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Statement by Ms. Nadya Rasheed, Counsellor, before the Third Committee, Agenda item 67: Right of Peoples to Self-Determination, 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 1 November 2010 (Please Check Against Delivery)

At the outset, my delegation expresses appreciation to the Secretary-General for the brief report submitted on the "Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination" and expresses appreciation as well for the important work of the Human Rights Council. We look forward to the continued practice in this regard with particular attention given to the violation of human rights, especially the right to self-determination, resulting from foreign military intervention, aggression or occupation in different parts of the world.

The right of self-determination of peoples is the underpinning of all other human rights, as is recognized by its presence as common article 1 in both international covenants on human rights, and also by its status as a peremptory norm of customary international law. The United Nations has played a significant role in this regard by providing the political and legal framework to support the liberation of peoples from colonial and foreign rule, which has brought about the independence in many countries that are now among its Member States. Indeed, it has been one of the Organization's most outstanding achievements, however its responsibilities and work in this field remain incomplete as long as the Palestinian people remain under Israeli occupation, with their right to self-determination forcefully withheld from them and relentlessly violated by their occupier.

Mr. Chair,

For more than four decades, the machinery of Israel's occupation has produced systematic violations against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, of a range of individual and collective rights guaranteed by international human rights law. Not only have they been deprived of their rights to self-determination and sovereignty over their land but have also repeatedly been subjected to displacement, killing and injury, imprisonment, destruction, oppression, collective punishment, confiscation of their land and properties, incessant colonization, the violation of their fundamental human rights and freedoms and other constant affronts to their human dignity and security. The situation in the Gaza Strip is especially deplorable. For more than three years, Israel, the occupying Power, has collectively punished, imprisoned and deprived more than 1.5 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip from all of their basic rights. In addition, more than half of the Palestinian people exist as a stateless people, living as refugees, deprived of their right to return for more than six decades now.

At the same time, as Israel's military occupation has continued and become entrenched over the decades, its illegality has deepened and its colonial nature and apartheid-like features have become undeniable, creating an even more serious abridgement of fundamental Palestinian rights. This is particularly evident in Israel's unlawful and fervent construction and expansion of more than 120 illegal settlements, which continue at an even more accelerated rate in Occupied East Jerusalem, its expansionist Wall, its bypass roads and its imposition of hundreds of checkpoints carving the

Occupied Palestinian Territory into Bantustan-like cantons. Israel, the occupying Power, has continued with the above practices and policies in contravention of international law, U.N. resolutions and the International Court of Justice, and has also done so at a time in which the international community has been exerting tremendous efforts to create a conducive environment for genuine negotiations to commence in order to reach a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In addition to the illegality of Israeli settlements and the human rights violations that emanate from them, the human rights of the Palestinian people continue to be violated by the nearly 500,000 illegal settlers, many armed and fanatical, who have been illegally transferred to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in grave breach of international humanitarian law. The constant failure by the occupying Power to hold illegal settlers accountable for their crimes has ultimately encouraged further attacks with complete impunity.

Simultaneously with its illegal settlements, the occupying Power continues with its colonization of Palestinian Territory through its illegal construction of the Wall, which is intricately linked to the settlements and intended to entrench them and to advance its land grab. The route of the Wall, in which 85 percent of it is being built on Occupied Palestinian Territory, clearly indicates the occupying Power's intention to set the stage for future *de facto* annexation of as much of the Occupied Palestinian Territory as possible, incorporating its illegal settlements, containing as much as 98 percent of the settler population in the occupied West Bank along with key aquifers all while oppressing the population under its occupation. It is important to recall that in its Advisory Opinion, the ICJ concluded that the construction of the Wall, along with measures taken previously by the occupying Power, severely impedes the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination, and is therefore a breach of Israel's obligation to respect that right.

Unquestionably, the presence and continued construction of Israel's illegal settlements and the Wall are undermining and actually fragmenting the contiguity of the Palestinian Territory and are therefore making the internationally agreed goal of the two-State solution and the realization of the Palestinian people's enjoyment of their right to self-determination in their independent State nearly impossible to achieve. We reiterate our appeal to the international community to take real efforts to bring and end to these violations and to advance the efforts for the realization of this inalienable human right by the Palestinian people.

Despite all of their suffering due to Israeli violence, criminal attacks and brutality, the Palestinian people are determined and will remain committed to ensuring a decent future for themselves and their children; a future free of occupation, violence and pain. They remain staunchly resolute-today more than ever-in defending their rights until they are all realized, beginning with the end of Israel's occupation which began in 1967, which would lead to the realization of their right to self-determination and the independence of their State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, I wish to inform the Committee that as in previous years the resolution, "The Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination" will be presented for adoption. It is our deepest hope that the Member States will send a strong message in solidarity with the Palestinian people by adopting this resolution by consensus, unequivocally affirming their long overdue right to self-determination and calling for its fulfillment. Thank You, Mr. Chair.