

Palestine on item 7

Thank you, Madam High Commissioner, for your report and introductory remarks. We wish you well wherever you move to. We would like to welcome Professor Richard Falk as the new Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and we thank him for his valuable introduction. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to register our deep appreciation of the tremendous noble work of the former rapporteur Professor John Dugard. Professor Falk, you are a very distinguished scholar in international law raising high the banner of justice in a world trapped in injustice imposed by the strong. The weak and oppressed resort to international humanitarian law crying for help which is not forthcoming. We count on people like you and your predecessor to continue holding the torch of freedom and thereby help in shaping a better world for all including our people who yearn to get rid of their chains and shackles forced on them by the victims of yesterday who colonised our homeland, created our disaster and continue to deny us our national rights and independence in a mere fraction of our homeland.

The current European football competition co-hosted by Switzerland rendered football the talk of the town, a talk blended with feelings of joy and frustration. Could you imagine in contrast our frustration for losing our homeland and living in captivity for several decades under foreign occupation that excels in grabbing our land and inventing methods of subjugation, starvation and humiliation? Israel, the occupying power, has been talking about peace while expropriating our land and farms piece by piece. The recent Israeli plans to build further housing units for Israeli settlers in occupied East Jerusalem demonstrate in very clear terms the Israeli determination to undermine international peace efforts including the Annapolis and Paris conferences aimed at establishing a Palestinian state by the end of 2008. Simultaneously, Israel is seeking to upgrade and develop its relations and status with the European Union. We urge the international community including the European Union to take into account the Israeli practices on the ground and to, at least, ban importing goods originating in the Israeli colonial settlements as a simple practical message that enough is enough. The USA had a civil war to end slavery and the world at large boycotted Apartheid South Africa the twin of racist Israel. We wonder why no real action is taken to end the disaster inflicted on us and on our region by Israel, the occupying power! The current edition of Time magazine has an article entitled 'How to Survive a Disaster' which, inter alia, states: 'we can do far more than we think to improve our odds of

preventing and surviving even the most horrendous of catastrophes'. Very well, we have the most horrendous man-made catastrophe and we urge you to do far more to help us not merely survive it but also to put an end to it. The dream of Martin Luther King has been realised. Likewise, we have a dream that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories will cease. We are determined that it must cease.