

Statement by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group on the General Debate on the Situation of human rights in Palestine and other Occupied Arab Territories, under Agenda Item 7

29 September 2009

Mr. President,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the African Group.

The African Group is deeply concerned about the grave human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Syrian Golan and other Occupied Arab territories. Over the years, the Heads of Government of the African Union have been consistent not only on their reaffirmation of total support for the cause of the occupied Palestinian Territory and other Arab territories, but have also decried Israel's refusal to abide by numerous United Nations resolutions on the matter.

Two months ago, at the last Summit of Heads of Government of the Non Aligned Movement held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, the African position was reinforced by the expression of grave concern, in the declaration, at the serious deterioration of the situation and critical political, economic, social humanitarian and security conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as a result of ongoing unlawful policies and practices by Israel.

Therefore, as required by relevant international human rights instruments, Israel is obliged to respect the rights of the occupied people of the affected areas. The meting out of collective punishments or reprisals against innocent civilians is not only unacceptable but also condemnable. The situation in the occupied Syrian Golan also calls for concern as Israel continues its occupation in complete disregard to international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Mr. President,

At this juncture, the African Group welcomes the report of the High Commissioner on the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution S-9/1, which, in consonance with report of the Fact-finding Mission to Gaza, also discovered incidents of violations of international humanitarian law during the

military operations in Gaza. Additionally, the High Commissioner reported violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in Gaza and in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

We, therefore, endorse the recommendations in her report which calls for the immediate easing of restrictions in the occupied areas with a view to completely lifting the blockade and other restrictions as well as credible investigation of all allegations of violations of humanitarian law and human rights violations during the Gaza military operations, among others.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the African Group calls on the Human Rights Council to, as a matter of priority, implement fully all resolutions adopted in both its regular and special sessions related to the issue.

I thank you.