists with its breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and its flagrant violations of UN resolutions, silence in the face of such crimes and human suffering is inexcusable. We must act now to alleviate the immense suffering of the Palestinian people and to bring an end to this illegal occupation and historic injustice.

Mr. President,

We deeply regret the failure of the recent initiative in the Security Council calling for action in this regard due to the veto cast by a permanent member of the Council. Such an outcome has not only undermined the serious efforts to address this crisis in a manner that would de-escalate the high tensions and protect defenseless civilians, but has also further encouraged Israel, the occupying Power, to continue its aggressions against the Palestinian people with total impunity.

Without fear of accountability, we witnessed again in recent days, the continuing brutality of the Israeli occupying forces, which killed another four Palestinians, including one child, and injured at least 600 other civilians, including women and children, in Gaza, in addition to the killing of a Palestinian youth in the West Bank, and the advancement of further settlement colonization measures, especially in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, and attempts to forcibly displace Palestinian civilians, including hundreds of vulnerable Bedouin families from Khan Al-Ahmar. This is a shocking reflection of just

the past week and of only some of the countless violations and crimes being perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation.

In light of this grave situation, and in accordance with the decisions by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers and the Seventh Extraordinary Islamic Summit, OIC and Arab Group have embarked on this joint initiative, along with other countries, in sponsoring the draft resolution that is before the Assembly and we make a strong appeal to all delegations for their principled support.

With its call on the UN Secretary-General to act, this initiative constitutes a serious effort, albeit a first step, towards ensuring much-needed protection to the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. We urge support for this draft resolution as an immediate contribution towards deterring violence against all civilians, de-escalating the dangerous tensions and ensuring calm and restraint, alleviating the dire humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, and protecting and saving civilian lives.

It is imperative that we act to fulfill these pressing objectives, which are also vital for creating an environment conducive to the advancement of our decades-long efforts to achieve a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution, in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions, and to realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to live in freedom, security and dignity in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Thank you, Mr. President.