

Statement by Ms Tehmina Janjua, Acting Permanent Representative of Pakistan on behalf of the OIC, on Situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories under Agenda item 7, during the 9th session of HRC, Geneva, 18 September 2008

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the member states of OIC.

The human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, Syrian Golan and other Arab territories remains grave. The occupying power has an obligation to respect human rights of the occupied people as enshrined in international instruments. The rights to life, health, education, religion, housing, food and water need to be protected. The occupying power cannot use collective punishments or reprisals against civilians. It cannot resort to destruction, confiscation or seizure of the property of the occupied people. But the painful forty years of occupation make a sad history of blatant violations of all rights of the Palestinian and other occupied Arab people.

Collective punishment has been used as a weapon of coercion against Palestinian people including women, children, and the elderly. This year, the indiscriminate use of force which was inconsistent with the occupying power's obligations pursuant to the Geneva Conventions, led to the killing of over a thousand Palestinians. The occupied territories continue to suffer from shortages of food, fuel and medical supplies. Women, children and the elderly are the primary victims of artificial shortages and illegal restrictions. The construction of the barrier around East Jerusalem and within the West Bank is contrary to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

The OIC would particularly like to stress that the building of illegal settlements in the occupied territories is contrary to the Geneva Conventions and Israel's commitment under the Road Map and the Annapolis process. We view this activity as an attempt to create new facts on the ground to obstruct resolution of the Palestinian issue on the basis of justice and equity.

Mr. President,

The situation in the Occupied Syrian Golan is deeply worrying. Israel maintains its occupation in total disrespect for international human rights and humanitarian law. The sole crossing point between Syria and the Occupied Syrian Golan remains closed. Torture of Syrian detainees and discrimination against Syrian citizen continues.

The occupying power's policy of death and destruction could make life miserable for Palestinian and other occupied Arab civilians including women and children but this policy could not shake their faith in the struggle for the right of self determination. Israel must realize that the root cause of all problems in the Middle East is its illegal and forcible occupation of Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories.

Mr. President,

There exists a broad acknowledgment of the difficult and serious human rights and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Golan and other occupied Arab Territories. In this context, the OIC calls upon this Council to seriously consider the full and effective implementation of resolutions adopted by its regular and special sessions. The OIC calls on this Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to take a lead role in ensuring the implementation of Council resolutions.

The OIC remains committed to working with our partners in finding the most effective methods of implementing resolutions of the Council on the OPT and other occupied Arab Territories.

Thank you, Mr. President.