

**Message from 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**

**The International Day of Solidarity with the
Palestinian People
New York, 29 November 2011**

I am honoured to address you as 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. This day provides a critical reminder to the international community of the urgent need to resolve the Israeli/Palestinian question in a just and equitable manner.

The goal for the occupied Palestinian people remains clear. They must, as they are entitled to, realize their goal of an independent state. However at the ground level, prospects for the realization by the Palestinians of their fundamental human right to self-determination and an independent state continue to remain distant and elusive.

Policies and practices emanating from the current regime of occupation continue to infringe on a whole spectrum of human rights.

Consequently, a significant proportion of Palestinians live 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 occupied East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank, due to restrictive access and discriminatory practices.

Earlier this month, the Special Committee presented its 43rd report on the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. Our report benefited from the Special Committee's first-ever visit to the Gaza Strip where the Committee's over-arching observation was that Israel's blockade continues to collectively punish the civilian population. This collective punishment is having a grave impact, especially on the children of Gaza.

It is only with a political solution, with human rights at its heart, that Palestinians and Israelis will enjoy human security and peace.

Thank you.