

EGYPT



مصر

The Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations
New York

بعثة مصر الدائمة
لدى الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك

**Statement of
The Delegation of Egypt**

**Before the Third Committee
on**

**Agenda Item 63:
“Right of Peoples to Self-determination”**

New York- 3 November 2008

Check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

Although more than six decades have already passed since its establishment, and despite the progress achieved in consolidating human and peoples' rights, the United Nations is regrettably still unable to realise full respect of the principle of equal rights and duties. This is particularly true concerning the right of peoples to self-determination, one of the most important purposes and principles set out by the Charter as the foundation for developing friendly relations among nations. In spite of our commitment in the International Covenants of Human Rights to support and respect the right to self-determination as an inalienable right, and even though paragraph 5 of the 2005 World Summit Document affirmed this commitment, in principle as regards the protection of the right of peoples under colonial control and foreign occupation to self-determination, the international action has not yet risen to the level of implementing the pledges we took upon ourselves in this respect, even after sixty years since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Such established inalienable right is not a donation from the international community. On the contrary, it is an acknowledgment of the entitlement of peoples under foreign occupation to resist occupation and be free from canonicalization, a right that is not less sacred than the right to self-defence, especially when facing those who seek to impose illegal situations on the ground and suppress the peoples' volition, relying on economic or military muscle, in a flagrant violation of their international commitments to protect and promote human rights, and in a blunt contradiction to their claims that they themselves are the proponents of democracy and freedoms. On top of these freedoms of course comes the right of all peoples to live, on equal footing, in peace and security.

The deprivation of the Palestinian people from exercising their inalienable right to self-determination and establish their independent state is a stark example. Meanwhile, Israel continues to claim that it is the only democracy in the Middle East, in an attempt to spread a new meaning of democracy, one that is founded on occupying the lands of others' by force and incessant violations of the most basic rights of the Palestinian people. The fallacy of this new concept needs to be uncovered and its spread should be resisted, as democracy and occupation cannot coexist.

Mr. Chairman,

The report of the Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries as a Means of Violating Human Rights and Impeding the Exercise of the Right of Peoples to Self-determination augments our existing concern regarding the role of some private companies operating in the security field in exacerbating and exasperating conflicts, undermining international mechanisms aiming at curbing the illicit trade in small and light arms and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. We welcome the efforts of the Working Group as mandated by the Human Rights Council to draft principles, guidelines and criteria with a view to developing national and international regulation mechanisms to address the activities of these companies, within a framework that ensures both the transparency and accountability for their activities. Meanwhile, we would also like to stress the importance of consolidating efforts to enhance the national capacities of States emerging from conflicts to develop their security sectors, based on the principle of national ownership, and to provide support to the working group in order to enable it to carry out its mandate.

The international community's pursuit for the consolidation of the universal respect of human and peoples' rights would not reach its final destination unless we completely divest ourselves of selectivity, politicisation and double standards when dealing with human and peoples' rights, and first of all the right to self-determination. Despite the widespread optimism that existed when the Human Rights Council was established, and the tangible positive

development in its activities, the Council's success in performing its role in addressing the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is pending the existence of a solid determination to ensure Israel's full adherence to its international obligations and its full cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Occupied Territories and the fact-finding missions established by the Council to investigate its gross violations of human rights.

We have carefully considered the report of the Secretary-General entitled "The Universal Realization of the Right of Peoples to Self-determination," and look forward to the inclusion of specific recommendations on how to enable the Human Rights Council to perform its role in investigating and dealing with Israel's violations of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in next year's report. This is particularly necessary in light of the findings of the balanced report by the Special Rapporteur, which identifies gross violations that run counter to Israel's commitments as the occupying power according to international law, on top of which comes the Fourth Geneva Convention. These violations contribute to the dangerously deteriorating situation in the Occupied Territories, and severely curtail the ability of the Palestinian people to enjoy their legitimate right to self-determination to the fullest, and to realise their aspiration for the establishment of their Independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. These violations are compounded, as the report clearly indicates, by the recurring Israeli violation of its commitments under the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, particularly so vis-à-vis the right to freedom of expression, freedom of Assembly, and the right to mental and physical health.

Undoubtedly, the protracted nature of occupation multiplies the negative effects suffered by the Palestinian people as a result, especially in light of the ongoing blockades, economic stranglehold, obstructing accessibility of and to humanitarian assistance, destruction of homes, the judaization of East Jerusalem, and other practices that run in their totality in contradiction with the responsibility of the occupying power to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people. In addition, the continuing policies that aim at the expansion of settlements, confiscation of lands, closure of passageways and the negative ramifications of the "Separation Wall" are all detrimental to the contiguity of the Palestinian lands and to the confidence building measures.

Accordingly, we reiterate the importance of invigorating the UN role in dealing with the human rights of the Palestinian people, along with other Arab peoples that are suffering from occupation and are being systematically subjected to incessant violations and intrusions. We aspire for a larger UN engagement in a more serious manner, through its role in the Quartet, and in confidence building, all the way through to the attainment of a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace... A peace that is founded on the Terms of Reference of the Peace Process, most important of which is the principle of "Land for Peace", the Arab Peace Initiative and the Annapolis understandings... A genuinely negotiated peace on all tracks, in order to realise the full withdrawal from all Arab territories, occupied since 1967, and to allow for the establishment of the Palestinian State. We aspire for a larger UN engagement to ensure the enjoyment of the right to self-determination and all other human rights to all peoples, without exception.

As we approach the end of the Second International Decade for the Elimination of Colonialism in 2010, it is incumbent upon the United Nations to reaffirm its commitment to implement the 1960 Declaration on Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, through concrete steps to liberate all peoples from each and every form of foreign control, and to guarantee their enjoyment of the right to self-determination.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.