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**20th Meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)  Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories**

Chair: Good afternoon, Distinguished Delegates, their colleagues. The 20th Meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) is called to order. This afternoon, we shall continue our general debate on Agenda item 50: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

Before opening the floor for the debate on Agenda item 50, I would kindly remind speakers to respect the time limit of 10 minutes for national statements and 15 minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of delegations.

Before we start with the general debate, I have one point of order request, and I give the floor to Distinguished Representative of Syria.

Syrian Arab Republic: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will not go long. Yesterday, after delivering my statement and after reviewing it, I have noticed some of deadly mistakes in the translation, and I want to say the following. At the same time of my deep appreciation to the efforts exerted by the interpreters who are doing their best to convey what we say to different languages, I reiterate that this interpretation should be carefully achieved or done by them in order to convey the right and accurate meaning of the original text.

Mr. Chair, I urge those who are in charge and the interpreters themselves to pay more attention and provide us with the accurate translation as we provide the interpreters with copies of our statements.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Delegate of Syria. Point taken. And now, I will start with the general debate.

The first speaker on my list is Saudi Arabia speaking on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am speaking on behalf of the Arab Group.

Mr. Chairman, I am taking the floor today on behalf of the Group of Arab States. I would like to thank you as well for the wise counsel in directing the work of the committee. We thank you, and we would like to commend the Ambassadors of Malaysia and Senegal as well as all those who have contributed to the deliberations of this committee, this SPDC, and this meeting on the Israeli-Palestinian situation as it concerns human rights in the occupied territories. We would like to thank you for the efforts made and reports and documents that have been presented comprehensively. We thank the Secretary-General and USG Andrew Gilmour for his efforts.

Mr. Chairman, the Arab Group expresses its deep concern with respect to the continuing escalation of violence and acts of provocation and aggression conducted by the Israeli occupying forces as well as the terrorist settlements against the Palestinians, including human rights violations of international law as well as a violation of all of the international relevant resolutions. These are documented points. And decisions of this committee have been documented with professionalism on this point.

The Arab Group vigorously deplores as well the unprecedented expansion of projects, plans, and Israeli movements and settlements, the crimes of demolishing homes and confiscating Palestinian territory in the West Bank and in Jerusalem at al-Quds al-Sharif in order to change the demographic status and the Arab identity of the location. It is an ethnic cleansing and discrimination which threatens the two-state solution, the establishment of a Palestinian state which is independent, and it seems to block any prospect of a peace process.

Mr. Chairman, the report submitted to your committee have proven that Israel, the occupying force for 50 years now, has been continuing to violate fundamental human rights and continues its aggression against the Palestinian people. Israel still uses disproportionate force and spreads it against the Palestinians and especially against women and children who are being tortured and who are being exploited and losing their dignity.

Mr. Chairman, for more than 50 years, the Palestinian people are between the rock of occupation and the hard place of international reaction. Terrorist acts which continue to be conducted by Israel and the flagrant violations that it engages in as well as its unacceptable crimes, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, all of this must be deplored, must be condemned unequivocally. The Israeli government must be held legally responsible and criminally responsible for these actions and those responsible, the perpetrators, must be held accountable internationally without delay. Without holding them accountable, these dangerous violations are going to continue, violations which we have seen for 50 years and which have been confirmed in the reports submitted to your committee.

Mr. Chairman, Israel, the occupying force, for 10 years now is imposing a siege against Gaza, a blockade. The report of the Special Committee has mentioned the serious impact of this blockade, which increases poverty, which ruins the economy, and no opportunities for employing youth. The unemployment rate for youth is over 65%, so they don't have the means to survive, very little. I would also like to mention the Israeli policy in the West Bank which fights against the free movement with all of the impact on the social life and on the economy that you could expect.

Mr. Chairman, the international community agrees to say that this settlement, these settlements, are a violation of international law. It's an essential impediment against a fair settlement, meaning the two-state solution. And in the light of the violations, which continue from Israel, the occupying force, against the Palestinian people, and while Israel is not being held accountable for such violations and for protecting the Palestinian people, the Arab Group welcomes once again the French initiative which asks for the holding of an international peace conference for the peace – on the peace process, and especially the Arab Initiative, Peace Initiative, and the relevant Security Council resolutions, we welcome. This would help us establish an international mechanism that would be effective, that would ensure the end of the Israeli occupation of the State of Palestine according to a determined timetable, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with al-Quds al-Sharif as the capital.

Fifty years of no political will, of stalling, 50 years when the ambitions of the Palestinian people have not materialized, this is 50 years of violations of international resolutions, of an escalation of extremism, of violence and terrorism as well as no security there and throughout the world. The Arab Group hopes – would hope that 2017 will be the year when an international consensus will be achieved and result in the occupying force, Israel, putting an end to its policies, to its settlements. According to international law, we also hope that the peace process will be revived, that the two-state solution will be put in place and all occupied Arab territories, including the Lebanese and Syrian Golan, all the occupied lands will all be liberated, we hope.

We also welcome the decision of UNESCO, which has admitted that al-Quds al-Sharif is of Islamic legacy. It's an important point to meet the ambitions of the Palestinian people and in all the time lines that it should be done.

The Arab Group once again would like to affirm that we're going to continue to support fully the Palestinian people. We are always going to be alongside the Palestinian people as they are fighting, as they are defending their territories and their holy sites, and while they are facing all of the extreme actions posed by Israel. We are as well saying that the occupying force, Israel, must respect the political, economic, and security agreements already signed, also respect international law, and that all the international conventions, including the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians. We also would want to see an end to the occupation by Israel of Palestinian territories and all other Arab territories with a withdrawal to the June ‘67 borders. We ask for progress to be made, to put in place the two-state solution under the Arab Peace Initiative so that the Palestinians will be independent and the state will have al-Quds al-Sharif as capital.

Chair: ...Representative of Saudi Arabia for her statement. I give the floor to Distinguished Representative of Qatar.

Qatar: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, may I congratulate you on your election and that of the members of the Bureau. We thank you for your steering of this committee's work. We also welcome the statement made by Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group and that of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We also thank the Deputy Secretary-General for Human Rights who provided a briefing on the human rights situation, and we also thank the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territory.

The State of Qatar believes that this committee must continue its work and the United Nations must support its work and activities. Chair, the report of the Special Committee, but also that of the Secretary-General under review, shed light on the various violations by Israel, the occupying power, against Palestinians and other Arabs in the occupied territories.

Chair, the These violations include the excessive use of violence, the use of ammunition, extrajudicial situations, and violations against children. And this runs against international law. There are also demolitions of homes, which is also a breach of various conventions.

These practices are part of an Israeli policy, an illegal one, to isolate Palestinians behind the wall in order to choke their economy and to exploit their natural resources. Mr. Chair, the peace process in the Middle East is threatened by the settlement activities in the Palestinian occupied territories, including al-Quds and the Syrian occupied Golan. And on the Secretary-General's report, there is mention of putting an end to the expansion of settlements and putting an end to the plan and end any attempt to attribute a legal aspect to these settlements and any practices to that end. These include initiatives to settlers for them to have a hold over Palestinian property.

Discriminatory practices must also be ended in the West Bank and the law must be implemented, including in relation to settlers who are attacking Palestinians. The illegal Israeli practices include attempts to erase Arab identity in Jerusalem and changing its demography. This includes aspects relating to holy sites, a UNESCO Islamic Cultural Heritage Site. And this policy is one of escalation. It is illegal and leads to Judaization and division in space and in time, and all of these laws, we see that these are null and void, in fact.

We denounce any attempt of aggression on al-Aqsa, as the people who were practicing their religion there have a right to pray. Human rights are undermined as well as the economic, social, and political rights in Gaza are affected. The economic aspects are affected and basic services, too. There's the freedom of movement in the case of transport of wounded and those who are ill, and the situation is getting worse in the Gaza Strip.

A/71/364, this report notes that there is growing frustration after 50 years of occupation and paralysis in the peace process. The absence of accountability means that this violence is continuing and the future of peace and security is also undermined. Israel, the occupying power, must be considered as directly responsible for the crimes against – by the settlers against Palestinians. Perpetrators of these crimes must be held accountable.

We reject Israeli practices, illegal practices, in the occupied Syrian Golan, as this violates international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, including 497 of 1981 and relevant GA resolutions, including the relevant resolution. Israel is imposing its laws and jurisdiction on Arab territory. These are – this is a null-and-void activity. We denounce such activities, namely that to change the demographic situation. We also condemn Israeli practices that lead to the exploitation of natural resources. My country's position is explained in detail in the report of the Secretary-General, and the implications of this resolution under – report 71/392, that is clear in this report.

The circumstances, sir, for a lasting, just, peaceful solution based on a two-state solution and according to Security Council resolutions based on the Arab Initiative for Peace, this must be respected so that Palestinians can enjoy their inalienable rights and establish a sovereign, independent viable state based on the borders of 1967 with al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital and the return of refugees. We call upon the General Assembly resolutions from the Special Session, the 10th Special Session, to be abided by, the relevant articles of the Geneva Convention to protect civilians, the 1949 Geneva Conventions, all of these must be respected. And we also note that this convention applies to the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and other occupied territories since 1967. In this context, we must ensure the protection of Palestinians and set – ensure relevant resolutions of the Security Council are protected.

To conclude, Chair, the State of Qatar supports the cause of our Palestinian and Arab brothers who are struggling to put an end to this foreign occupation of occupied Arab territories and against these illegal practices of the occupying power and the extremist settlers. Thank you, sir.

Chair: ... Distinguished Representative of Qatar for his statement. I give the floor to Distinguished Representative of Sudan.

Sudan: On behalf of God, thank you, Mr. Chairman. We associate ourselves with the speech that was given by Venezuela on behalf of NAM as well as the statement that was made by Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group. We would also like to thank Mr. Amrith Rohan Perera, the Perm Rep of Sri Lanka, and Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. We would also like to thank the members of the Bureau, Mr. Ramlan Ibrahim of Malaysia and Mr. Baba Cisse of Senegal. We'd like to thank all the other committee members for their efforts.

Mr. Chairman, we have familiarized ourselves with the report of the committee, report 350 – 70/350. The investigations of the Special Committee have demonstrated the results, and the results are still negative. The report has mentioned in the details of the situation which is deteriorating in the Palestinian, occupied Palestinian territories, in terms of human rights as well as the escalation of violence in Jerusalem-East and the West Bank since September 2015 and as well as the military situation in Gaza. The occupying forces refuse all cooperation with the Special Committee and refuse all consultation with those responsible. Even access to occupied territories is refused.

As well as the Golan Heights, these are practices which flagrantly violate the Fourth Geneva Convention according to UN resolutions thereto. All of those activities and measures conducted by Israel are illegal under international law and these actions must come to an end immediately. These practices violate human rights and they are an impediment for implementing peace. They're a direct threat to the possibility of a two-state solution in the 1967 borders.

Mr. Chairman, Sudan condemns vigorously colonialist, illegal colonialist measures, as well as the systematic violations, the exploitation of human resources, demolition of houses, forced displacements of Palestinians, detention of Palestinians, in particular Palestinian children. We condemn acts of violence and terrorism and provocation on the part of settlers and extremists, in particular, in the holy places in occupied Jerusalem and the al-Aqsa Mosque.

Humanitarian assistance is blocked, very difficult to deliver, and there are attacks targeted against those medical officers who work in that area. The committee says that the land and sea blockade in Gaza should be stopped. The committee has said that. It's entering its tenth year, this blockade. This is an illustration of – one of the worst illustrations of the collective sanctioning that has been inflicted upon the residents of Gaza. It's against international humanitarian law and we – it's an illegal siege in Gaza. We deplore it. We call for the opening up of all humanitarian corridors for humanitarian assistance and compliance with all Security Council resolutions and others, especially the Resolution of 2009.

We condemn the acts, the illegal acts of the Israeli authorities in the occupied Golan, including the illegal policies based on discrimination and on putting in land mines and military bases within and around neighborhoods where people live. We denounce the settlement activities and the recent statement of the occupying force that stated, proclaimed its sovereignty over the occupied Golan. These are statements which counter international law and the UN Charter as well as relevant UN resolutions, in particular, Security Council Resolution 887 and the four Geneva Conventions. We call on Israel to fully withdraw from the Syrian Golan according to the 1967 borders.

Mr. Chairman, it is time to put an end to this occupation, which is in its fiftieth year, unacceptably. It has inflicted a great deal of suffering on the Palestinian people. This occupation is one of the main reasons for the destabilization that we see in the region and internationally. We call for assistance to the people to have their, enjoy their inalienable rights, independence, self-determination, and the establishment of a viable Palestinian state with Jerusalem – East Jerusalem as its capital. We call for a fair solution to the reason for Palestinian refugees based on the GA Resolution 194.

Thank you, and may the peace of God be with you.

Chair: I thank Distinguished Representative of Sudan for his statement. I give the floor to Distinguished Representative of Lebanon.

Lebanon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Lebanon associates itself with the statement of Venezuela on behalf of NAM and the statements made by Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group.

Mr. Chairman, when the international community has begun implementing the Sustainable Development Program for 2030 with the SDGs under Agenda 2030, at a time when we're doing not and has received the conclusions of the UN Conference of Habitat III, at such a time as this, the international community has established a new program in so doing for urban developments. We have also achieved an international consensus to pay more attention to countries that are in conflict or occupied by foreigners or states that are in a post-conflict situation. And so, Mr. Chairman, we must assist the Palestinian people to end the Israeli occupation, to relaunch their economy, and to regain their sovereignty and natural resources.

What is the objective of the Israeli occupation of Palestine and of the illegal practices against the Palestinian people? The reports of the Secretary-General document the Israeli practices in the occupied territories and other Arab territories which are still being occupied by the Israelis, especially Syrian Golan and the – we see the scope of illegal practices of Israel and how they run counter to the UN Charter and run against international law and IHL. Pursuing these practices is itself a violation, a serious violation of these norms and acts where Israel is challenging our attempt to have relations of peace, justice, and the rule of law and equality.

Mr. Chairman, Israel, in spite of the international consensus on the illegal nature of its settlement activities is still continuing to build these settlements according to the statistics from OCHA, which is – we got the first week of the month of September, this year, 463 units were built in Zone C in the West Bank. In addition to, 1,000 other units in East Jerusalem and 735 housing, other housing units, are scheduled and they have been approved for July and August. These settlement activities block any prospect for resuming the peace process.

Israel has arrested more than 7,000 Palestinians. Among these Palestinians, we have 700 who are administrative prisoners, 340 children in their number. A 13-year-old and a 14-year-old, two boys, were arrested. [Madwan], another one, another 13-year-old was arrested. These children were killed by Israeli police in 2016 without any accountability for it. What is the security Israel is talking about when they confiscate, they take away the dreams and the childhood of young Palestinians, their hopes, on the roadsides without any accountability to anybody?

The siege and the bombing of Gaza, the siege that has been going on for 10 years, if this siege continues and if the situation gets worse in Gaza, then Gaza will be uninhabitable by 2020 and the reconstruction mechanisms put in place could be delayed by another 10 years in order for Gaza to come back to its pre-2014 state. Israel does not confined itself to banning or confiscating things from the Palestinians, confiscating property, chasing the Palestinians from their homes, protecting extremist settlements built by Israel; they sanctioned Palestinian deaths and they only announce them a year later so there are no funeral that can be given to them. Is that their, Israel's, attempt to respect the Geneva Conventions and international conventions on human rights?

Yes, Jerusalem is of inestimable value to all those who practice divine religions. Israel is imposing restrictions on believers who would like to pray at the al-Aqsa Mosque or in churches in Palestine, in particular in Jerusalem. We call on Israel to respect the historic status of the Jerusalem mosque under the UNESCO decision.

Mr. Chairman, we have a hope – it is our hope that we will be able to protect the peace process and resume the negotiations, to put an end as soon as possible to the Israeli occupation. Therefore, Lebanon supported the initiative of France and of Egypt if it is applied according to the Madrid Principles, the Arab Peace Principles and the relevant UN resolutions, including the GA resolutions, 194 especially. There is no doubt that we must protect the Palestinian people at all times.

Thank you very much.

Chair: I thank Distinguished Representative of Lebanon for her statement. I give the floor to Distinguished Representative of Turkey.

Turkey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate Turkey's strong and long-standing commitment to the establishment of a peaceful, secure, stable, inclusive, and democratic environment respectful of fundamental human rights and freedoms in the region.

The Israeli-Palestine conflict remains the core challenge for the establishment of such an environment. It continues to undermine the prospects for a lasting regional and global peace.

As we approach the fiftieth year of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, Palestinians are still deprived of their right to have a decent life, respect, and freedom. Settlement expansion activities continues despite numerous calls and condemnation of the international community. Impunity leads to a said increase in settler violence, which in turn impedes the enjoyment of numerous other human rights by the affected Palestinian population.

Attempts to undermine the sanctity of holy sites and the historical status of Haram al-Sharif also escalate attention. There must be accountability for the human rights violations, and rule of law must be ensured. Inaction of the international community does not only aggravate the daily suffering of the Palestinians, but has also deplorable consequences for the region and beyond.

The current political impasse needs to be overcome. To this end, the Palestinians should be able to sit at the negotiation table as the State of Palestine on an equal standing with Israel. To reach a lasting peace, it is also crucial for the Palestinians to voice their legitimate demands in unity.

The international community should uphold its responsibility and renew its engagement to reach a negotiated political settlement based on two-state solution in accordance with international law, relevant UN resolutions, and Arab Peace Initiative.

This vision requires, first and foremost, the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian state with pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. We remain committed to support our Palestinian sisters and brothers in their objective of living in peace, prosperity, and dignity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chair: I thank Distinguished Representative of Turkey for her statement. I give the floor to Distinguished Representative of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement under this agenda item. Bangladesh thanks the esteemed members of the Special Committee for their detailed and incisive report. We commend the objective conclusions drawn and the specific recommendations made by the Special Committee to the attention of the international community for the appropriate follow-up.

The Special Committee has once again been denied any cooperation, including consultation and access to the occupied Palestinian territories. Despite such repeated defiance by Israel, we can only hope that the Israeli authorities would change track and take into consideration the urgent and legitimate recommendations intended at them by the Special Committee. In our view, the Special Committee continues to serve a critically important purpose by keeping the cause of the Palestinian people and other Arab populations under Israeli occupations alive and relevant in the backdrop of the outbreak and continuation of armed conflicts in different parts of the world.

The continued Israeli settlement and the construction of the wall in the West Bank and East Jerusalem have emerged as the most blatant symbol of occupation, and are increasingly identified by the international community as the biggest threat to the viability of a two-state solution. The illegality of the settlements found by the International Court of Justice, continues to encroach into habitats and agricultural lands of the Palestinian people and results in their displacement, livelihood disruption, and loss of traditional lifestyle for certain communities.

It is regrettable that the Israeli authorities continue to offer impunity to Israeli settlers resorting to indiscriminate violence against Palestinians and to individuals and entities engaged in unregulated exploitation of natural resources in the occupied territories. Israel's excessive use of force continues unabated in violation of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and constitutes the commission of serious crimes under the purview of the international criminal law regime.

The indiscriminate attacks against medical facilities and vehicles is further aggravating an already dire humanitarian situation. It is deplorable that Israel continues with its degrading and often inhuman treatment of Palestinian detainees, including children, with hardly any recourse to justice. It is also profoundly disturbing to hear reports of denial of return of dead bodies of Palestinians for their dignified closure.

The Israeli land and sea blockade of Gaza is entering its tenth year in an egregious demonstration of collective punishment against 2 million people for purported retaliation against certain individuals. The occasional disruption of humanitarian assistance and other basic amenities have made living condition in the Palestinian – of the Palestinians living in Gaza almost untenable. We urge the international community to prevail upon Israel to urgently lift the unjustified blockades and allow the people in Gaza as well as other occupied territories their legitimate claims to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Bangladesh takes note of certain initiatives such as the International Conference held in Geneva in July this year at the French initiative, and then underscores the need for restoring the political horizon for the Security Council to act in a decisive manner towards pursuing a peaceful, just, and lasting solution to the protracted crisis in the occupied Palestinian territories. The solutions are embedded in the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Quartet Roadmap, The Arab Peace Initiative, and the Madrid Principle of Land for Peace. What is fundamentally absent is the genuine demonstration and application of the political will to move in the direction of those solutions.

With a view to contributing our part in mobilizing sufficient political will across the board, Bangladesh supports the proposal to declare the year 2017 as the international year to end the occupation to mark the fiftieth year of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

We shall continue to encourage and support the work of the Special Committee and other relevant UN mechanisms and entities to sensitize the international community about the grave human rights violation and humanitarian consequences suffered by the Palestinian people under half a century of illegal occupation, that constitution (sic) affront to the purpose and principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

I thank you.

ChaiR: I thank Distinguished Representative of Bangladesh for his statement. I give the floor to Distinguished Representative of Morocco.

Morocco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, at the outset I should like to seize this opportunity to pay tribute to the work undertaken by the Special Committee entrusted with the task of investigating into the Israeli Practices Affecting Human Rights of the Palestinian people and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. I should like to thank them for all the laudable efforts they have made.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the Saudi Arabian statement when it was delivered on behalf of the Arab Group. Mr. Chairman, the report submitted by the Special Committee contained in document A/71/364 covering the period from the 1st of June 2015, to the 31st of May 2016, is a report that sets out the details of the Israeli practices, which are a blatant breach of the international humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention and the international humanitarian law.

Mr. Chairman, the report refers to the escalation of violence since the month of September 2015, and it continued until June 2016, although its acuteness has decreased somewhat. However, the period under discussion has been the bloodiest period in absolute terms. We have witnessed the policies of Israel in closing the checkpoints, particularly in East Jerusalem, the expansion of settlements, and the demolition of homes, which led to the feeling of despair, frustration, which feeds the spiral of violence and undermines the peace and security opportunities.

My delegation has on numerous occasions and in different international fora has called upon the Israeli government to put an end to these manifestations of violence and the unfair policies towards the Palestinian people. We do regret to see that the settlement policies and the expansion of settlements in addition to demolition of homes are practices that are in breach of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the international humanitarian law.

These practices go against the grain of peace, the peace process. They do undermine it. They are against the establishment of a two-state solution with a Palestinian state within the borders of the 4th of June 1967, with its capital East Jerusalem.

Mr. Chairman, we do believe that the international community bears a primal responsibility and full responsibility to find an opening in this deadlock and to put an end to the stalling in negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis, which led to further tension, violence, and a spiral of violence.

We believe that the international community should make every effort in order to lead down the road of finding a negotiated solution with a two-state solution whereby a Palestinian State is set up within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as a Palestinian capital. This would ensure a peaceful and good solution, which would reinstate trust between the various parties and would establish the pillars for a viable and sustainable State of Palestine living in peace, harmony, and peaceful coexistence with the State of Israel, and this in accordance with the international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Therefore, my country would like to pay tribute to the French Initiative calling for the holding of an international peace conference with the aim of putting an end to occupation. The aim of which is to make every party assume its responsibility before time goes by and the opportunities for peace are lost. Therefore, we in Morocco, we have a stand-fast and enduring position whereby we uphold the Arab Peace Initiative on the basis of the international legitimacy, whereby a Palestinian state would be set up within the borders of 1967.

Thank you.

Chair: … of Morocco for his statement. I give the floor to Distinguished Representative of Algeria.

Algeria: Mr. Chairman, at the outset, my delegation would like to associate itself with the Permanent Delegation of Venezuela on behalf of the NAM and we would like to associate ourself with Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab region. My delegation would like to pay tribute to the work undertaken by the Special Committee to Investigate the Israeli Practices Affecting Human Rights of the Palestinian People, and would like to pay tribute to the Chairman from Sri Lanka.

While we welcome the recommendations of this committee, we would like to deplore once again the activities and practices of the Israeli government obstructing the way of the Committee to undertake its activity.

Mr. Chairman, Algeria considers that the failure of the international community to find a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian people to establish its state within the borders of 1967 with the capital East Jerusalem is indeed a true reflection of the failure of the modern order.

Mr. Chairman, despite the numerous and repeated calls of the international community to put an end to occupation, the Israeli occupation force is still adamant on its practices, building a separation wall, displacing civilians, inflicting collective punishment, erecting a separation wall. All these practices are a blatant breach of international law.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation would like to endorse what is contained in the report of the Special Committee, which depicts the various violations of the human rights of Palestinians and other Arab people.

We refer to the force used by settlers, the expansion of settlements, the exploitation of natural resources in Palestine and the Golan, the Syrian Golan, in addition to the non-release of the Israeli forces of dead bodies to their families, the excessive force of – excessive use of force, extrajudicial executions in addition to other practices whereby homes are being demolished. The violations of the rights of Bedouins and pastoralists in the West Bank, all these are sheer violations of the international human law, and they are not accounted for.

Mr. Chairman, the civilians among Palestinians are entitled to protection under international humanitarian law. Palestinian people are fully entitled to the provisions of Geneva Convention on the protection of the rights of civilians in times of war. However, Israel has rejected the numerous calls of the international community. It has no fear of any punishment in doing so. Mr. Chairman, the policies of settlements in Palestine, in Sheba'a Farms in the Golan, all these practices are measures to create a new fait accompli to change the features of these roles.

Israeli occupation is still expanding its settlements, which is a major obstacle to the two-state solution. Mr. Chairman, the international community is called upon more than ever before to help the Palestinian people suffering from occupation for more than 50 years. The international community should bring pressure to bear on the Israeli occupation to put an end to its occupation of the pre-‘67 territories, the end of occupation to the Golan and Sheba'a Farms. We would like to call upon Israel to facilitate the establishment of two-state solution with East Jerusalem as a capital of Palestine within the framework of the international legitimacy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chair: I thank Distinguished Representative of Algeria for his statement. We are approaching the end of the list. I will pause the meeting for one minute just to clarify where we stand on the list of speakers, and are we really at the end, and then I'll resume a meeting after a minute, please. The meeting is just paused for technical reason for a minute.

Distinguished Delegates, I am continuing with the meeting. We have heard the last speaker inscribed on my list for this item, and thus concluded our general debate on this item. Action on the draft resolutions to be submitted under this item is scheduled at our last meeting on Tuesday, 8 November at 10 AM

Distinguished Delegates, at our next meeting tomorrow, Wednesday 2nd November at 3 PM in this very room, the Committee will begin consideration of item 49, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East.

I would like to remind that in accordance with our program of work, all outstanding draft proposals should be submitted to Secretariat no later than today at PM, the deadline set for submissions of proposals.

Having said that, now I will call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right to reply. And, as always, I would like to remind delegations that the number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to two, with first intervention limited to ten and second to five minutes.

And now I give the floor to the Representative of the State of Palestine.

PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor in exercise of the right of reply. I do so regrettably in response to the statement by the Delegation of Israel.

Mr. Chair, my delegation stands by its statement yesterday before this Committee, a statement reflecting the facts without distortion and without rhetoric about the real suffering, trauma, and tragedies being endured every single day by the Palestinian people, children, women, and men under Israel's nearly half century occupation.

This is the same occupation that Israeli representatives continue to ignore and refuse to address in any way, no less in the context of international law, which is clearly the context of the examination in the reports of the Special Committee and the Secretary-General. These reports reflect facts amassed by credible UN agencies, committees, and bodies. We thus denounce the slander directed at the Special Committee and its members, and Israel's non-cooperation with this Committee and other human rights bodies and mechanisms of the UN.

Furthermore, we reject its dismissal of the veracity and validity of these reports, and the claim that these reports are "one-sided or biased". The law is not biased, but it does indeed stand on the side of justice. No matter how many distortions or perversions, the law cannot be twisted to justify the actions of the aggressor, in this case the occupying power, at the expense of the victims, the occupied people.

Our deliberations are not about so-called Israel bashing. It is about facing the truth and seeking ways to redress this massive injustice. We implore the Israeli delegation to be serious and to discuss the substance, the real issues, the human rights violations being perpetrated against the Palestinian people under Israel's foreign occupation and subjugation for 50 years, and to do so on the basis of international law and the Human Rights Covenants.

Such an approach would surely lead to a different narrative than the one constantly being told by Israel's representatives. The reality is that this conflict is neither about terror nor incitement, despite the presence of these dynamics in the conflict. Nor is it simply about security. It is about a people denied their freedom and rights by an oppressive illegal occupation; struggling to survive, struggling to attain their dignity, and the solace that only justice can provide, and struggling to realize their rights and independence in their homeland.

Mr. Chair, to aspire to live freely, rather than under the yoke and misery of foreign occupation, is a legitimate aspiration. To aspire for the same rights, peace, and security that all people aspire to are legitimate aspirations. Attempts to justify the occupation and the violations and crimes sustaining it and caused by it, however, are illegitimate. And attempts to divert attention from these violations by presenting distorted narratives, including by boasting about Israel's gifts of humaneness to the people it has occupied for 50 years, are offensive and demeaning.

Seeking admiration for facilitating the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip, which it has destroyed and blockaded and suffocated for nearly 10 years, causing massive human suffering, is absurd and provocative. These are not favors from Israel. It has clear and specific obligations as the occupying power, as per international humanitarian law, and it must comply with the law. Israel must be reminded that the Fourth Geneva Convention, now customary international law, is obligatory, not voluntary.

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the occupation, Israel should act forthwith to end this illegal cruel occupation that is destroying both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, rather than attempting to further justify and entrench it. The international community has a duty to act as well. It must not accept empty slogans and distorted pretexts from the occupying power, but must insist without exception on respect for international law, the cornerstone for peace and security for Palestine and Israel, and for anywhere in the world.

I thank you, Mr. Chair, and in closing once again express my delegation's respect and gratitude to the members of the Special Committee for their work.

Chair: I thank Distinguished Representative of the Observer State of Palestine for her statement. I give the floor to Distinguished Representative of Israel.

Israel: Thank you for giving me the floor. I would like to comment on some of the statements of the delegations which spoke here. Many of the speakers in this room still refuse, after 68 years, to recognize the State of Israel. This week we celebrate 100 years to the Balfour Declaration, issued by then Foreign Secretary of Britain, Lord Arthur James Balfour, which marked one of the first times in modern era that a significant world power officially recognized the Jewish people's right to their ancient homeland.

This document was then incorporated into the 1922 decision by the League of Nations to create a mandate aimed at establishing a national home for the Jewish people in the land of Israel. The League of Nations' decision transformed the Balfour Declaration from a policy position into an international legal obligation accepted by the international community as a whole. Regrettably, some in this room, as well as the Palestinian leadership, have systematically continued to undermine the basic rights of Jewish peoplehood and the legitimacy of the State of Israel.

This is evident by Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas announcing intentions to sue the British government over the Balfour Declaration. The historical denial of internationally recognized rights of the Jewish people was also reflected in recent attempts in UNESCO to erase the Jewish and Christian heritage of Jerusalem, a city which is the cradle for three monotheistic religions. Just yesterday we have heard in this very room the Palestinian delegate echo allegations which demonstrate once again their attempt to rewrite history and propagate a one-sided narrative that only pushes us further away.

These words and deeds are all derived from one reason and one reason only: the persistent Palestinian refusal to recognize the Jewish state in any boundary. Whereas Israel has repeatedly stressed its adherence to the principle of two states for two peoples, the Palestinians remain fixated on unfounded allegations from the past, instead of moving towards a better future for both peoples.

I can only hope that one day, hopefully in the near future, they will accept our repeated calls for the resumption of dialogue without preconditions, and invest their efforts in ending this conflict. As for some of the other speakers, among them the Islamic State of Iran, the number one supporter of terror in the Middle East and one that openly calls for the destruction of a UN member state, as well as Lebanon, a country controlled by the Iranian proxy, the designated terror organization Hezbollah, none of them has the moral stand to preach.

The representative from Venezuela had the audacity to attack my country using the language of human rights. This Security Council member, whose government bans the freedom of assembly, speech, the right to a fair trial, and is blocking international aid from its own suffering people, I would advise him to focus his attention on his own advice and create a conducive environment for NGOs as well as Venezuelan citizens to voice their opinions, act freely, and report human rights violations.

Thank you.

Chair: I thank Distinguished Representative of Israel for her statement. I give the floor to Distinguished Representative of Iran.

Iran: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the floor. Mr. Chairman, the representative of the Israeli regime just voiced some baseless accusation against my government in a futile attempt to divert the Committee's attention from his regime's criminal acts and aggression policies against the Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrian, and other people in our region.

A regime that resorted to all kinds of atrocities and criminal policies such as aggression, occupation, assassination, state terrorism, torture, and kidnapping is never, is never in a position to portray itself as an advocate of human rights and democracy. Everyone in this room, in this forum is very much familiar with this useless method.

Deliberations of many international forums, including conventional debate of the 4th Committee on the issue of Palestinian and other territories occupied by the Israeli regime, the child killer, have clearly shown how his regime, how her regime has continuously and purposefully flouted every norm and principle of international law as well as dozens of UN resolutions.

Human right principles are systematically violated by the Israeli regime. Various UN resolutions and numerous reports of the United Nations, including those introduced to the 4th Committee in recent days attest to the bitter fact that this regime has no respect for the basic values of the civilized world, nor does it respect the fundamental human right principles on which the world community functions. In this regard, I wish to remind the Committee of the report of the United Nations fact-finding mission on Gaza conflict, which is also known as the Goldstone Report of 25th September, 2009 on the Gaza conflict.

This report has authenticated and confirmed serious violation of international humanitarian law as well as gross violation of human rights during the military aggression on Gaza by the Israeli regime. Most importantly, the report confirms that war crimes and crimes against humanity have indeed been committed by this occupying child-killer illegal regime.

Having said so, my delegation firmly believe that the representative of such an entity, which is the prime source of threat, terror, and administration in the whole world, including the Middle East, is not in a position to level fabricated and baseless allegation against any country. We call on the international community to acknowledge the detrimental effects of all of the dangerous policies and activities of this regime and take decisive measures to prevent further violation of human rights and humanitarian law by this regime in the occupied territories.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to restate my government's unwavering and continuous support for the Palestinian people in their rightful and legitimate struggle against the occupation and for their just quest for full exercise of their human rights, in particular their right to self-determination. And my delegation also, and my government, fully supports the Special Committee, and we hope this Committee will continue in the future, and we are waiting for its report in the future.

Thank you.

Chair: I thank Distinguished Representative of Iran for his statement.

I see no further requests for the floor, therefore, I will bring our meeting to its end. We shall meet tomorrow. I wish you a nice evening and the meeting is adjourned.