



General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

54th plenary meeting

Tuesday, 30 November 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Deiss (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 37 (continued)

Question of Palestine

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/65/35)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/380 and A/65/380/Add.1)

Draft resolutions (A/65/L.14, A/65/L.15, A/65/L.16, A/65/L.17 and A/65/L.24)

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): We wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine (A/65/380 and A/65/380/Add.1), which confirms assertions that peace is indeed elusive and remains a distant dream for the people of Palestine. We hope that today's debate will generate and consolidate momentum for a peaceful resolution to the question of Palestine.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made yesterday afternoon by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Yesterday, we pledged our solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people when we commemorated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In his message of solidarity, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Jacob Zuma, reaffirmed South Africa's commitment to the

Palestinian people in their struggle for liberation and self-determination.

At the beginning of this session of the General Assembly, world leaders travelled from far and wide to affirm the centrality of the United Nations in deliberating and resolving world affairs. Leaders also confirmed the centrality of the Organization in the peaceful resolution of disputes. As a beneficiary of the hard work of the international community, South Africa could not agree more with that assertion.

We therefore call on the United Nations to leverage its legitimacy and unity of effort to accelerate attempts to deliver the people of Palestine from the inhuman occupation by Israel. We also hope that during this session the United Nations will reflect concretely on the effectiveness of its collective efforts towards the resolution of the question of Palestine. South Africa has always stood steadfastly in support of the right of the Palestinian people to a State of their own, consistent with the call for the creation of a Palestinian State that coexists peacefully alongside Israel on the basis of the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. We firmly believe that this is the only sustainable solution to the conflict.

We have consistently supported a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, in line with the will of the international community as expressed in numerous peace initiatives, such as the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative, and including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 465 (1980), 681 (1990), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.



1860 (2009). We call on Israel to respect the spirit of these resolutions and abide by the prescripts of all other international legal instruments. The failure to do so, as has been the case for many years, amounts to violation of international law. Despite all those initiatives, Israel has freely continued its occupation of Palestinian territory, thus deliberately undermining the credibility of the United Nations.

When direct talks between Israel and Palestine began in September, we all hoped that they would lead to meaningful progress that would result in lasting peace and the creation of a viable Palestinian State. However, Israel's failure to renew the moratorium on the building of illegal settlements in the occupied territories has created an obstacle to that progress. South Africa views the halting of settlement construction as a commitment already agreed to by Israel during previous peace negotiations, including the Annapolis Middle East Peace Conference in November 2007, in which South Africa participated.

We note with grave concern Israel's show of contempt for the peace process, as demonstrated by the continuation of settlement construction and its announcement of plans to build more settlements in the West Bank. By continuing with such settlements, Israel expedites the alteration of the demographic composition, legal status and landscape of occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. In order to salvage the peace process, we call on Israel to halt the building of settlements, as this will demonstrate its serious intention to bring about a peaceful solution to the Palestinian question. We also support the mediation efforts by the Arab world, and by Egypt in particular, to achieve reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas and intra-Palestinian unity. It is our firm belief that a united Palestine will better serve the interests of the Palestinian people.

South Africa is encouraged by the steady progress in the Palestinian Authority's State-building agenda, in accordance with Prime Minister Fayyad's strategy. In that regard, we appreciate the efforts of the international donor community in support of the strategy. We also call on other stakeholders to provide support for the implementation and sustainability of that initiative. With regard to security, we welcome the international community's efforts to improve the capacity of the Palestinian security institutions.

The promulgation of a decision by Israeli authorities in June to ease the blockade of Gaza by allowing unrestricted entry for all items except those on a published list of military and dual-use items has not positively altered the situation, as construction materials, which are mainly classified as dual-use, are what is most needed for the reconstruction of Gaza. The blockade of Gaza has adversely affected the economic life of Palestinians, as their export activities have been seriously curtailed.

Consequently, these acts in Gaza and other occupied territories contribute directly to increasing unemployment and poverty, thereby having an impact on the full enjoyment of social and economic freedoms. In addition, we also condemn the uprooting of olive trees and the theft of agricultural equipment by Israeli settlers, which are critical to the Palestinian economy.

Three million dollars has been pledged for projects in Gaza through the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) mechanism. IBSA-proposed projects will positively contribute to the socio-economic development of the people of Palestine, especially those in Gaza.

On the humanitarian front, we appeal to Israel to ease entry into Gaza, especially for humanitarian agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the United Nations Development Programme. In that regard, we are pleased by the humanitarian community's finalization of the 2011 consolidated appeal, which will be presented in Brussels on 30 November.

In conclusion, we call on the parties to desist from unilateral actions that have the potential to jeopardize the negotiations, and to focus instead on confidence-building measures conducive to the resumption of peace negotiations. We also extend our support to the peace process and urge the Secretary-General, including the Quartet and other countries' institutions, to continue to encourage the parties to go back to the negotiating table. More important, we call on the parties to demonstrate the necessary political will to find a solution. The parties should never forget that peace is in the interest of the most downtrodden, including women and children.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): It is most appropriate that the General Assembly discuss the question of Palestine, given the importance of the issue for the international community as a whole, especially at this crucial juncture in the peace process. The end of the Israeli moratorium on settlements in September put to the test, early and severely, the fragile start to direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. The failure to extend the moratorium on settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories and the reported construction that has occurred since made it very difficult for negotiations to resume, as such activity is destroying the feasibility of a two-State solution. It is not reasonable to expect the Palestinians to keep negotiating as reality on the ground is deeply — and, some fear, irreversibly — altered. This is particularly worrisome when it comes to East Jerusalem and small- and medium-sized settlements deep in the West Bank. In the current circumstances, therefore, a complete halt to settlement activity by Israel is not only a legal obligation but also a necessary condition for negotiations to continue and to have a chance at succeeding.

Brazil commends the efforts made by the United States and a number of other stakeholders to revive direct negotiations. We also commend the admirable patience shown by the Palestinians. We hope that Israel will seize this opportunity and create the conditions necessary for negotiations to resume, if for no other reason than simply because, contrary to what some may think, the status quo is truly unsustainable. The status quo is also dangerous, as it plays into the hands of radical groups from both sides that seek to undermine the peace process.

We firmly condemn all acts of violence from all quarters; but condemnation is not enough. Israel must not tolerate, and must actively prosecute, settlers involved in attacks against, or harassment of, Palestinians. Rocket fire from Gaza into southern Israel must stop, and Israeli forces must not react disproportionately.

On its part, the Palestinian Authority must continue to make progress in maintaining law and order in the areas under its jurisdiction. Breaking the old pattern of conflict is key to preventing both the resumption of armed conflict between Israel and Gaza and the intensification of street violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

In fulfilling the vision of a democratic and viable Palestinian State, Palestinians should continue to address two key challenges, namely, overcoming their internal divisions and enhancing democratic governance. We call on all Palestinian groups to rebuild unity, without which statehood will be exceedingly difficult to achieve. We also praise, and extend our full support for, Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's sustained efforts to build a democratic and effective Palestinian State throughout the territories. Among other measures, Israel must actively support such an endeavour by transferring more territory to the Authority's control and further easing restrictions on movement in the West Bank.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip continues to be a source of grave concern. The easing of the blockade is welcome, but access to basic goods clearly remains insufficient. It is deeply disturbing to acknowledge once again that not enough progress has been made to restore the freedom of movement for people and goods. Fully lifting the blockade, without prejudice to legitimate Israeli security concerns, is vital to allow life in Gaza to return to normal and reconstruction to take place.

On our part, as much as we can, we will continue to provide help to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people. Apart from our bilateral cooperation, we are engaged in a project under the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) forum for the partial reconstruction of the Al-Quds Hospital in Gaza, with resources allocated from the IBSA fund.

It is not too late to reverse the current deadlock and begin to move in earnest towards the end of the Israeli occupation and the realization of the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security within internationally recognized borders. Success, however, requires statesmanship, political courage and true attachment to sustainable peace. Leaders on both sides, especially in Israel, the stronger party, must rise to the challenge. Their prize will be unfading recognition of their exceptional achievement, not only by their fellow citizens but also by the entire international community.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this important meeting on developments over the past few years concerning the issue of Palestine. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Abdou Salam

Diallo, Permanent Representative of Senegal, on his election to the chairmanship of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, who succeeded Mr. Paul Badji, who lent excellent services vis-à-vis the question of Palestine during his chairmanship of the Committee.

Each year on 29 November, the United Nations commemorates the Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, during which the international community recalls the inalienable rights and the aspirations of the Palestinian people to establish a viable independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the land that has been occupied by Israel since 1967.

The Palestinian people are exasperated by the fact that the years continue to pass with no prospects on the horizon for achieving status as a national entity. Palestine has been occupied for decades, during which it has suffered aggression, tragedy and destruction. It is tired of waiting — and of waiting for negotiations that begin only to be stopped, and that are resumed only to be postponed. It is time to implement resolutions of international legitimacy, which have followed one after another with no real impact on the ground for millions of Palestinians. Finally, Palestine awaits the implementation of international initiatives and commitments that include all the necessary elements for a comprehensive and just peace based on the consensus of the international community as a whole.

As we evaluate developments on the Palestinian question, we note the continuing flagrant contradictions between the efforts of the international community to resume peace negotiations and developments on the ground through which Israel, the occupying Power, seeks to impose a de facto reality that continues to hinder the peace process.

Based on its principled position on peace as a strategic choice, in the context of the Arab Peace Initiative and as supported by United Nations resolutions and other terms of reference, the Kingdom of Morocco has supported the positive and dynamic initiative launched by President Obama to encourage the Palestinian side to participate in indirect talks in March. The direct talks held in Washington in September under the auspices of the United States were notable for the good faith shown on the Arab side aimed at taking advantage of the occasion to move towards peace. Morocco appreciates President Obama's

continuing efforts to put the peace process back on track. We also appreciate the President's statement to the General Assembly in September on the rights of the Palestinian people, especially their right to the establishment of an independent State within a definitive time frame (see A/65/PV.11). At the same time, we support all international parties who share this opinion and who seek to translate that vision into reality.

Palestine's attitude throughout the process has demonstrated courage, practicality and persistence and has shown that it is a real and serious partner in the peace process, in spite of the continuing frustration and suffering of the Palestinian people. Through the Arab Peace Initiative, Arab States have shown that they support the aspirations of the people of the region and of the international community to live in peace, security and stability. Arab States have also shouldered their responsibility towards present and future generations and the international community.

In spite of this courageous Arab initiative and all the efforts of the international community, Israel continues its practices and policies aimed at imposing a fait accompli and pre-empting the results of the negotiations, which runs counter to its obligations and the seriousness required vis-à-vis the two-State solution. It has continued its illegal settlement policies in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, in an attempt to annex more land by force. To that end, just days after the Arab side agreed to indirect negotiations, Israeli authorities announced their decision to build 1,600 housing units in East Jerusalem. Israel also decided to build another 1,300 units in East Jerusalem and issued new legislation specifying new conditions for withdrawing from occupied East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan.

With regard to Jerusalem, which is an important aspect of the Palestinian question, Israel has continued its policies of Judaization, annexation and deportation of the population of the Holy City, which include the confiscation and destruction of property. It has also continued its policy of provocation with regard to Muslim and Christian holy sites, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque and its environs. It has also attacked other holy sites, including the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi and sites in Bethlehem, as part of a policy aimed at increasing tension and religious incitement.

The Kingdom of Morocco, including its leader, His Majesty Mohammed VI, who chairs the Al-Quds Committee, reaffirms its solidarity with the Palestinian people in their quest to create a national State. Moreover, Morocco condemns all acts against the special status of the Holy City. In that regard, I would like to reiterate our call for the establishment of an international alliance comprised of all those who desire peace, coexistence and tolerance, with a view to preserving Jerusalem as a symbol of peace and the cradle of monotheistic religions.

With regard to the Gaza Strip, the grave humanitarian situation there demands that the Israeli authorities immediately lift the illegal blockade and allow the free movement of goods in and out of Gaza, permanently, unconditionally and without restrictions, in keeping with international humanitarian law and the relevant international resolutions. While we appreciate the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in that connection, we would like to underscore the mandate given to the Agency by the General Assembly in resolution 302 (IV) of 1949 to provide assistance to Palestinian refugees until the issue is settled in a satisfactory and lasting manner.

His Majesty Mohammed VI underscored the significance of the cause of peace in the Middle East in his message to the World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa in October, where he said that

“The road to peace in the Middle East has to be through a two-State solution that guarantees the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, living in peace and security alongside the State of Israel, in accordance with international legitimacy. This goal should be achieved through direct negotiation, without any obduracy, escalation or unilateral, illegitimate measures.”

His Majesty the King therefore sent out a message of hope and prudence to restart serious negotiations, saying that he urged the parties

“to engage in serious negotiations according to the wishes of the international community. That is the right way to achieve security for all peoples in the region and to put an end to violence and extremism, which are fuelling instability, weakening opportunities for economic and social

development and undermining the region’s status and clout with respect to international cooperation.”

Mr. Wetland (Norway): Every year, we seem to reach a critical juncture in the Middle East. And every year, in retrospect, we end up with a missed opportunity. However, Norway wants to underline that 2011 could represent an important crossroads in the peace process.

A Palestinian State structure is emerging, scheduled for completion by August next year. The one-year timeline for the direct negotiations will expire at around the same time. Those two tracks — the State-building track and the political track — are set to converge in the two-State solution. We may finally see the day when the independent Palestinian State emerges.

The bottom-up track — the State-building process — has been successful. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, increasingly robust Palestinian institutions are in place. The Palestinian Authority is cutting spending and bringing deficits down. Dependency on foreign aid is decreasing at a steady rate, and transparency and accountability continue to replace corruption and nepotism. There is a growing sense of security and the rule of law in Palestinian communities in the West Bank. On all fronts Palestinian society is evolving, and among Palestinians there is a growing sense that the changes taking place today hold promise for a better tomorrow.

The process is so successful that the World Bank stated, in its report to the donor community in September this year, that the Palestinian Authority is now “well-positioned for the establishment of a State at any point in the near future”.

At the same time, direct negotiations launched in September this year with the goal of reaching a settlement of the conflict within one year, have stalled over Israel’s decision to let the partial moratorium on settlement activity in the occupied territory expire. The lack of progress at the negotiating table has led some Palestinians to question the viability of negotiations and to contemplate alternative paths to the two-State solution. Norway firmly believes that there is no alternative to negotiations, but, if we wish to restore the confidence of Palestinians in the political process, the situation on the ground must improve. That includes the ending of settlement activity in East

Jerusalem and the West Bank, in accordance with Road Map obligations. It also includes efforts by Israel to strengthen economic development and improve economic growth and living standards in the occupied territories.

The donor community has done its utmost to honour its commitments to the Palestinian State-building process, despite the challenges caused by the global financial downturn. As Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, Norway can confirm the donor community's determination to help the Palestinian State-building process past the finishing line in 2011. But at the same time, we must sound a word of warning: continued financial support for Palestinian institutions depends on a credible political process. Without a political horizon and a clear timeline, it becomes increasingly hard to justify high levels of contributions.

As we look to 2011, we can rest assured that the efforts to build Palestinian institutions and to prepare for statehood will continue as planned. And the timeline for the completion of negotiations by September next year is there. In other words: 2011 should be the year when the conflict is resolved and the Palestinian State is established.

Mr. Falamarzi (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by commending the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts to shed light on the suffering of the Palestinian people resulting from the unjust practices of the Israeli authorities. I would also like to thank Mr. Paul Badji for conducting the work of that Committee. My delegation also associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Despite the vigorous efforts of the international community, including through the Quartet and the countries which sponsor the peace process, to push that process forward, which led to indirect then direct negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians, the intransigence of Israel and its building of settlements, despite international appeals to the contrary, have prevented any progress being made to date. The Arab countries have shown their desire for peace by creating a propitious climate for peace negotiations. But this will not continue indefinitely.

Qatar sent a message, on behalf of the Arab countries, in September 2009 to the American

mediator, asking for guarantees from Israel so that the Arabs could maintain that position. However, one year later, the world sees the radical position taken by Israel, which is retreating from its internationally agreed commitments and impeding the negotiations, as we have seen lately. The Israeli Government continues its illegal settlement policy in the occupied Palestinian territory and the Syrian Golan, in defiance of the call by the Ministerial Committee of the Arab Peace Initiative at their last meeting in Sirte, Libya.

There is international consensus that the Palestinian question should be settled through a two-State solution, whereby the two States would coexist peacefully. However, the expansion by Israel of settlements, especially around East Jerusalem, undermines the two-State solution based on the 1967 borders and threatens the contiguity of the Palestinian territory as an essential element of the proposed State. The so-called natural growth of Israeli settlements is not acceptable; it is contrary to international law. The international community should not be deceived by the so-called temporary freeze on settlement activities; all settlements on territories occupied since 1967 should be dismantled, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. A comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East can only be established through the implementation of the land-for-peace principle, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The State of Qatar rejects the illegal practices being carried out by Israel in occupied East Jerusalem in its attempt to change the Arab identity of the city, its legal status and religious character. We repeat that all such attempts are null and void. The international community should express its rejection of the attempts by the Israeli Government to prejudice Muslim and Christian religious sites in order to Judaize the city. Such attempts are in contravention of the commitments of Israel under international law and relevant United Nations resolutions and undermine a potential peaceful solution.

Israel's insistence on carrying out such illegal activities against the Palestinians is incompatible with the behaviour of the civilized world. Israel is thereby distancing itself from being a constructive member of the international community and severing its relations with peace-loving nations in the Middle East. If the leaders of Israel have any true vision, they will see that ending the occupation would serve the security,

economic and social interests of all peoples, including the Israelis. The non-implementation by Israel of United Nations resolutions undermines trust in the international community and in this Organization, while implementation would show its genuine will to reach a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question, the crux of the Middle East crisis. It has become ever more important that the United Nations help the Palestinian people determine their fate and live in an independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Al-Abri (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of Oman, I would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to you, Sir, for having organized this special meeting to consider the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. Through you, my delegation expresses its gratitude to Mr. Abdou Salam Diallo, the Permanent Representative of Senegal, whom we congratulate upon his election as Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; we also thank him for having introduced the report of that Committee (A/65/35). I would like, in that regard, to commend the great efforts made by the members of that Committee in favour of the Palestinian people and their just cause. I would also like to welcome the comprehensive statement made by the Chair of that Committee on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East.

With your permission, Mr. President, I should like to address both agenda items, the "Question of Palestine" and the "Situation in the Middle East", at the same time. There is no doubt that this meeting is of particular importance, as we are gathered here today to seek a solution to the difficult question of occupied Palestine, which we have been addressing now for some 60 years. In that time, the situation of the Palestinian people has continued to deteriorate as a result of the systematic actions carried out by Israel, the occupying Power. We cannot remain silent in the face of such a situation, in which violence, killings, displacements and destruction, including the destruction of essential infrastructure, continue. In spite of all of that, the Palestinian people remain strong and steadfast and continue to seek the opportunity to enjoy their legitimate rights and establish an independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

We are very concerned by the catastrophic situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and the blockade against the Gaza Strip. The inhuman, illegal and barbaric aggression and actions carried out by the Israeli State continue in the form of actions such as the confiscation of identity cards and the forced eviction of Palestinian people, with a view to Judaizing Al-Quds Al-Sharif and all other holy sites of Palestine.

Yesterday was the thirty-third anniversary of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, who call on the international community to be allowed to enjoy their fundamental and inalienable rights. It was also the sixty-third anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations of resolution 181 (II) on the partitioning of the Palestinian territory. Today, the Palestinian people continue to be denied their legitimate rights — to national sovereignty, to self-determination and to establish an independent State on their land. This situation has produced more than 4 million Palestinian refugees, who now live in difficult conditions, exiled in diaspora.

It has always been here, in this international forum, that the Palestinian people have sought protection against arbitrary, inhuman and illegal Israeli actions. It is therefore incumbent upon the international community to take a strong and serious position against those actions and abuses, including last year's war in the Gaza Strip and the attacks against the freedom flotilla, which was carrying only humanitarian supplies and sought only to lift the unjust blockade against the Gaza Strip, not to mention the other flagrant violations of human rights. Israel has thus shown the whole world that it is not in favour of peace.

The international community must exert greater pressure on Israel, insisting that it cease those actions and policies and that it engage seriously in negotiations based on relevant terms of reference which includes the principle of land for peace, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The delegation of Oman welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 64/10 on 5 November 2009 on the follow-up to the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict and the adoption of the recommendations contained in that report. Today, we insist once again on the need to follow up on those recommendations and to ensure that they are fully implemented by all main

organs of the Organization, primarily the Security Council.

As it has done in the past, my delegation underscores the need to find a solution to the chronic conflict in the Middle East. And while the Sultanate of Oman supports the peace process led by the United States, we nonetheless fear that Israeli policy remains obscure and confused, and fails to meet its responsibilities and the requirements of peace. Establishing a sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, means that Israel must withdraw from all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan and parts of southern Lebanon, to the pre-June 1967 borders.

The Government of the Sultanate of Oman welcomes the active role of the friendly United States and the positive position taken in statements by President Barack Obama in favour of finding a solution to the Middle East conflict and the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian State, which would live side by side with the State of Israel and which would, within one year, become an official Member of the United Nations. That is why we insist here on the need to build on the momentum to seize this historic opportunity to create a true partnership for peace and security with Arab countries.

The Sultanate of Oman has always welcomed the peace process, seeing discussion, dialogue and negotiation as the natural and civilized way to resolve the conflict. We therefore urge all of the parties to adopt a positive and effective attitude in order to solve the dangerous conflict in the Middle East. Thus we are asking for the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities, along with the international Quartet, to make a greater effort to reach a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict on all tracks, according to relevant international resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative, in order to achieve the creation of an independent Palestinian State on Palestinian land occupied since 1967, living peacefully side by side with Israel within internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Pham Vinh Quang (Viet Nam): First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. Allow me to convey the most heartfelt greetings of the Government and the people of Viet Nam to the people of Palestine and the Palestinian

National Authority on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Viet Nam aligns itself with the statement delivered by Egypt at the 53rd meeting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

After more than 60 years, the question of Palestine remains unresolved. The Palestinian people have continued to be displaced from their homeland and live in a dire situation due to the blockade imposed by Israel. The blockade has caused the deterioration of socio-economic conditions, including widespread poverty, unemployment and declining health. It is truly heartrending to witness that grave deterioration, which rampantly infringes on the rights of Palestinian people on the ground, including the right to self-determination and the right to freedom, and creates a cross-border influx of refugees.

Despite increased international efforts, the peace talks between Israel and Palestine are at an impasse and face more difficulties, due to Israel's refusal to extend a 10-month settlement moratorium on settler homes in occupied East Jerusalem, which goes against international law and the Quartet's efforts.

For decades, the Middle East has seen many wars and much bloodshed instead of peace, security and prosperous development. Continued violence will only make the peoples — Palestinian and Israeli alike — shed more blood. It is time to stop it. There is no alternative to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace settlement and the exercise of the right to self-determination by the Palestinian people, resulting in the creation of an independent and viable State of Palestine, living side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace. Both parties should exercise maximum restraint and take concrete steps towards that end.

We strongly urge Israel to cease all military activities and abide by international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. It must promptly remove restrictions on the movement of persons, humanitarian aid and commercial goods and the business activities of Palestinians. We urge Israel to create every safe condition for the return of refugees, to renew the moratorium on the construction of settlements, and to release Palestinian prisoners.

It is also incumbent upon the Palestinian Authority, for its part, to take effective actions to bring an end to violence, including the firing of rockets into Israel's territory. We call upon Palestinian factions to promote national reconciliation and rally behind the Palestinian National Authority for a national unity Government with a view to realizing the legitimate Palestinian national aspirations.

Viet Nam has been closely following the development of the peace process in the Middle East. We strongly believe that the continued support and renewed efforts by the Quartet, the League of Arab States, regional countries and the United Nations are crucial for moving forward the Israeli–Palestinian negotiations on all core issues. We call for intensified efforts by the international community, in particular the Security Council and the Quartet, to address the current political and humanitarian crisis.

During that process, the international community must abide by the principles of objectivity, neutrality and impartiality, giving equal attention and consideration to the legitimate concerns and demands of both sides, based on internationally recognized guidelines such as the Road Map, the Annapolis process outcome, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant Security Council resolutions, including recent resolutions 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009). In that connection, we support the holding of an international conference in Moscow to expedite a resumption of the peace process.

We also commend the role and tremendous work of United Nations agencies, especially the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in delivering humanitarian programmes and emergency assistance to the Palestinian people. We wish to emphasize the need to ensure safe conditions and unhindered humanitarian operations for staff members of United Nations agencies and UNRWA.

We call upon all donors to continue to make the most generous efforts possible to meet the Agency's anticipated needs. We applaud the role of non-governmental organizations, civil society and peace groups in the struggle to defend Palestinian national and human rights, and we encourage them to continue their positive work.

To conclude, I wish to reaffirm the consistent support of the Government and the people of Viet Nam

for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East and for the right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination and sovereignty in their independent State of Palestine. We are firmly convinced that the just cause of the Palestinian people will eventually succeed.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, my delegation expresses its solidarity with the steadfast people of Palestine in their tireless pursuit and strong resolve to realize their national aspirations and to defend their inalienable rights.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Egypt on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation thanks the Chairman and members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their invaluable report (A/65/35), which reveals what has been happening in the occupied Palestinian territories since 1967 and shows the efforts still being made to put an end to the Israeli occupation and to establish an independent and sovereign Palestinian State with its capital in East Jerusalem.

We also appreciate the Committee's monitoring of the situation and the political developments, and the implementation of the Committee's programme of international meetings and conferences. That includes the international meeting of the Committee on 12 and 13 February 2010, which engaged parliamentarians of the Mediterranean region and beyond in support of the two-State solution, the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, held in Vienna on 24 and 25 March, and the United Nations African Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held in Rabat on 1 and 2 July, as well as other meetings and seminars.

My delegation also thanks the Department of Public Information for its implementation of the special information programme of the question of Palestine to raise the awareness of the international community on the question of Palestine, pursuant to resolution 64/18.

When we carefully consider the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, our concern over the deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian

territory increases because, as described by the Committee in its report, conditions on the ground are still dire as a result of the Israeli forces' daily military raids and arrests all over the West Bank.

The Committee describes the situation in Gaza as even more bleak. More than 1.5 million people are still suffering from the Israeli attacks of December 2008 to January 2009. They still suffer a severe lack of basic services and commodities, such as clean water, because of the economic effects of the blockade. The report includes many serious details, but in fact they are merely examples indicative of wider practices that are covered in the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (A/HRC/12/48), endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/10 of 5 November 2009.

The establishment of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, is internationally condemned as a violation of international law, according to the sixth paragraph of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, paragraph 120 of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, and other General Assembly resolutions on the subject. Nevertheless, Israel continues its illegal settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as confirmed by the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The primary purpose of Israel's actions is to create a new reality on the ground in an attempt to obliterate Arab and Islamic sites in Jerusalem and to affect the legal status of the city. Those measures are illegal, according to international law, including Security Council resolutions 446 (1979), 476 (1980) and 478 (1980), in which the Council reiterates its insistence that all administrative and legislative measures are null and void, that they represent an attempt to change the character and status of Jerusalem, and that they should be cancelled.

In that regard, the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of its resolution S-9/1 (A/HRC/12/37) states that the settlement activity in the West Bank amounts to violation of numerous humanitarian law provisions, including article 55 of The Hague Regulations and article 49 of the Fourth Geneva

Convention, whereby the occupying Power should not transfer its own population to the territories it occupies.

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People mentions that during the reporting period violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians included physical assaults, harassment, intimidation, setting fire to agricultural land, uprooting or destroying olive trees and grapevines, throwing stones at vehicles and houses, vandalizing mosques, killing livestock, shooting at civilians in open areas and, as mentioned in paragraph 37, blocking access to schools.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People expressed its concern over the settlement activity in occupied East Jerusalem and at actions intended to displace residents from the city through the demolition of houses and the cancellation of residency permits. The Secretary-General also expressed his concern about the demolition of houses and the construction of settlements (see A/65/380), and according to his comments, the situation in East Jerusalem remains tense, adversely affecting the peace process. The settlement activities and the construction of the separation wall contravene the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the Road Map and the two-State solution.

In his report in document A/65/331, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 states that the right to self-determination is the central right underpinning all other human rights. He refers to the oppressiveness of Israel's occupation over more than 43 years, as evident in the range of Israeli violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention and of applicable international human rights law, as well as its defiance of the International Court of Justice and of numerous resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Reaching a just and peaceful settlement of the Middle East question is necessary to end the suffering of the Palestinian people and to establish peace and stability in the region. Peace will not be achieved through aggression, State terrorism and the building of new illegal settlements. A lasting and comprehensive peace in Palestine will be established only by upholding justice and ending discrimination and the

occupation of Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories.

Mr. Jomaa (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Since 1978, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 1977, we have celebrated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which is very symbolic and demonstrates broad international support for a people suffering under occupation and unable to enjoy its simple fundamental rights. The Day is also an opportunity for the international community to be mindful of its responsibility and resolve with regard to the ongoing suffering of the Palestinian people that is caused by the actions and practices of the occupier, Israel, in defiance of international resolutions, decisions, agreements and the terms of reference of the peace process in the Middle East.

Today, we meet to consider the question of Palestine at a time when we thought that the peace process might create new momentum in the region and pave the way for measures that would generate some positive developments for millions of Palestinians and would ensure a final resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Since September the peace process, led by the United States, has been welcomed and supported by the international community. There has been agreement in principle on a timetable for direct negotiations to lay the foundations for discussing the core issues for a final settlement. Thus we cherished the hope of seeing a beginning to the end of the conflict.

Unfortunately, however, Israel, by refusing to extend the moratorium on settlements and by going even further in approving the construction of more housing units, has created further tension and undermined the basis for trust, thus destroying the hope of establishing peace in the region. That situation requires a resolute and immediate reaction by all parties.

Negotiations towards any kind of peace require primarily the goodwill of the parties and their compliance with their obligations. International bodies agree that Israeli activities in the Palestinian territories threaten the resumption of the peace process and violate the basic principles of international law, international humanitarian law and the major instruments and terms of reference regarding the peace process, in particular the Arab Peace Initiative.

We are deeply concerned about Israel's persistent violations and its ongoing excesses with regard to human rights and international humanitarian law. We all hope that there will be improvement on the ground to alleviate Palestinian suffering and build enough trust for the negotiations process to resume. Despite the continuous calls of the Quartet and the appeals of the international community, Israel continues its settlements and the expulsion of Palestinians. It has taken measures, including the destruction of their homes and restrictions on the freedom of movement of persons and goods, that have served to millions of people of basic commodities and necessities of life and of humanitarian assistance, not to mention its Judaization of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and changing its demographic character.

Therefore, we would like to underscore the need to put an end to those Israeli actions against, and collective punishment of, the fraternal Palestinian people. If the international community wants to truly and seriously reach a solution that puts an end to the conflict and establishes peace, security and stability in the region, immediate measures must be taken.

Once again, from this rostrum, we reaffirm our principled position, which is to support the Palestinian people in their noble cause to regain their legitimate rights and to establish their independent State on their land. Once again, we emphasize that for Tunisia, the question of Palestine is in particular a priority political issue. We have always approached the issue with great care and respect because the right to dignity and a homeland is a question of natural law, as the President of Tunisia has underscored for many years.

Tunisia has always contributed to respect for and compliance with the decisions and resolutions and noble principles of the international community and to international legitimacy. Once again, we call on the various influential parties, in particular the Quartet, to put more pressure on Israel to change its policy and stop the settlements and the Judaization of Al-Quds, in respect for the relevant international instruments for the peace process. We call on the international community to take effective and prompt steps to find a just, comprehensive and lasting solution on the basis of international instruments and resolutions, the terms of reference for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is critical and cannot continue as it is. The

occupying Power cannot persist in constantly flouting the international will that demands peace for the Middle East. Steps must be taken promptly to improve the daily life of millions of Palestinians so that they can enjoy the most basic rights under international law. Also, we must all work together to give the peace process new impetus and continue the momentum for peace. We must stop making hollow promises and raising false hopes. We should take specific steps on the ground, in particular putting a complete end to settlement activities, lifting the blockade on Gaza and protecting Al-Quds Al-Sharif until a true climate of trust for serious negotiations can be established and a just, lasting and comprehensive solution for the conflict can materialize. The situation requires a resolute common position and firm efforts in order to stop what has been happening.

Tunisia underscores the need to support dialogue and negotiations. At the same time, we must not return to tension and stalemate, so that the peace, stability and security in the region that we all seek can be achieved.

In conclusion, I once again call on Israel to put an end to its occupation of the Syrian Golan and the remaining Lebanese territories, in accordance with international law. We also underscore that Tunisia will continue its efforts to bring to a successful conclusion all peace efforts and initiatives in order to once and for all resolve all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict and to establish lasting peace, stability and security in the region.

Mr. Ismail (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to express its gratitude and appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its outgoing Chairman, Mr. Paul Badji. My delegation commends the Committee's report (A/65/35) and calls for its implementation. I would also like to commend the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (see A/65/327) and the recommendations set out therein. In that connection, my delegation would like to pay tribute to the Member States that make up that tripartite Committee — Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Senegal — and we request that Israel cooperate immediately with that Committee.

Despite all international and regional efforts, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to violate the

rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and to establish a sovereign State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international law and the United Nations resolutions that Israel constantly flouts and disregards.

Moreover, Israel pursues its illegal and inhumane practices, which violate Palestinian human rights and international law. That has been emphasized in a number of international reports, including, most recently, the report of Richard Falk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (see A/65/331); the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (A/HRC/12/48); the reports of the Human Rights Council (A/65/53 and Corr.1 and A/65/53/Add.1), recently considered by the General Assembly (see A/65/PV.42 and A/65/PV.43); the report of the Human Rights Council on its twelfth special session (A/64/53/Add.1) in connection with which the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/10; the report of the Secretary-General on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine (A/65/380 and Add.1); and, lastly, the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which the Assembly is now considering.

In addition to those reports, the United Nations has adopted a number of resolutions calling on Israel to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan Heights. In that regard, we note that the Israeli legislation requiring a referendum before troops can be withdrawn from the Syrian Golan Heights and Jerusalem runs counter to Security Council resolutions 497 (1981) and 476 (1980). We call on Israel to fully withdraw from the Syrian Golan, to the 1967 lines. We also call on Israel to withdraw from the occupied Lebanese territories: the Shaba'a farms, the Kfar Shuba Hills and Al-Ghajar village.

My delegation once again condemns the practices of the Israeli occupying Power that defy the international will and threaten international and regional peace and security. We call on the people and Governments of the world to support the Palestinian people in their fight against the Israeli occupying Power and the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip, which prevents the flow of international humanitarian aid to that area and destroys its economy and social fabric. Israel's blockade on Gaza is one of the worst forms of collective punishment. We call for an

immediate end to the blockade and for opening the crossing points so that people are allowed access to aid and food supplies and medication for the women, children and the elderly who are ill.

The report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/65/13) reviewed the effects of the blockade imposed on the Palestinian people, which has prevented humanitarian aid and all major projects assisting the Palestinians and has paralysed life in Gaza. Israel also attacked the freedom flotilla, and UNRWA facilities and staff were not spared in those attacks. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is simply intolerable.

Talk of settling the conflict in the Middle East peacefully will remain a dream until Israel is willing to stop its practices and violations of human rights and respect the international will in that regard, abide by laws and stop its attacks on the innocent people of Palestine, which we see on television throughout the world. As long as Israel is allowed to continue the blockade, the suffering will continue.

We firmly support the Palestinian position, and we call for an end of all settlement activity and the resumption of dialogue on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative. We also call on Israel to stop the destruction of civilian homes in the Palestinian territories and to end its illegal settlement activities.

To conclude, we must say that in this the credibility of the United Nations is at stake, and we are at a crossroads. It is time to assume our historic responsibility and put an end to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories that it has occupied since 1967 and to see the Palestinian people establish their own independent, sovereign State on their land.

Mr. Kohona (Sri Lanka): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to address the Assembly this morning.

My delegation associates itself with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, as articulated by the Permanent Representative of Egypt at the 53rd meeting.

Each year, 29 November engenders mixed feelings in us. On the one hand, it gives us hope that we will be able to see the State of Palestine become a

reality, as envisaged in the historic resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947. On the other, many of us are disappointed that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, national independence and statehood, still remain unaccomplished despite many efforts of the international community.

Sri Lanka's position with regard to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people remains consistent. We reaffirm our unequivocal support for the two-State solution.

Permit me to convey the message of my President, His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

“On this important occasion to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to renew, on behalf of my Government and the people of Sri Lanka, our sincere and unwavering support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable rights, including their right to statehood.

“I have personally associated myself with the Palestinian cause for over 30 years, and it is my conviction that the Palestinians have been denied their basic rights for far too long. It is in the mutual benefit of both Israel and Palestine that the proximity talks should recommence without further delay. We therefore take this opportunity to earnestly request the utmost restraint and the cessation of all provocations so as to ensure the re-establishment of trust and confidence among all parties. It is hoped that the parties will continue to demonstrate leadership and political courage and keep the door to peace open. The dream of the people of the region and all people of the world is peace.

“It is peace in Palestine that can pave the way for a stable and peaceful Middle Eastern region. It is by securing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the establishment of an independent, self-sustaining State of Palestine consistent with a negotiated comprehensive solution, that peace and security in the region can be ensured.

“It is the continuing hope of Sri Lanka that this day will arrive soon.”

Sri Lanka remains deeply concerned and disturbed at the disappointing conditions in Gaza and the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. We earnestly hope that both the Israeli and the Palestinian leaders will take bold measures to reinvigorate the stalled peace proximity talks. We regret the termination of the moratorium on settlement construction. Over the years, both sides have suffered the loss of valuable human lives and material resources, but the Palestinian losses and suffering have been particularly harrowing.

In Sri Lanka, we are fully cognizant of the fact that senseless violence can only destabilize societies and unleash hatred and hostilities. Regulations and policies that restrict the freedom of movement of the Palestinians in the occupied territories, illegal intrusions into Palestinian lands, the destruction of their private property and agricultural lands, and restrictions on access to fishing and other livelihood activities can only create more tension and bitterness and push back the possibility of realizing a durable peace.

We therefore urge both parties to exercise the utmost restraint in order to create an environment conducive to building mutual trust and understanding. For that to happen, we strongly believe that Israel must end the occupation and immediately withdraw to the 1967 borders, freeze all illegal settlement activities, and cease the construction of the separation wall. There should also be guarantees to Israel that its legitimate security concerns are not at stake.

I take this opportunity to commend the work that has been carried out by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to assist millions of Palestinian people in need during all these years amid multiple difficulties. We emphasize the need to further ease the restrictions on the flow of goods to Gaza in order to expedite the return to normalcy. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of international donors, regional organizations and United Nations agencies to alleviate the suffering of innocent civilians and to provide protection for them.

It is Sri Lanka's firm hope that all Palestinian people will rally behind the Palestinian Authority to build and enhance the democratic institutions of Palestine, which is a necessary precondition for a strong, viable and independent future State of

Palestine. It is also our hope that Israel will flourish, uphold democratic values, and gain the increased recognition and friendship of its neighbours.

Let me quote Mahatma Gandhi when he said: “The future depends on what we do in the present”.

Mr. Puri (India): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this discussion on the question of Palestine at the General Assembly. Yesterday, we marked the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, a day that allows all of us to underline our support for the people of Palestine in their quest for peace and justice.

The support for the Palestinian cause has been central to India's foreign policy, even before we achieved independence in 1947. Starting with our vote against the partition of Palestine and through India's recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1974 as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and our recognition of the State of Palestine in 1988, India has consistently stood by the Palestinian people.

I draw the Assembly's attention to the message of our Prime Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh, dated 15 November 2010, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. He reiterated India's unwavering support for the Palestinian people's struggle for a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel, as endorsed in the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet Road Map and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

India's solidarity with Palestine's struggle for the realization of its fundamental rights is a matter of faith for us and enjoys national consensus in India. India has always supported and will continue to support the Palestinian people in their pursuit of the legitimate goals and quest for development, based on dignity and self-reliance.

Towards that objective, India extended further budgetary support of \$10 million to the Palestine National Authority earlier this year, in addition to a similar contribution last year, to assist in their work of reconstruction and development. India has also continued to support the United Nations Relief and

Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East through its annual contribution of \$1 million.

India welcomes the direct talks between Israel and Palestine, and reiterates its full support for efforts to achieve a durable, comprehensive and just settlement. We sincerely hope that the talks and negotiations will lead to a comprehensive peace process for the final resolution of the Middle East conflict.

We remain convinced that lasting peace in the region will contribute to global stability and prosperity.

Mr. Escalona Ojeda (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

On many occasions, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has firmly stated that the search for a just solution to the question of Palestine, without further delay, is vital to creating a climate of peace in the Middle East region. That solution will be truly credible upon the establishment of an independent, viable and territorially contiguous Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

However, we cannot hope to achieve a real, just and balanced peace if the occupying Power, the State of Israel, does not make sincere efforts to that end. On the contrary, the entire international community has witnessed the systematic action of the Israeli Government to disregard in practice the Oslo Accords and all the initiatives that have emerged. Each time that those initiatives open up prospects for peace, direct talks between the authorities of that country and those of Palestine end up being interrupted.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela vigorously appeals to the relevant organs of the United Nations to compel the State of Israel to fully comply with United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The actions of multilateral bodies has been limited to words and more words, while the most basic rights of the Palestinian people are being violated. It is time for resolute action.

History itself relates the rise and fall of so many savage forms of domination, whose foundations, rooted in immorality and barbarity, have collapsed. Thus, it is

not surprising that the Israeli acts of aggression against the Palestinian people, such as the criminal blockade against the Gaza Strip, Operation Cast Lead and the attack on the humanitarian freedom flotilla, are the clear expression of the current imperialist hegemony. Although those actions have been condemned by this Organization, my country is deeply concerned about the impunity of the Government of Israel in carrying out similar violations of human dignity and the passivity of the international community towards such serious issues.

At such a crucial time for defining new standards in all areas of life and human thought, it is our responsibility, as Member States of this Organization, to contribute decisively to a better and fairer world. That is incompatible with the ongoing violations of international humanitarian law and the human rights of men, women and children committed by the State of Israel.

Not all the agreements and resolutions adopted on that subject have been just and fair. For example, under the Oslo Accords, signed in 1993, Israel strengthened its control over 78 per cent of the territory originally occupied by the Palestinians. That situation is very different from the one that prevailed in 1948, when the State of Israel was established on territory equivalent to 22 per cent of that area. A just and fair solution for Palestine must take account of its territorial structure of 1967.

Allow me to underscore the fact that my country became a full member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People by decision of the General Assembly at the 115th meeting of the sixty-fourth session on 7 September of this year. That action testifies to a more active commitment to the cause of that brave people, whose resilience and courage serve as an example to all peoples of the world and a source of inspiration for the exercise of the right to self-determination.

To conclude, allow me to quote our President, Hugo Chávez Frías, on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People yesterday:

“Here, once again, is the proof of our vibrant and active solidarity with the Palestinian cause and with a great people who wish to have a homeland.”

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The ongoing developments in the occupied Palestinian territory point to the continued violation of the rights of the Palestinian people and the worsening of the situation as a result, inter alia, of Israel's acceleration of its illegal settlement activities, accompanied by the escalating violence of settlers, home demolitions, forced evictions and the ongoing construction of the separation wall, despite the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

Despite recent efforts to revitalize the peace process, Israel continues to carry out its illegal actions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, altering the physical, legal and institutional structure of the occupied territory. Those measures are intended to achieve the annexation of the Palestinian territory by bringing about long-term demographic changes, removing traces of Palestinian heritage and strengthening the Israeli presence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Moreover, the situation in Gaza remains disturbing from the perspective of human rights and international law. The Palestinians have continued to be collectively punished through the isolation of the 1.5 million residents of Gaza for several years now; they are denied the right to study at West Bank universities and to maintain normal social contact with family members. Exports from the Strip have been prohibited, as has the flow of goods and people, even in life-and-death situations. In that regard, my delegation underlines the necessity for an immediate lifting by Israel of its illegal blockade and the opening of all crossing points to Gaza, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 and other relevant United Nations resolutions.

Similarly, the imprisonment of about 10,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails, where ill-treatment and torture are widely used, is a matter of serious concern for my country. The international community cannot continue to ignore that scandalous affront to international humanitarian law and must adopt a clear and urgent stand for the immediate release of that illegally detained group of people, which includes children and women.

The Israelis' unlawful actions on the ground provide the starkest evidence of the contrast between its actions and its professed participation in the peace process. That clearly demonstrates that Israel is not on the path to peace and that the only goal pursued by the Israeli policy seems to be undermining any future prospects for a peaceful settlement.

Despite the call of all United Nations resolutions for the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories, the occupying Power continues its policy of expansionism with impunity, while showing disdain for the international community. We call on the international community, in particular the Security Council, to halt the brutal practices of the Israeli Government through the implementation of its resolutions and the adoption of measures to protect the Palestinian population and to ensure that such practices, which further worsen the living conditions of the Palestinian people, are not repeated.

It is the responsibility of the Security Council to exercise its prerogative to put an end to that culture of impunity by taking the action needed to ensure respect for and compliance with the ruling of the International Court of Justice, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

A complete cessation of all settlement activities and human rights violations is clearly a prerequisite for creating a more stable environment conducive to a genuine peace process, so as to achieve the goal of the two-State solution. Negotiations remain imperative for achieving a mutually agreed solution based on two States, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principles contained in the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative.

Algeria reiterates that any negotiated outcome between the parties must result in the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): Yesterday, this Assembly marked the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Today, the Government and the people of the Maldives wish to reiterate our steadfast solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters in their efforts to realize their right to self-determination.

My delegation appreciates the work carried out by the Secretary-General, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/19. The Maldives welcomes the work of all those Governments that contributed to his report (A/65/380 and Add.1).

It is with great concern and disappointment that we note the continued suffering of the people of Palestine. They have been denied their right to self-determination and their right to live in peace and freedom in their own independent State for far too long. While recognizing the rights of Palestinians, we also appreciate and support the right of the people of Israel to live in peace and security alongside an independent and sovereign State of Palestine.

The situation in Palestine and the Middle East has been an item on the United Nations agenda for 63 years now. During that time, the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights, the Human Rights Council and the Security Council have adopted dozens of resolutions. However, it is regrettable that the principles, recommendations and decisions contained in those documents have not produced a solution.

My delegation strongly urges both sides to put an end to the ongoing violence and to return to the negotiating table to broker a peaceful solution. The Maldives also calls on Israel to observe international humanitarian and human rights laws and to end practices that have been deemed to involve the torture and inhumane treatment of Palestinian prisoners. We also call for the release of all innocent Palestinian civilians who remain in their custody. Moreover, we also urge Hamas to observe international humanitarian and human rights laws by allowing humanitarian workers access to the captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

As many have done here today and yesterday, we wish to draw attention to the human rights tragedy in Gaza, and state once again that encroachments on human rights will continue to hinder the peace process, as that only strengthens hate and mistrust. As the Israeli blockade enters its fourth year, we note that the situation for all Palestinians in Gaza has worsened. Even the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East finds it difficult to cope with the situation in Gaza. While many delegations welcome efforts to ease the blockade, the Maldives condemns the blockade itself and calls on Israel to bring an end to it.

Israeli settlements provide another issue of concern. The Maldives recognizes the Israeli right to housing, but, at the same time, the rights of Palestinians should not be trampled. Therefore, the Maldives calls on Israel to freeze the expansion of all settlements in the occupied territories.

The note verbale dated 20 July 2010 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations, contained in the Secretary-General's report, states that:

“Despite significant efforts made on the part of the Government of Israel in the past year to renew negotiations with the Palestinian Authority and to foster conditions for economic growth and development, Palestinian terrorism continued and remains an alarming reality.” (A/65/380, para. 4)

The Maldives condemns all forms of terrorism in the strongest terms, and wishes to underscore that a peaceful and sustainable solution will be the result of a peaceful process, as many self-determination movements in history can attest. My delegation does not believe that violence can provide a real end to the occupation or meaningfully contribute to a two-State solution. Therefore, the Maldives calls on all stakeholders to avoid violence and to embrace dialogue and empathy.

In conclusion, the Maldives does not wish to see another generation of Palestinians grow up under the yoke established by the occupation and the blockade, which perpetuates the extreme poverty and depravity witnessed over the past 63 years.

We continue our call for all sides to return to the peace talks in order to resolve their differences, and we urge all countries to support the pillars that will provide an enduring solution to the conflict for the people of that region. We believe that dialogue and constructive engagement serve the cause of peace better than ostracism and isolation. Violence will never bring peace to the Middle East. Instead, it will create more violence, shed more blood and increase hatred on both sides.

Ms. Gini (Bangladesh): Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this important meeting on the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. We wish to reaffirm our full solidarity with the Palestinian people and our unwavering support for their legitimate struggle for self-determination.

Bangladesh stands firm in its position on the Arab-Israeli conflict in support of achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The Bangladesh delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Given the importance of the matter, we would, however, like to highlight some points of particular concern to us.

The Palestinian issue has always been a serious concern for Bangladesh. Our Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, on the Day of Solidarity expressed our unwavering support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people in their just and legitimate struggle for the right of self-determination and statehood.

Bangladesh reiterates its long-standing position that the continued occupation of Palestine is the root cause of violence, unrest and destabilization in the region. The people of Palestine have been under illegal occupation for more than five decades. Their fundamental rights to self-determination and a sovereign State remain unrealized. The situation in the occupied territories continues to be one of despair. Millions are living in refugee camps in abject poverty and face hunger, disease and malnutrition. Bangladesh is deeply concerned over the continued suffering of the Palestinian people and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the occupied territories.

Israel has continued to violate international humanitarian law by systematically committing human rights violations against the Palestinian people. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, remains critical, as indiscriminate closures enforced by Israel impede the access of humanitarian assistance to the occupied territories, halting commercial activities and causing the loss of thousands of jobs. It has not only restricted access to the basic necessities of life, but is also destroying the social fabric of the Palestinian people by causing widespread displacement. We therefore demand the immediate withdrawal of all restrictions on the movement of Palestinian civilians.

Bangladesh stands firm in its constitutional commitment of support to the poorest people around the world, and has consistently supported the righteous cause of the self-determination of the Palestinian people. We condemn the attacks on the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank and the deaths of

innocent Palestinians, including women and children. No verdict can justify the killings of innocent civilians or the breach of international humanitarian law and human rights standards.

Bangladesh believes that the continued expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and the construction of the separation wall threaten to derail the ongoing peace negotiations. With the unhindered construction of the wall in disregard for the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the occupied territories are increasingly being fragmented into smaller parts, which will seriously affect the viability of a sovereign, stable, peaceful and independent Palestinian State.

My delegation draws attention to the fact that Israel, as a signatory to the relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which stipulates the responsibilities of an occupying Power, cannot legally or morally absolve itself of its responsibilities to guarantee the basic human rights of the people under its occupation. The General Assembly and the Security Council, in the resolutions they have adopted over the years, have reconfirmed Israel's obligation to ensure the basic human rights of the Palestinian people. Bangladesh believes that only the full and sincere implementation of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions can resolve the Palestinian crisis.

Bangladesh wants to see Palestine as a sovereign State, with recognized borders, living side by side in peace with Israel. In that regard, we welcome the multilateral initiatives, particularly the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Arab peace plan and the efforts of the Quartet. The greatest challenge to peace in the Middle East is the absence of an environment conducive to trust and confidence. We hope that the parties involved will demonstrate sincerity in transforming the two-State solution into a reality.

One day after the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we call on the international community to take resolute steps to alleviate the plight of our Palestinian brethren, revive the peace process and enable the global values of mutual respect, human rights, the harmonious coexistence of nations and the peaceful resolution of disputes to prevail in the Middle East.

In closing, we would like to underscore that Israel's activities in the occupied territories remain a matter of grave concern to us. We express our full solidarity with the Palestinian people and reiterate our steadfast support for their legitimate and inalienable right to a sovereign and independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement made earlier in the debate by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The resumption of direct negotiations between Palestine and Israel in September was indeed a laudable initiative undertaken by the parties concerned, as well as other regional and international players, including the United States and the other members of the Quartet. However, we were disheartened when that courageous undertaking faced a bleak impasse, with no clear sight of progress.

Israel's illegal policies and inhumane practices, which continue with impunity, detract from the effort to realize the aspiration of creating two sovereign States living side by side in peace. Israel's intransigence is evident from the following.

First is the continuation and expansion of illegal settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with the recent plans to construct more than 1,500 settlement units in parts of East Jerusalem and 800 units in the Ariel settlement in the West Bank.

Second is the forced eviction of the Palestinian people; the demolition of their homes and other infrastructures, such as places of worship; the confiscation of Palestinian lands, including through the building of the illegal separation wall, which, to date, continues to be built despite the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice to stop its construction; and the revocation of the residency rights of Palestinian Jerusalemites.

Third are the incidents of violence towards and attacks on Palestinian civilians, Palestinian property, agricultural land and crops, as well as Muslim and Christian places of worship and holy sites, by extremist Israeli settlers. Such provocative and brutal acts continue unabated.

Fourth is the imprisonment in Israel of thousands of Palestinians, including Palestinian women and

children, who have been subjected to ill-treatment and torture by the Israeli authorities.

Fifth is the imposition of measures that constitute a form of collective punishment, which is strictly forbidden under international humanitarian law. Such measures include the illegal blockade of Gaza, which has restricted the passage of essential goods and construction materials to the vulnerable group, the hundreds of checkpoints and roadblocks and the permit system, as well as other obstacles that violate the Palestinians' right to freedom of movement.

Sixth is the new legislation approved by the Israeli parliament last Monday, which requires a two-thirds majority or a referendum on any potential land-for-peace agreement.

It is obvious that such exploitation is not only illegal and immoral, but also counterproductive to the aim of achieving a genuine and lasting peace. Israel cannot cloud the eyes of the international community by simply enumerating actions undertaken to lessen the sufferings of the Palestinians.

Instead, Israel must heed the high expectations of the international community to end this long-standing conflict by improving the situation on the ground, stopping the construction of illegal settlements, lifting the blockade in Gaza, addressing humanitarian needs and improving the atmosphere for negotiation, among other things. In that connection, we call on the United States and the other members of the Quartet to persuade Israel to stop its intransigence, particularly the construction of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. That said, Malaysia believes that the achievement of political unity among Palestinians is equally important to moving the peace process forward and reconstructing the Gaza Strip.

Yesterday, we also marked the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all Palestinians who have suffered in their just struggle to live in freedom and in dignity in a State they can call their own. The people of Palestine can count on Malaysia's unwavering support in their efforts to create an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Rivard (Canada): While the situation on the ground has remained largely calm since the Gaza

conflict, there continue to be sporadic rocket attacks on Israel emanating from Gaza, which we strongly condemn as designed to ensure the failure of the United States-led peace talks. It is important that these spoiler elements not be given the opportunity to derail the chance for peace.

(spoke in French)

If the peace talks are to succeed, it is urgent that the parties take a risk for peace. This is not easy to do in a part of the world where mistrust is deeply rooted and the dangers are very real. But without genuine leadership and a vision for a better tomorrow, we know what the future will hold — unending violence and bloodshed on both sides. Every effort should be made to ensure that this does not occur.

It is important to note that the Palestinian Authority has made real progress in its reforms, which we applaud. However, much remains to be done. That is why Canada's assistance is focused clearly on the security and justice sectors. At the same time, the Government of Israel must fulfil its commitments on settlements and on the access and movement of people and goods.

(spoke in English)

Canada continues to recognize the important role of the United Nations and its Member States in supporting the peace process. United Nations agencies remain at the forefront of providing assistance to those in need in the region. However, Canada remains concerned about the number of United Nations resolutions that single out Israel, as well as the disproportionate focus placed on the Middle East. Now more than ever, we strongly believe that the efforts of the United Nations and its Member States should complement efforts towards ensuring that peace talks begin again and that a climate for success is created.

Once again, Canada urges the parties to do whatever it takes to return to direct negotiations. There is simply no other reasonable option.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) *(spoke in Spanish)*: At the outset, my delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the delegation of Egypt as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Once again, we meet this year to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian

People. After 63 years, Israel is still rejecting peace and the establishment of a sovereign, independent State of Palestine. On a daily basis, the international community witnesses the look of terror in the eyes of Palestinian children and the images of Palestinian farmers clinging to an olive tree as they are expelled from their lands and the homes they sacrificed so much to build. We also bear witness to the pain of mothers who cannot watch their children grow up because they are either assassinated or imprisoned.

The supposed deadlock of the peace negotiations for over a month now is just the most recent evidence that achieving peace is not Israel's true intention. In order to ensure the complete failure of the negotiations, the Israeli Parliament recently enacted a law, presented by the Government, requiring that the withdrawal of the Israeli army from occupied territories be submitted to a referendum.

For years now, the most reactionary Israeli voices have declared that the only solution is permanent war. Successive Governments have successfully carried out this policy through a murderous occupation, a genocidal blockade and the collective torture of an entire people. The military industry is today the most lucrative industry in Israel.

Israel has always had the economic and military capacity to pursue its policy of permanent war thanks to a crucial accomplice that has supplied it with war materiel that it used to kill more than 1,500 Palestinians between December 2008 and January 2009 and to murder, in cold blood and in international waters, nine innocent people participating in the freedom flotilla. Above all, that nation is complicit in granting Israel impunity, particularly in the Security Council, where it now threatens to veto any attempt to issue a unilateral declaration of an independent Palestinian State.

Peace in the Middle East does not just involve resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It must also necessarily include the situations in Lebanon and Syria, which also have occupied territories. Furthermore, it must include all countries of the region. It will also be crucial to eliminate all nuclear weapons from the Middle East. This means that Israel must accept nuclear disarmament and become a party to the relevant international conventions. It will not be possible to achieve a climate of trust until that happens.

Nicaragua would like once again to reiterate its firm condemnation of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, the Syrian Golan Heights and Lebanese territory, and of the criminal blockade against the Palestinian people, and demands that Israel comply with all Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

The supposed relaxation of the blockade of the Gaza Strip is a mere cosmetic measure to deflect international attention. The ongoing construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and the refusal to dismantle existing settlements are nothing less than a mockery of the peace process aimed at imposing conditions on the negotiations and changing the demographic and religious composition of these territories.

Nicaragua and Palestine are celebrating 30 years of diplomatic ties, and a number of different events have been planned in our country in this respect. Some of these activities include the reactivation of the Nicaraguan Palestinian community association and the establishment of a committee for solidarity with the Palestinian people. Similarly, Commander Daniel Ortega, President of Nicaragua, recently received in our country the survivors of the freedom flotilla and gave the keys to the city to Palestinian revolutionary Leila Khaled.

On the occasion of this year's International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Government and people of Nicaragua request that those countries that have not yet done so transform their expressions of support and solidarity into a concrete act — recognition of the Palestinian State.

Nicaragua would also like to take this opportunity to express its firm support for the General Assembly's taking a stand on the issue of recognition of a free and sovereign Palestinian State, as it should have done more than 60 years ago. That is an obligation, and it should be a priority for the Assembly to honour the purposes and objectives of this Organization as conceived by those who crafted its Charter.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): As we commemorated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People yesterday, I wish to join you, Sir, and others in congratulating the Palestinian people on that auspicious day.

The question of Palestine is one of the most sensitive and long-running issues on the agenda of the United Nations. It impinges on the overall issues of durable peace and development in the Middle East. Despite years of debate and substantial energy and resources spent, the resolution of this problem remains elusive. And since it has become a permanent fixture on the United Nations agenda, there is a danger that we sometimes deal with it more as a ritual, thereby losing the freshness and urgency it truly deserves.

The Philippines shares with the Palestinian people their legitimate aspirations to achieving justice, peace and freedom. In the General Assembly's regular debates on the subject, the Philippines has consistently supported the Palestinians' quest for self-rule and self-determination, as well as the establishment of a Palestinian homeland. The Philippines has also repeatedly expressed its support for the complete and unconditional lifting of the blockade imposed by the State of Israel on the occupied Palestinian territories, especially Gaza. We find the embargo counterproductive; it serves only to collectively punish hapless civilians, particularly women and children.

The Philippines welcomes the resumption of the protracted talks between the Palestinian Authority and the State of Israel, and is hopeful that, despite the obstacles and hurdles on the road ahead, a breakthrough can be achieved in due time. More work and sacrifice, however, are still needed. The Philippines urges both parties to work together to forge a lasting peace. The international community's assistance is, of course, more important than ever. Only with the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with its neighbours, will the Palestinian people truly attain their rightful place in the community of nations.

Let us not lose sight of the fact that we all have a stake in the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. It may still be on our agenda next year, and maybe in years to come, but it should inspire us to work even harder and not to allow hopelessness and inaction to set in. The Philippines stands ready to cooperate and work together with like-minded Member States to find a good answer to the question of Palestine, not just for its significance for the stability and progress of the Middle East, but also for the benefit of the entire world.

Mr. Sipangule (Zambia): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the professional manner in which you have conducted these proceedings. We thank you for organizing this important meeting.

My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement on the question of Palestine delivered by the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We meet today after the commemoration yesterday of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 16 years after the promulgation of a peace accord aimed at establishing a Palestinian State existing in peace side by side with the State of Israel. Since then, there have been many efforts by the international community, including the United Nations, to find a lasting solution to the problem of the question of Palestine. My delegation would like to see continue the peaceful negotiations that once gave so much hope.

It is in light of the prevailing situation that the Zambian delegation wishes to reiterate its belief in and support for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to a State of their own in full and secure boundaries and sovereignty, and in peaceful coexistence with the State of Israel. As a country that maintains mutually beneficial relations with both Israel and the Palestinian National Authority, my delegation urges the two parties to seize the momentum signalled by the renewed commitment of the Quartet to engaging in honest negotiations leading to a solution.

The Palestinians and Israelis need the support of the Security Council, the Middle East Quartet and the international community at large to bring them to the negotiating table. In order that these objectives may be achieved, my delegation wishes to urge all the parties to adhere to the tenets of international and humanitarian law, as well as to all resolutions of the General Assembly concerning the matter.

Zambia recognizes the important work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the West Bank, Gaza and all the occupied Palestinian territories. We wish to add our voice to the many others calling for Israel's cooperation and increased United Nations support for UNRWA to facilitate the smooth execution of its mandate. As all in this Hall are aware, the work of UNRWA in Palestine is the lifeblood of the people in all the occupied territories.

As in the past, at the end of this debate my delegation would like again to reaffirm its commitment to all efforts leading to a mutually acceptable negotiated solution to the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. In this regard, Zambia will maintain its past voting pattern on the draft resolutions on the agenda items before us.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. However, due to technical difficulties, I propose that he postpone his statement until the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.30 pm.