

Message from Ambassador H.E. Dr. Palitha T. B. Kohona  
Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations,  
the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli  
Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People  
and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

On the occasion of  
the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Geneva and New York,  
29 November 2010

I am honoured to address you as Chairman of the General Assembly mandated Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories as you commemorate the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. This day provides a critical reminder to the international community of the urgent need to finally resolve the Palestinian question in a just and equitable manner.

I am saddened to address you at a time when the situation for the occupied Palestinian people remains dire. Despite well intentioned efforts to revive the peace talks this year, the facts on the ground reveal that prospects for the achievement of their fundamental right to self-determination are as distant and elusive as ever. Ongoing confiscation of land, settlement and housing expansion and the construction of the Wall are severely undermining prospects for an end to the attainment of statehood.

Policies and practices emanating from the current regime of occupation continue to infringe on a whole spectrum of rights. Consequently, a significant proportion of the occupied population lives in poverty; many of them totally dependent on humanitarian aid. Levels of poverty are particularly high in the Gaza Strip, as a result of the Israeli-imposed blockade, and in Area C of the West Bank, due to restrictive access and discriminatory planning. Furthermore, we are deeply concerned by the ongoing loss of life and injuries in conflict-related violence. Moreover, over 6,200 Palestinian prisoners remain in detention, while allegations of torture and ill-treatment have been made.

Earlier this month, the Special Committee presented its 42<sup>nd</sup> report on the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. Our report concluded that an unacceptable culture of impunity prevails leading to the repetition of violations that are highlighted year after year by our Committee and many others. As a key means to address the long-standing pattern of systematic human rights violations, the Special Committee called for diplomatic efforts to be intensified with a view to adopting appropriate measures to require Israel's compliance with Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the Palestinian question and with international humanitarian and human rights laws. It is only with a political solution, with human rights at its heart, that Palestinians and Israelis will enjoy human security and peace, as neighbours.

Thank you.