

General Assembly
Special Political and Decolonization Committee
4 November 2011

Agenda Item 53:
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting
the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs
of the Occupied Territories

Statement delivered by
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Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Croatia^{*}, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia^{*}, Montenegro^{*} and Iceland⁺, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

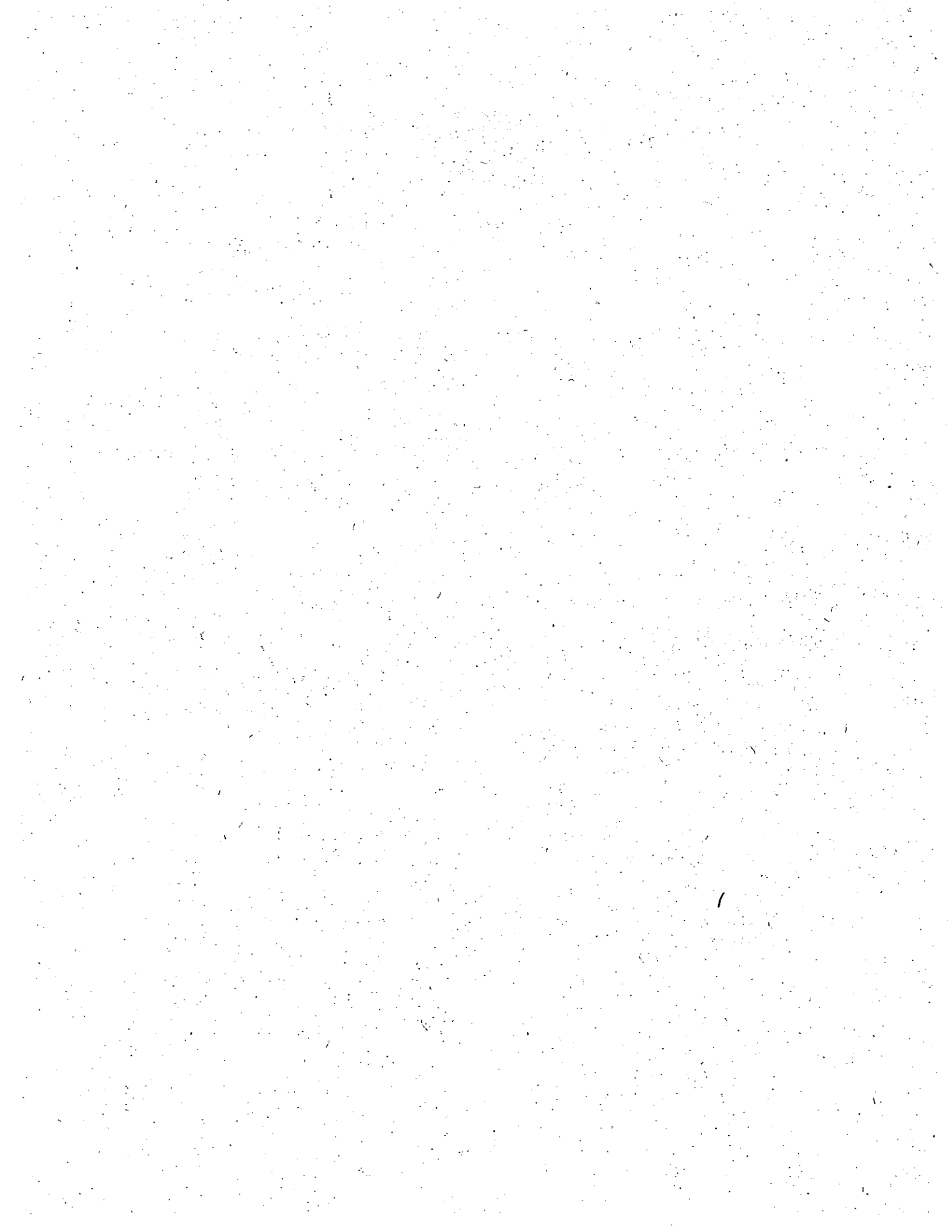
Madam Chair,

The events taking place throughout the Middle East and Northern Africa in the past months have taken on truly historic proportions which will not only shape the future of the entire region but also have repercussions far beyond the countries concerned. The fundamental changes witnessed across the Arab world have made the need for progress on the Middle East Peace Process all the more urgent. Recent events have indeed shown the necessity of heeding the legitimate aspirations of peoples in the region, including those of Palestinians for statehood, and of Israelis for security.

The European Union reiterates its appeal to the parties to resume negotiations under the terms and within the timelines indicated in the Quartet Statement of 23 September 2011.

^{*} Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

⁺ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.



The European Union welcomes the positive statements of both parties in that regard and the fact that they agreed with the Quartet to come forward with comprehensive proposals on territory and security within three months. The European Union underlines the Quartet's crucial role in facilitating the resumption of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians and recalls its readiness to support all efforts to bring the parties back to the negotiating table.

Madam Chair,

Heeding these calls requires the parties to uphold and implement commitments made. The European Union echoes the Quartet's call on both parties to refrain from provocative actions if negotiations are to be effective.

The European Union deplores the recent Israeli decisions to advance settlement expansion in the settlements of Gilo and Givat Hamatos, and accelerate constructions in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, which run counter to the Quartet's efforts. The European Union deplores steps to legalize - under Israeli law - houses in West Bank outposts. The EU reiterates that settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible. All settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem, should cease immediately. New construction plans should be abandoned. The European Union also calls upon both sides to avoid steps that run counter to the Quartet's efforts to restart negotiations.

Madam Chair,

The European Union acknowledges measures taken to ease restrictions on movement in the West Bank and entry of goods into Gaza, and stresses the need for further steps to be taken in this regard. Such steps would push back radical elements, improve living conditions, and could promote Palestinian economic development. The EU reminds Israel and all other parties of their obligation to respect the human rights of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories.

The European Union welcomes the presentation of the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013 on Governance, Economy, Social Development and Infrastructure, and stresses the need for continued international support for the Palestinian State building process, as outlined in the Chair's summary of the 18 September 2011 meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. The European Union is deeply concerned about recent reports on plans by the Israeli Government to suspend the transfer of revenues to the Palestinian Authority and recalls in this regard the position of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee that clearance revenue collection by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority should be efficient, transparent and predictable.

As regards Gaza in particular, the European Union calls for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), the full respect of international humanitarian law and for an immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow

of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza including goods from the West Bank. In this context the EU calls for the full implementation of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access. The EU welcomes the measures announced by the Israeli Government as a step forward. However, more is needed. The EU calls for full implementation and complementary measures in order to achieve a fundamental change of policy that allows for the reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza – including through exports. The European Union has offered its assistance for achieving this objective. The EU calls for a solution addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. The EU is very concerned at the renewed exchange of fire in the Gaza Strip and the South of Israel following the firing of rockets by Islamic Jihad from Gaza into Israel. The EU wholeheartedly condemns the indiscriminate targeting of civilians wherever they are, and calls on all sides to respect the ceasefire brokered by Egypt.

Madam Chair,

The European Union will continue to work with its partners within the Quartet, as well as with the other actors of the international community, to contribute to a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The EU will continue to provide political and financial support to this effect and, in so doing, will continue to place particular emphasis on the need for full respect of international humanitarian and human rights laws.

Thank you Madam Chair!