



General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

55th plenary meeting

Tuesday, 30 November 2010, 3 p.m.

New York

President: Mr. Deiss (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

(spoke in Arabic)

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)

The President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that at the end of this morning's meeting I announced that we would begin our meeting this afternoon with a statement by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in exercise of the right of reply. Before giving him the floor, I remind him that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in French*): Before I address the substance of my statement, I express the hope that such technical problems will never again recur under your presidency.

Allow me at the outset to read some titles of articles published recently in the Israeli press. These articles are a direct response from the Israeli press itself to the erroneous allegations put forward by the Israeli representative against my country.

The first article was published by the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* on 24 November. In the article, one can read the following:

“The referendum concerning the occupied Golan and East Jerusalem is one further insult to the international community and significantly changes Israel's commitment to respecting resolutions of international legitimacy.”

The second article, which appeared in the Israeli paper *Israel Today* on 25 November, states:

“The Israeli Government is attempting to undemocratically prevent by law the signing of a peace agreement with Syria and the achievement of reconciliation with Palestine with regard to Jerusalem.”

The third article, which was published on 28 November, that is, two days ago, in *Ha'aretz*, is entitled “We Israelis, Sons of the Chosen People, will decide the fate of another people living for generations under occupation. This is Israeli insolence in its most hateful form”. These are comments that were made in *Ha'aretz*; they are not my words. In that article, one can also read:

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“Under Israeli democracy in its clearest form, the people as a whole will decide the question of settling the conflict but not the question of settlements or the questions of annexation, war or conflict.”

Here again, we see Israeli attempts to mislead us.

As a result, the Israelis legislate the settlement of the conflict with a view to deferring the settlement date again and again. The Israelis should have asked the following questions of their Government: Where are you taking us? Where are we headed? The settlements will continue to be built, the occupation is deepening and becoming further rooted, but what will happen after that?

Israeli State terrorism is clear and documented by a number of international institutions, which have assembled a black record of massacres, crimes, aggressions and occupation of Arab territories extending back more than 60 years. As such, Israel excels at State terrorism, carrying out the most atrocious crimes against civilians in Palestine, the Golan, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia and the Sudan.

Undoubtedly, we all remember what happened in Qana, Jenin, Nablus, Gaza, Bahr el-Baqar, Deir Yassin and al-Quneitra. Israeli State terrorism has not even spared the representatives of the United Nations, from the killing of the mediator Count Bernadotte to the crimes committed against peacekeepers serving in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, and ultimately the destruction of the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in Gaza in 2008 and the killing of the peace activists this year. We cannot list here all Israel’s practices throughout its history, such as war crimes, genocide and ethnic cleansing.

Perhaps Israel can deceive and lead some to believe its lies for some time, but it cannot do so forever, because its racist aggressive policies are now well known and have been condemned by the majority of the States in the world. The word “Israel” has become synonymous with such words as “aggression”, “killing”, “racism”, “occupation”, “terrorism” and “assassination”. The most recent assassination took place in Dubai, as everyone knows.

Israel will need a great deal of forgiveness and pardon from its victims. Israel needs to be more introspective and must be accountable for terrorist

crimes committed for decades by successive Governments before the international community, officials and civilians alike, can think about stopping their condemnation of it.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to inform members that, upon request of the author, the Assembly will take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.24, entitled “The one-State solution”, at a later date. I would also like to inform members that action will be taken on draft resolutions A/65/L.14 through A/65/L.17 immediately after consideration of agenda item 36, “The situation in the Middle East”.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 37.

Agenda item 36

The situation in the Middle East

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/65/379, A/65/380 and A/65/380/Add.1)

Draft resolutions (A/65/L.18 and A/65/L.19)

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/65/L.18 and A/65/L.19.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly is today taking up agenda item 36, “The situation in the Middle East”, emphasizing its inherent role in addressing the conflict and constant tension in the Middle East resulting from Israel’s illegal occupation of Arab occupied territories since 1967, and its refusal to accept the will of the international community and to implement relevant United Nations resolutions and the rules of international law and international humanitarian law, despite all regional and international efforts to reach a negotiated solution allowing for a lasting, comprehensive and just peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the conflict.

Undoubtedly, the Middle East is now passing through an extremely dangerous phase as a result of the intransigent positions of the Israeli Government. Lately we have witnessed an increase in Israeli violations of international law, reflected by the illegal expansion of settlements, particularly in and around East Jerusalem, especially with the end of the so-called moratorium on settlements. Israel has done this despite calls by all stakeholders, including the United Nations, the

international Quartet and the European Union, for it to desist.

Israel's violations of international law, human rights law and international humanitarian law have been increasing, as manifested by many practices, such as the detention of 10,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails and detention facilities without any legal grounds; the continued construction of the racist separation wall, in defiance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice; the tight siege of the Gaza Strip, contrary to Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and General Assembly resolution ES-10/18; the barriers and checkpoints in the West Bank; the Jewish loyalty oath instituted by the Israeli Cabinet to isolate the Arab-Israeli population in Israel; the recent Knesset legislation setting stringent new conditions on any withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories annexed to Israel except through a referendum or the approval of a two-third majority of the Knesset; and many other violations that time will not permit us to list.

What is especially disappointing is the fact that all of those violations are linked to Israel's deliberate quest to undermine all attempts to resume the direct negotiations that were agreed and endorsed by the Palestinian side, indicating its unwillingness to reach a peaceful settlement. That refusal will have dire consequences not only for the Israelis and Palestinians, but for the whole region and indeed the world.

In the light of those violations, the international community, represented by the General Assembly, is called on today more than ever to provide political support to efforts aimed at resuming the negotiating process, to emphasize the illegality of settlement building and the acquisition of others' territory by force, and to compel Israel to fulfil its commitments and to enter into serious negotiations on the six core issues of the Palestinian track. We must call on Israel to work towards a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict on all tracks, on the basis of the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Road Map and relevant United Nations resolutions.

By the same token, the international community, represented by the General Assembly, must also stress and reaffirm the illegality of all measures taken or to be taken by Israel to alter the legal status or the facts on the ground in the occupied Syrian Golan, and that all those and other measures, including the most recent

bill before the Israeli Parliament, are illegal and therefore null and void because they represent a clear violation of all pertinent United Nations resolutions. The General Assembly should also demand that Israel fully comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and fully withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan to the borders of 4 June 1967, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

In order to express the international community's rejection of Israel's ongoing occupation and illegal practices in the occupied Arab territories and to confront the grave deterioration in the peace process, I am pleased to present to the General Assembly under agenda item 36, "The situation in the Middle East", two draft resolutions, one on Jerusalem (A/65/L.18) and the other on the Syrian Golan (A/65/L.19).

The first draft resolution, on Jerusalem, reaffirms that the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions remain the main terms of reference for the special status of occupied East Jerusalem, and again confirms the renunciation and repudiation of all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel to alter the character and legal status of the city. It also affirms that any just and comprehensive solution to the question of Jerusalem should include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience of its inhabitants. That freedom is restricted by settlement activity and by Israeli settlers, unlawful attempts by Israel to impose a Jewish character on the city, violations of the right of the Palestinians to have access to places of worship, repeated aggressions against the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and threats to its structures, and the excavation in the old city of Jerusalem, including in and around the holy places.

The second draft resolution, on the occupied Syrian Golan, recalls Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and underlines the deep concern of the General Assembly about Israel's continued non-compliance with its implementation. It also confirms the applicability of The Hague Convention of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to the Syrian territory occupied since 1967 and the illegitimacy of both the decision to apply Israeli laws in that territory and the settlement activities there. The draft resolution also renews calls upon Israel to withdraw fully from the occupied Syrian Golan to the borders of 4 June 1967 and to respect previous pledges in that regard.

The sponsors of the two draft resolutions believe that it is high time for the international community to deal with the question of the Middle East comprehensively. The peoples of the region, who continue to suffer the scourge of war and aggression, aspire to achieve peace, stability and coexistence. These cannot be achieved without Israel's political will and serious commitment to fully withdraw from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, based on the principle of land for peace, the rules of international law, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map, and on the basis of all terms of reference stated in the Madrid principles and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

To that end, the sponsors look forward to the support of all States members of the General Assembly and their votes in favour of the two draft resolutions in support of the important goals that they enunciate, in order to reaffirm the steadfast international will to achieve the set goals and to uphold the lofty purposes and principles of the Charter.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to remind members that we have many speakers on our list. I therefore suggest that speakers shorten their statements and distribute their full texts in the Hall. If time permits, I would like us to take action on the draft resolutions today. If we cannot, we will have to meet tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like to align our delegation with the statement made by our colleague the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I would also like to thank him for introducing draft resolutions A/65/L.18 on Jerusalem and A/65/L.19 on the Syrian Golan.

How long will the General Assembly continue to consider the agenda item on the situation in the Middle East? The General Assembly began its consideration of this item in 1970 at its twenty-fifth session. It has considered it every year since, without making any tangible progress. How long will the General Assembly at each and every session call on Israel, the occupying Power, to put an end to its occupation of the Arab territories, stating that any steps taken by Israel in the occupied Arab territories to impose its jurisdiction, administration and laws in the Syrian Golan or Jerusalem have absolutely no legality and are null and void.

Is it not high time for the General Assembly to play the part it is given in the Charter by ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security, especially given the fact that the Security Council has failed to ensure implementation of its unanimously adopted resolutions, including resolution 476 (1980) on occupied Jerusalem and resolution 497 (1981) on the occupied Syrian Golan? These two resolutions reject the provocative and unilateral decisions of the occupying Israeli authorities to annex Jerusalem and the occupied Golan and determine that they were illegal and null and void. Is the international community not aware that Israel is flouting international law and humanitarian and ethical principles? Over 1,000 resolutions have been adopted by the United Nations system and agencies over the past 40 years.

Today once again, we find ourselves considering this same agenda item on the situation in the Middle East. It is a very dangerous moment, and the chances of war seem to be trumping the chances for peace due to increasing Israeli aggression and an unprecedented level of settlement construction. Most recently, last month Israel decided to build more than 1,300 housing units in East Jerusalem with a view to undermining all Arab, regional and worldwide hopes for achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East at the very moment when the entire world is working to achieve that peace, declaring that peace is an absolute prerequisite for achieving regional and international security and stability.

The world is absolutely shocked at Israel's ongoing talk of war. Israel continues its belligerent practices, pursues its Jewish settlement construction, profanes holy sites, has imposed a blockade on Gaza and is threatening to evict millions of Palestinians from their land. Such behaviour is discriminatory, racist and based on archaic political ideologies that call for religious and ethnic cleansing in order to give life to the mirage of Israeli Judaism.

Israel continues to pursue such practices as the building of the racist separation wall and is moving ahead with the Judaization of Jerusalem. It is also making decisions based on racism, the most recent being the Jewish loyalty oath to be taken by non-Jews. And they call this a democracy.

All of these laws reflect the racism of Israel and represent the very antithesis of all calls of the

international community for freedom and equality in the twenty-first century. These laws also expose the falsehood of the claim that Israel is an oasis of democracy in the Middle East. Israel wants to create a new form of democracy — a racist, colonialist, expansionist, occupying and aggressive democracy.

Syria and the Arab States have adopted peace as a strategic option. We adopted the Arab Peace Initiative in 2002 at the Arab summit in Beirut. The Initiative entails everything that peace implies: recognition of Arab rights, recuperation of land, Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories to the borders of 4 June 1967, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with its capital in East Jerusalem, and the return of Palestinian refugees, in accordance with resolution 194 (III) of 1948.

Now, what has been the Israeli response to the Arab Peace Initiative? Israeli's response has been to simply ignore the appeals, to invade the West Bank and to perpetrate massacres in Jenin and Nablus in 2002. Israel has continued its expansionist settlement policies, seizing more territory and resources. Not content with what it had already done, Israel waged its barbaric aggression against Lebanon in 2006 and against Gaza in 2008. It then attacked the freedom flotilla carrying humanitarian assistance to Gaza, killing nine political activists.

The Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan is part and parcel of its very dark policy. Israel still refuses to return the occupied Syrian Golan to its motherland of Syria. It refuses to comply with international legality, particularly Security Council resolution 497 (1981). Just a few days ago, the Israeli Knesset promulgated a law calling for a referendum on its eventual withdrawal from Syrian Golan and occupied East Jerusalem.

These actions have been taken with respect to territories where Israel has no right to make decisions. They are a violation of international law and a rebuff to the political will and position of the international community, which has decided unanimously in two Security Council resolutions that Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan are occupied Arab territories. The international community has also decreed that the Israeli decisions to annex those two territories are null and void. The Israeli position has been rejected and cannot alter the fact that the Syrian Golan is occupied territory. This is non-negotiable, and the 4 June 1967

borders of the Syrian Golan must be restored. This is a prerequisite for peace.

There are some who still harbour the illusion that the current Israeli Government is truly seeking peace. On the basis of that belief, Israel has been granted favours, known as packages, but it pursues its repression and terrorizing of Syrian citizens. It has imprisoned citizens of the Golan, seized land and built more settlements; it has pillaged the Golan's resources, distorted its history and planted mines there. There is also the question of the Israeli theft of water. The Syrian Foreign Minister recently sent two identical letters to the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly (A/65/542) regarding Israel's theft of the water of Mas'adah Lake in the Golan, leading to the loss of approximately \$20 million worth of resources.

I reconfirm from this rostrum that Syria has a sovereign right to the occupied Syrian Golan up to the borders of 4 June 1967. This right is neither negotiable nor subject to bartering. Peace must be based on that right. Syria reconfirms that this is a prerequisite for the achievement of peace. We are not merely calling on Israel to make what it calls painful concessions. This is purely and simply a matter of a right that has been usurped and land that must be returned. The people of Syria and the Arab countries are truly committed to a just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option, along with everything that implies, including the complete restitution of rights and the full return of occupied territories.

However, it is not possible for us to ignore reality and legitimate questions about the future. It would be illogical and inadmissible for us, as Arabs, to continue to manifest our true desire for peace when Israel is the party occupying our territories. Israel is the party committing aggression against our peoples and our rights and continuing to threaten to unleash war. Thus we, along with the international community, would ask the following question: Can a State that was founded on illegal occupation and the continual murders of native Palestinian citizens; that has committed massacres in Lebanon, the West Bank, Gaza, the Syrian Golan and elsewhere; and that has undertaken acts of State terror that have overwhelmed several regions, act in favour of peace? Can a State whose successive Governments have publicly and privately prevented the achievement of a settlement through the peace process be a full partner in the peace process, particularly when

the Head of that State represents one of the most extremist Governments in the history of that country? There is an even more important question to be asked and answered within this forum. How long will Israel place itself above the law? How long will Israel continue to act with impunity, pursue its aggressive practices and persevere on that path?

We believe that, today more than ever, the international community must take concrete measures to deal with Israel's horrific actions and compel it to put an end to its aggressive practices, halt its settlement construction, lift the blockade against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, end to its occupation of the occupied Arab territories, and withdraw to the borders of 4 June 1967.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba fully supports and will vote in favour of the draft resolutions (A/65/L.18 and A/65/L.19) introduced by the representative of Egypt.

The unstable situation in the Middle East — characterized by the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, the ongoing construction of the separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, the complex situation in Lebanon and the occupation of the Syrian Golan, inter alia — is a reality that affects not only the region but the entire international community.

Israel's disregard for international law and its ongoing illegal occupation of Palestinian territories and other Arab territories remain the primary obstacles to achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region. Cuba reiterates its grave concern over the further deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly as a result of Israel's excessive use of force against the Palestinian civilian population and its many other illegal policies and practices, such as the inhumane and destructive measures of collective punishment against the civilian Palestinian population, including the blockade of Gaza.

Cuba reiterates its appeal to the international community to compel the Israeli authorities immediately to lift the cruel and illegal blockade of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, open the border crossings and allow the free circulation of goods from and into the Gaza Strip. Humanitarian access must be guaranteed on a regular basis and in compliance with

legal obligations pursuant to the Fourth Geneva Convention and relevant United Nations resolutions.

Cuba reiterates its deep regret over the Palestinian people's ongoing suffering during the more than 40 years of brutal Israeli military occupation of their land, and due to the continued denial of their fundamental human rights, including the right to self-determination and the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their land.

The international community's efforts, including United Nations actions to continue the peace negotiations for a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the Palestinian question, remain unsuccessful. The Israeli authorities — in clear rejection of international law and open disregard for the resolutions of the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Security Council — have pursued their aggressive policies in the region. We call for the immediate cessation of Israeli settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including in East Jerusalem. Ending these practices is an absolute prerequisite for achieving a peace agreement.

Cuba reaffirms that any measures or actions taken or to be taken by Israel, the occupying Power, in an attempt to alter the legal, physical or demographic status or the institutional structure of the occupied Syrian Golan, as well as measures to apply its jurisdiction and administration there, are null and void and without legal effect.

We reiterate that all these measures and actions, including the construction and extension of Israeli settlements in the Syrian Golan since 1967, are clear violations of international law, international agreements and the resolutions and Charter of the United Nations. Cuba calls on Israel to abide by Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and to withdraw fully from the occupied Syrian Golan to the borders existing prior to 4 June 1967.

Cuba reaffirms its support for the Middle East peace process on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map and the formula of land for peace. We reject attempts to modify the mandate of the peace process, as well as unilateral Israeli measures and strategies aimed at imposing an illegal unilateral solution.

The Palestinian people have the inalienable right to establish an independent and sovereign State with

East Jerusalem as its capital. We demand the unconditional return of all Arab territory occupied in June 1967. That is the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace for all the peoples of the region.

Mr. AlJarallah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's sincere efforts to revive the peace process in the Middle East. We were grateful for yesterday's opportunity to reaffirm our support and solidarity for our Palestinian brothers during the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Middle East continues to suffer from instability owing to the occupation of Arab land by Israel and its actions against Palestinians, including killing and displacement, which is dragging the region into conflict and war. Our debate here is the result of Israel's continuing disregard for the will of the international community, its resolutions and various international efforts, including the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002, that are aimed at achieving a just peace and real security and stability in the region. Furthermore, as set out by President Barack Obama in his statement to this session of the General Assembly (see A/65/PV.11), the United States has called for direct negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and Israel for one year, leading to an end to much of the Arab-Israeli conflict through the declaration of a fully sovereign Palestinian State.

Israel's actions and its violations of the rights of the besieged Palestinian people in Gaza, whom they prevent from getting the basic resources needed to sustain life and to whom they refuse all humanitarian assistance, are further evidence of Israel's continuing violation of international laws and norms and humanitarian principles. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, is at a dangerous stage and will pose a threat to international peace and security if we cannot arrive at a just solution based on the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions — in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1860 (2009) — and the land-for-peace formula.

In the same vein, with regard to the implementation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981), my country calls on Israel to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan and to return to the 4 June

1967 line. We reiterate that Israel's occupation of parts of sisterly Syria is a serious obstacle to achieving peace and security in the Middle East. The State of Kuwait also renews its commitment to stand by Lebanon and to support its efforts to safeguard its stability and security. We call on Israel to cease its constant violations of Lebanese land and air space, implement Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and withdraw completely from occupied Lebanese territory.

International efforts are continuing to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and achieve peace and security in the Middle East. Yet Israel's continued prevarication and intransigence continue to impede those efforts, including efforts by the United States to restart negotiations between Palestine and Israel, by insisting on extremist policies that defy the will of the international community. Its most recent such action was the decision to resume building illegal settlements in occupied Palestine.

Efforts by various Israeli Governments to disassociate themselves from peace negotiations with Arab countries have created a sense of frustration and pessimism in every country of the world. The international community faces a great challenge today, namely, compelling Israel to implement the relevant international resolutions, cease its illegal settlement activity on Palestinian territory and move forward with the peace process in order to reach an agreement that provides for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State and for Israel's complete withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to thank the Permanent Representative of the sisterly country of Egypt for introducing the two draft resolutions before the Assembly, on Jerusalem (A/65/L.18) and the occupied Syrian Golan (A/65/L.19).

As a result of Israel's illegal occupation of Arab territory since 1967, year in and year out since the twenty-fifth session, in 1970, the General Assembly has considered an agenda item on the situation in the Middle East. During every session since, the Assembly has called on Israel to end its occupation of Arab land and accept the will of the international community by implementing the relevant international laws and United Nations resolutions.

The Middle East is at a very dangerous crossroads and faces considerable challenges. A comprehensive and just peace is still unattainable owing to Israel's intransigence in dealing with the peaceful route that Arabs have embraced; but it has nevertheless become an urgent requirement for maintaining international peace and security. Nevertheless, Israel still treats this option with contempt, believing that such behaviour will gain it more power and more time.

Israel's continued building of settlements makes the situation even worse. It recently announced its decision to build 1,360 new housing units in East Jerusalem — a decision that runs counter to numerous United Nations resolutions condemning the building of settlements in the occupied territories and emphasizing the invalidity of acquiring or annexing land by force, including Security Council resolutions 446 (1979), 476 (1980) and 478 (1980). These flagrant practices run counter to article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and article 55 of The Hague Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. They also illustrate Israel's disregard for the peace process, whose resumption we all hope for in order to achieve a negotiated settlement on the basis of two States living side by side within the pre-1967 borders.

There is no doubt that the Israeli Government is continuing with its intransigent positions and provocations, which are more evident when new negotiations loom on the horizon. All of those actions reflect the fact that Israel is not seriously committed to achieving a just and permanent solution to the question of Palestine, which remains the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Given Israel's position, the General Assembly is called upon today to provide the necessary support for the Middle East political process in order to revive peace negotiations. More than ever before, the Assembly is also called upon to exercise its cardinal principles in support of the peace process and to force Israel to honour its international commitments with a view to achieving a just, comprehensive and permanent solution to all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict on all tracks on the basis of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and in conformity with the Arab Peace Initiative, the principle of land for peace, the Road Map and other relevant international decisions.

At each of its sessions, the General Assembly has called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to end its occupation of Arab territories. The Assembly has also emphasized that the measures taken by Israel in the West Bank, particularly in occupied Jerusalem, as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan, are illegal, and thus null and void. The resolutions adopted annually by the Assembly as well as the Security Council's own resolutions — in particular resolution 478 (1980), on occupied Jerusalem, and resolution 497 (1981), on the occupied Syrian Golan — all focus on the impact of Israel's illegal action. Those two Security Council resolutions also rejected Israel's unilateral decisions to annex Jerusalem and the Golan, determining that such decisions were null and void and lacking international legal basis.

It is clear that the illegal settlement policy pursued by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, which is based on the pretext of natural growth, is both unwarranted and unjustifiable and runs counter to international law and United Nations resolutions.

It is absolutely clear that Israel's policies — which include blockading the Palestinian people, storming places of worship, collective punishment, the scorched earth policy and the construction of the racist separation wall — constitute flagrant violations of international law. They complicate the situation on the ground while at the same time revealing an attempt to impose a *fait accompli* in order to improve Israel's position in any future negotiations on a final settlement of the conflict. Moreover, those policies risk hampering negotiations towards the comprehensive, just and lasting peace to which we all aspire.

In order for just, comprehensive and lasting peace to prevail in the Middle East, the Kingdom of Bahrain once again calls on Israel to withdraw completely from the occupied Syrian Golan to the border of 4 June 1967, in implementation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981), which asserts the illegality of Israel's imposition of its laws and settlements there. Israel's continued occupation of Syrian Arab territory constitutes a genuine obstacle to the achievement of peace in the Middle East.

With regard to Lebanon, the Kingdom of Bahrain calls upon Israel to halt its continued violations of Lebanon's land and air space and to implement Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and fully

withdraw from the occupied Lebanese territory in Sheba'a farms and Al-Ghajar village. Bahrain emphasizes the need to preserve Lebanon's unity, territorial integrity and political independence.

We call upon the international community and the Quartet to make every diplomatic effort to give new impetus to the peace process in order to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): At the outset, the Philippines commends you, Mr. President, for giving priority to the discussion on the situation in the Middle East. In our highly interdependent world, the situation in the Middle East cannot be overlooked, even by geographically distant countries like mine. As a major source of oil and a big market for services for many countries, including the Philippines, the stability and progress of the Middle East is essential for world peace and security. More than 2 million of my country's men and women live and work in the Middle East. The Philippine Government therefore attaches great importance to the security and safety of every Filipino citizen in that region.

The Philippines is a strong advocate and supporter of the Middle East peace process, and we aim to contribute in any way we can. The Philippines has always supported the establishment of a free and independent Palestinian State. The Philippines has for many years joined the global clamour for the establishment of a Palestinian homeland to help alleviate the dire situation of the Palestinian people. In that regard, the Philippines sees merit in the two-State solution for peace proposed by our partners. We hope that both Israel and Palestine will join hands to achieve a meaningful, long-lasting and durable solution to the problem.

The Philippines is cognizant of the fact that bringing stability and long-lasting peace to the Middle East is easier said than done. Despite huge investments in energy, time and resources, a solution to the Middle East problem remains elusive. Past failures, however, should be seen as the foundation for future success. We should not halt our quest to find the right solution to the predicaments that plague the region.

One concrete measure in laying a solid foundation for peace and stability in the region would be the creation of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It may be recalled that a proposal was agreed upon at the

1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) via the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. That proposal was recently reaffirmed by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, specifically in part IV of the section on conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)), entitled "The Middle East, particularly implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East".

The Philippines views the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference as a significant contribution to the Middle East peace process. In that context, I wish to highlight some of the vital elements agreed upon that need urgent attention and action. First, we must convene an international conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Secondly, we must appoint a facilitator with a full mandate to support the implementation of the 1995 resolution by conducting consultations with States in the region and making preparations for the 2012 conference. Thirdly, we must designate a host Government for the 2012 conference. Lastly, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons should play a key role in the preparations for the 2012 conference.

The Secretary-General and the three depositary States of the NPT should be moving with dispatch to implement the actions expected of them in last May's NPT Review Conference Final Document, with specific reference to the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. The year 2012 is fast approaching.

The other part of the foundation rests on the commitment of the countries in the region to respect each other's rights to exist, to live free from the threat of destruction and annihilation and to live in peace with their neighbours. Through these steps and other confidence-building measures, we can start laying the groundwork for the peaceful and stable Middle East that all Member States desire.

The steps that I have just enumerated present enormous challenges. But I am afraid that, if something is not done quickly, the countries of the region are bound to repeat a cycle of conflict and strife that will eventually destabilize the whole world. What is needed is a change in thinking and attitude and the

development of greater trust and understanding. Such trust and confidence between erstwhile enemies will need to be built patiently. Indeed, it will take time, energy and resources, as well as goodwill and commitment to sustainable peace.

The 2012 conference is one such concrete step. It presents a rare chance to show the seriousness and goodwill of stakeholders. I strongly encourage the countries in the region and the three depositary States of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to participate and strive to achieve a meaningful outcome. Not only is it important that they attend, but they must go to the conference with an open mind and heart. The conference will be a fresh start for all. Let us seize the opportunity. The 2012 conference could be an important step towards finding a viable solution to the situation in the Middle East.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The international community is still focused on the Middle East but, despite its efforts, the Palestinian-Israeli peace process is still stagnating. The situation concerns us greatly.

This past year has demonstrated that if the chronic mutual distrust of the parties is not dealt with and if there is no clear understanding of the fact that there is simply no alternative to strict compliance with the international legal basis for a Middle East settlement, then we will be faced with a situation in which hopes for peace in the region wither. As a member of the Quartet of international mediators, the Russian Federation is actively trying to overcome the current protracted pause in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, which has had a negative impact on the region and feeds the various radical and extremist forces that are not at all interested in a resumption of the peace process. It is important that all parties demonstrate restraint and not indulge in violence.

We cannot accept unilateral acts in advance of a settlement. They cast a pall on the momentum for a resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. It is perfectly clear that unilateral actions cancel out the efforts made by the international community to create a viable Palestinian State with territorial integrity and living side by side in peace, security and cooperation with the State of Israel. What we have to do is find a mutually acceptable formula that would allow for the resumption of direct talks and ensure that they proceed

successfully. A policy of *fait accompli* is not acceptable.

We categorically reject the settlement policy of Israel. We believe that the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible. This is one of the fundamental principles of contemporary international relations. The key to establishing the right climate for negotiations is an Israeli moratorium on settlements, without arbitrary timeframes or geographical limits.

The overall situation becomes gloomier when we see the flare-ups of tension around Gaza. We are concerned by the frequent rocket attacks on southern Israel. They cause civilian suffering and must end. On the other hand, we also call for an urgent humanitarian effort to improve the social and economic situation of the Palestinian people. More effort must be made to lift the blockade on Gaza. The international community must help the Palestinian leadership in its efforts to establish security and order, reform its law enforcement structures and thwart all forms of terrorism. As a practical contribution in that direction, the Russian Government decided to provide a \$10 million financial contribution in humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian National Authority. The question of Palestinian unity is also crucial. It is central to ensuring progress in the negotiations. The Russian Federation, together with regional partners, in particular Egypt, is seeking to resolve this matter.

Overall, we welcome the Israeli decision to withdraw troops from the northern part of the village of Al-Ghajar, and we look forward to them doing so. Yet, we note that other steps are necessary to achieve a final settlement. This is a difficult situation and the international community must be more involved. The Quartet can certainly be helpful, and it has proven its value. We also attach particular importance to interaction between the Quartet and the League of Arab States. We would like to confirm that our proposal for a Moscow conference on the Middle East still stands. If the direct substantive talks between Palestinians and Israelis become more sustainable, that would create the necessary preconditions for convening the conference.

The international mediators and all interested parties must now urge the Israelis and Palestinians to resume dialogue as a way of achieving our common goal of establishing an independent and viable Palestinian State with territorial integrity coexisting in peace and security with Israel. The international legal

groundwork for that exists, namely, the numerous Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative. As Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said in his message to Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, achieving that goal would help to stabilize the region and promote peaceful coexistence and mutually beneficial cooperation among all countries and peoples.

Mr. Andrabi (Pakistan): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for arranging this important meeting, which is the annual reaffirmation by the General Assembly of its commitment to the legitimate struggle and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. This meeting coincides with the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which was observed yesterday. The Day reminds us that the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine has remained one of the major challenges for the international community for the past six decades.

As we are now into the seventh decade of our collective failure to meet that challenge, prospects for a final settlement are still elusive. The collective voice of peace and compassion emanating from various quarters at the United Nations continues to be ignored. Such open defiance of the international community diminishes the prospects of peace and prolongs the suffering of Palestinians living under occupation.

One institution in the United Nations that has held aloft the cause of peace in the Middle East is the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Yesterday, we were briefed on its annual report (A/65/35). We greatly value the work of the Committee under the able leadership of the Permanent Representative of Senegal, Ambassador Abdou Salam Diallo. We also thank its Rapporteur, Ambassador Saviour Borg of Malta, for his invaluable contributions.

The resumption of direct negotiations between Israelis and the Palestinians in September this year had rekindled hopes for all of us for sustainable peace in the Middle East and a permanent political settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian question. But I fear our hopes and optimism appear to be short-lived, as the window of opportunity for meaningful and sustained negotiations is once again closing.

Settlement activity by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory is the major hurdle to a long-term sustainable political process. Settlement activity is a major provocation, violates international law, vitiates the atmosphere conducive to negotiations and mutes voices calling for peace and compassion. For us, the most disquieting aspect of settlement activity is the ongoing effort to remove traces of Palestinian heritage by altering the status of centuries-old mosques, cemeteries and churches. That effort is endemic in East Jerusalem, Hebron and Bethlehem. It is being done in the name of creating new housing spaces or commissioning other types of buildings. East Jerusalem is witnessing renewed settlement activity in the neighbourhoods of Ramot and Pisgat Ze'ev.

Violence by the settlers against their Palestinian neighbours is a regrettable corollary of this activity. Israel must stop this illegality. It must also end its calculated ambiguity on settlements in the West Bank, with a categorical renunciation of any new project. Until Israel renounces the construction of new housing and commercial projects in occupied territory, settlement activity will continue to derail the negotiations and cast its ugly shadow on the peace process.

Any meaningful and viable negotiating process must run in parallel with improvements in the lives of the Palestinian people. Millions of Palestinians in the occupied territories currently live under the shadow of checkpoints, roadblocks, military siege and separation walls. Recent measures taken by the Israeli authorities to ease restrictions on movement in the West Bank and improve access to Gaza offer some hope. Such measures must be sustained by a deeper political commitment to improving livelihoods in Palestine through respect for human rights, freedom of movement and the unrestricted flow of trade.

The delegation of Pakistan wishes to take this opportunity to call upon the international community to increase its assistance to Palestinian authorities, especially in connection with plans for building State institutions. Many independent studies, including the World Bank's *Economic Monitoring Report*, have praised Palestinian authorities for their efforts in institution-building and the delivery of public services. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have projected an 8 per cent growth rate in the West Bank and Gaza. The economic boom and entrepreneurship, both of which reflect the resilience of

the people of Palestine, can also be a solid edifice for Palestinian Statehood. It holds immense promise for lasting peace in the region and must be complemented by generous development assistance.

We would also urge Member States to address the financial challenges faced by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Despite its financial constraints, caused by unprecedented floods this year, Pakistan will continue to provide all possible support to UNRWA and the Palestinian Authority.

The international community must act to rekindle the hopes of peace through a meaningful negotiating process. As stated by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, we must remain united in our demand that Israel respect its legal obligation as an occupying Power. We believe that a lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be achieved without addressing the root cause of Israeli occupation of Arab territory. The solution therefore requires the complete withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and all other occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan and South Lebanon.

We also look forward to a substantive and objective investigation by the Secretary-General's Panel of Inquiry on the freedom flotilla incident of 31 May. The Panel must diligently pursue the matter. Justice must prevail and those affected must be duly compensated.

Pakistan shares the collective objective of the international community for an independent, sovereign and viable State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, living side by side and in peace with all its neighbours. We support lasting peace for all the inhabitants of the Middle East, irrespective of religion, ethnicity or nationality. Peace has eluded the region for far too long. Peace cannot elude the region forever.

Mr. Seger (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland wishes to speak on several items — first, with regard to the peace process.

The continuation of settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, violates international law and undermines the peace negotiations. We once again call upon Israel to immediately cease all illegal activities and to comply with its international obligations. Negotiations

must be promptly resumed so that priority can be given to identifying mutually acceptable arrangements on borders and security. The Geneva initiative offers solutions in those two areas that fully respect the interests of Israel and a Palestinian State, which we once again call for.

Secondly, with regard to inter-Palestinian reconciliation, restoring Palestinian unity is essential for the completion of the peace process and the reconstruction of Gaza. Switzerland calls on the parties concerned to redouble their efforts to rapidly reach a reconciliation agreement. Establishing an electoral timetable must be at the heart of such an agreement.

Thirdly, with regard to Israel's restrictions on the movement of goods and people in the occupied Palestinian territory, the restrictions in Gaza are clearly disproportionate to the military advantage sought. They are therefore illegal. There are other solutions for preserving the security interests of Israel.

It is also imperative that economic and commercial exchanges and the movement of people between Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, be restored and that the private sector in Gaza be able to export to foreign markets. In that context, we note with interest the recent Israeli announcement that it will soon allow regular exports of goods from Gaza. All stakeholders concerned must work to implement Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) as soon as possible.

To help improve the situation, in June we proposed an access regime that meets both the needs of the civilian population in Gaza and the security needs of Israel. This proposed regime can be adapted for access by sea.

To continue denying or tolerating this unacceptable policy of restrictions, whose negative effects in political, security and humanitarian terms are glaring, is not a viable option. The continuous deterioration of the situation in Gaza can only exacerbate the risk of escalating violence and serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Finally, Switzerland wishes to express its concern over the rising tension in Lebanon. It believes that the interests of justice and stability can be harmonized and calls on the stakeholders to exercise restraint. Each victim has a right to justice; impunity is not an option.

The Special Tribunal for Lebanon contributes to that objective. It is, however, important to emphasize that the presumption of innocence applies to each defendant as long as he or she has not been found guilty.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my thanks to you, Mr. President, for convening meetings on this agenda item, namely, the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine.

Despite serious efforts on the part of the international community, including the international Quartet and other supportive States, which have sought to press ahead with the peace process and gave rise initially to indirect negotiations and later to the launching of direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians, the intransigence of the Israeli side, Israel's persistence in constructing settlements and its disregard for international appeals to stop the construction of settlements, at least as a goodwill gesture to boost the negotiating process, have frustrated all efforts and no tangible achievements have been arrived at thus far.

The Arab States have demonstrated their serious desire for peace and have provided an atmosphere conducive to peace negotiations, but that will not continue ad infinitum.

It is quite clear that Israel's military occupation is the main reason for the problem, although it will not provide security for Israel. On the contrary, it is the worst violation of human rights against a defenceless and persecuted people and is being used as a pretext to combat violence and terrorism, but, in fact, it is one of the reasons for terrorism.

The pretext of using excessive military force in the name of ensuring the security of Israel is false and pointless, as the struggle of people for liberation from foreign occupation is a legitimate right and cannot be equated with military aggression by the occupier. The Israeli authorities persist in perpetrating numerous human rights violations against the Arab population inside the so-called Green Line and continue their challenges to and defiance of the international consensus by expanding the illegal settlements with a view to annexing de facto more Palestinian territory.

That constitutes a blow to international mediation efforts, particularly those on the part of the Quartet.

The State of Qatar believes that solving the question of Palestine should be through a two-State solution, with the two States living side by side in peace. Qatar is of the view that Israeli Government attempts to expand settlements, particularly around East Jerusalem, thwart the achievement of a two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 borders.

The settlements in East Jerusalem threaten the contiguity of the Palestinian land, a main pillar of the establishment of the Palestinian State. The Israeli Government has tried to justify the expansion of settlements by referring to the so-called natural growth of settlements. We completely reject that concept. Settlement activity is illegal and the so-called growth is not natural.

Israeli public policy encourages settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in East Jerusalem, through Government bonuses and incentives to encourage the transfer of Israeli civilians to Palestinian territory, in contradiction to international law.

We must also mention continued Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty and refer to Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), as well as to the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory and the Syrian Golan. We would like to reassert the invalidity of Israel's decision to annex the Golan and the need to return it to Syria, as well as to return the remaining Lebanese territories to Lebanon.

We also wish to re-emphasize the need for a complete Israeli pull-out from the occupied Syrian Golan to the 4 June 1967 borders. The international community has to impose steady pressure on Israel so as to ensure respect for Security Council resolution 497 (1981), which rejects Israel's decision to annex the Syrian Golan and considers it null and void. Three decades later, that resolution is still awaiting its implementation by Israel.

In that connection, I would like to refer to the decision taken by the Council of the League of Arab States entitled "Occupied Syrian Arab Golan", adopted at the Arab Summit at Doha on 30 March 2009. It emphasizes the need to return the occupied Syrian Golan to Syria for the sake of achieving a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

For stability to prevail in Lebanon, Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) must be respected and

implemented by all parties, with no discrimination or selectivity. Constant Israeli flights over Lebanon constitute the most significant violations of that resolution, in addition to its continued occupation of the Shebaa Farms and the Al-Ghajar village.

That threatens the credibility of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, as well as the ability of the Lebanese Government to extend its sovereignty over its territory. On the other hand, in order to guarantee the establishment of peace, security and stability, we emphasize the need to make the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, without exception.

We would like to emphasize our categorical rejection of the illegal measures taken by Israel in occupied East Jerusalem and its attempts to alter the Arab identity of the city, its demographics, its legal status and its religious character. All these attempts are null and void and have no legal effect.

The international community is duty-bound to express its rejection of the Israeli Government's attempts to adversely affect Christian and Islamic holy sites, to demolish homes and evict the Arab population, and to confiscate their identification papers with a view to Judaizing the city. Those attempts run counter to Israel's obligations as the occupying Power under international law and run counter to relevant United Nations resolutions, and threaten any chance of a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict. In addition, they torpedo international efforts carried out by the Alliance of Civilizations.

The achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region can only be based on the principle of land for peace, the terms of reference represented in relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Therefore, the Israeli Government has to refrain from taking extremist positions and from exploiting the Arab side's sincere intention to find a way to end the Middle East crisis.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the need to involve all factions of the Palestinian people in efforts to bring about the success of peace efforts. Our Palestinian brothers have to try seriously to foster national unity in a manner that serves the interests of the Palestinian people while safeguarding the

geographic and political unity of the Palestinian land. We wish to address proud expressions of our esteem to our Palestinian brothers for their steadfast stand against occupation, injustice and persecution.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): We are once again at a pivotal moment in the Middle East. There are two paths ahead. One is towards a bright future, the other towards more of the same. Much will depend on which path is taken. History will not judge lightly those who pay lip service to peace but act to perpetuate conflict.

Turkey welcomed the resumption of direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority back in September. Since then, we have been deeply concerned that no tangible progress has been possible. Turkey continues to support efforts to ensure a resumption of the direct negotiations. We are cognizant of the inherent difficulties, but too much time, energy and political capital have been invested in that process to let it fail now.

On the other hand, negotiations cannot realistically continue in good faith as long as the rampant illegal settlement activity continues unchecked, potentially undermining the whole notion of a two-State solution. Turkey, like countless other nations, calls on Israel to adhere to its Road Map obligations and cease and desist from all settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem. The patience and the will of the international community on that score should not be tested. Ultimately, there will have to be consequences. The Security Council and the Quartet cannot remain silent forever.

At this point, let me underline that the status of Jerusalem is one of the core issues of the peace process, along with borders and refugees, and is subject to final status negotiations. We therefore reiterate the importance of preserving the status as well as the social, cultural and religious fabric of Jerusalem and call on Israel to refrain from any provocative acts in the city.

On the other hand, the unlawful blockade on Gaza has to end. The relevant Security Council resolutions must be implemented without delay. How can we effectively combat the spread of extremism in the Middle East while the unjust and inhumane collective punishment of a civilian population continues in Gaza? The Security Council has stated clearly that the situation in Gaza is unsustainable, and yet it continues. Like the settlement issue, that

continuation raises issues of credibility for the international community and the United Nations.

With the hope that direct negotiations, once resumed, can make rapid progress, it is also important to continue to uphold the basic framework for peace, as embodied in the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map obligations. It is clear that there is an international consensus on those fundamental parameters: a comprehensive peace based on two States — Israel and an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State — living side by side in peace and security, with agreed borders based on those of 1967, Jerusalem as the capital of both States and a just settlement for refugees. The reaffirmation of those elements will serve to bring about a timely solution that addresses the concerns of all.

On the other hand, all the issues in the region are interlinked, and that is why a comprehensive peace is necessary in order to ensure that stability prevails in the region. Therefore, meaningful progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks will be crucial as well. In that regard, we call for the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions.

In order for there to be popular support for direct negotiations and ultimately for the realization of a two-State solution, the conditions of occupation have to be eased and a positive environment created on the ground, one that allows for the State-building exercise in Palestine to make progress.

We welcome the World Bank's pronouncement that, at the current pace and performance, the Palestinian Authority is well-positioned for the establishment of a State at any point in the near future. In order for the Palestinian Authority to become economically viable, obstacles to private sector development and sustainable growth have to be lifted. Palestinians need to be able to use more of their land. They also have to enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms.

In short, as the basis for a State is rolled out, the measures of occupation must be rolled back. In the meantime, the considerable progress already made by the Palestinian Authority in State-building must continue to be supported by the international community.

Developments in Lebanon are also crucial to peace and security in the region. Turkey attaches great importance to maintaining the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, and we support the efforts of the Government. Turkey has been concerned about rising tensions. As evidenced by Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit to Lebanon last week, we will continue to work to help promote calm.

The Special Tribunal for Lebanon is an independent body established by the Council at the request of Lebanon. Its work is of a legal nature and should not be used to further political agendas. The hard-won internal peace and stability in Lebanon and the rule of law must be preserved and respected by all. Turkey will continue to play its part in a bilateral and regional context aimed at defusing existing tensions.

Six months have passed since Israel attacked an international humanitarian aid convoy on the high seas, killing nine civilians and wounding many others. Turkey continues to cooperate fully with the Panel of Inquiry established by the Secretary-General in accordance with the Security Council presidential statement of 1 June 2010 (S/PRST/2010/9). After having received the Turkish interim report, the Panel submitted its first progress report to the Secretary-General in mid-September. However, four months after the establishment of the Panel, Israel has yet to present its findings. Meanwhile, the International Independent Fact-Finding Mission formed by the Human Rights Council has issued its report (A/HRC/15/21), which contains alarming findings, compelling legal arguments and striking conclusions. We continue to expect Israel to live up to its responsibilities, acknowledge its mistakes and act accordingly.

In conclusion, let me emphasize our conviction that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict lies at the heart of all of the problems in the Middle East and that, as such, the current pause in direct negotiations between the parties cannot last forever. There is no acceptable alternative to a just and comprehensive settlement. The status quo is not viable. The relative security that prevails cannot be taken for granted. Uncertainty breeds instability, and time is running out. The people of the region need leadership, not brinkmanship. The time to act is now.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): Please allow me, at the outset, to express our sincere appreciation for the scheduling of this discussion on an important

subject that demands our collective attention — the situation in West Asia, a region of great importance and concern to the entire international community.

Being part of our extended neighbourhood, the West Asia region is of vital interest to India. The region is home to nearly 5 million Indians, and is an important source for meeting India's energy needs and a region with which we have deep and intricate ties.

We share the perception that the conflict in West Asia is essentially political in nature and cannot be resolved by force. In line with our support for Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), India supports a negotiated solution that results in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side with and at peace with Israel, as endorsed by the Quartet Road Map and Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003).

India has supported the Arab Peace Initiative, which calls for the withdrawal of Israel to pre-1967 borders, the recognition of Israel and the establishment of the State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. India is aware that genuine peace in the region also requires the resolution of other issues on the remaining tracks of the Middle East peace process, including the restoration of other Arab lands that remain under occupation. Progress on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks of the peace process is important for achieving comprehensive and durable peace in the region.

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 a final resolution of the Middle East conflict.

Given the complexity of the task, unprecedented determination, goodwill and the capacity to offer and accept compromises and concessions are needed on all sides. We sincerely hope that wisdom will prevail and that, in the resolution of conflicts and differences, dialogue will triumph over confrontation.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Husseini (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): While this meeting is being held, international efforts are being intensified to establish the necessary environment for the resumption of direct

negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians with a view to reaching a two-State solution that includes an independent State of Palestine with the 4 June 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital, living in peace and security with the State of Israel. We in Jordan support those efforts, and we call upon Israel to reciprocate, so that direct negotiations can resume at the earliest possible date and deal with all final status issues, including Jerusalem, refugees, security and borders. That perspective necessitates the de facto cessation of all unilateral and condemned Israeli actions in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, particularly the settlement activities carried out by two Israeli organizations Ateret Cohanim and Elad, whose activities constitute violations of the rules of international law and international humanitarian law and relevant United Nations resolutions, and violations of Israel's obligations as the occupying Power.

The international community should shoulder its responsibility by compelling Israel to cease immediately and once and for all of those violations aimed at imposing *faits accomplis*, which have been rejected and threaten the chances for peace. Jordan calls upon the international community to ensure that no irresponsible actions are taken that could undermine the chances for resuming direct negotiations between the two sides.

The Arab and Islamic States, which constitute more than one third of the membership of the United Nations, have expressed their collective commitment to the pursuit of peace by adhering to the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted at the Beirut summit conference in 2002, which constitutes the basis for dealing with all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Today, we call upon everyone to take the historic opportunity provided by this initiative to end the conflict and establish a just and comprehensive peace on the basis of two States, end the occupation of Lebanese and Syrian territory and achieve international security and stability for all countries and peoples of the region.

The achievement of peace necessitates radical change in the tragic situation in which the Palestinian people have been living, especially in the Gaza Strip. We call upon the international community to stand by the Palestinian people and provide them with humanitarian assistance, end their humanitarian suffering and move immediately and effectively to

make sure that Israel abides by resolution 1860 (2009) and lifts the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip. We in Jordan will spare no effort in continuing to provide all kinds of support to our Palestinian brothers or in drawing attention to their deep suffering.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People met yesterday to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. China's Premier Wen Jiabao sent a message to the meeting in which he reiterated China's firm support for the people of Palestine in their just cause for national independence.

At present, the situation in the Middle East remains complicated and volatile. The question of the Middle East not only affects the overall situation of the region, but also has a bearing on the peace and stability of the world.

The question of Palestine is the crux of the question of the Middle East. All peoples of the region, including the peoples of Palestine and Israel, are in favour of efforts to achieve a political solution to the question of Palestine, which will contribute to lasting peace and stability in the Middle East region.

China has always firmly supported the Palestinians in their just cause to restore their legitimate national rights and has always advocated for the settlement of the differences between Palestine and Israel through dialogue and negotiation and on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map for peace in the Middle East, with the ultimate purpose of creating an independent State of Palestine, with Palestine and Israel living in peace with each other.

In early September, direct talks were relaunched between Palestine and Israel, which offered a new and important opportunity for a political settlement of the question of Palestine. China had hoped that the talks would be able to continue and yield substantive results at an early date. Regrettably, however, as a result of Israel's resettlement activities, the talks were brought to a complete standstill in less than a month, which has caused widespread concern and anxiety in the international community.

The resumption of the talks will not come about easily. All the parties should treasure this opportunity

in the overall interest of achieving peace, stability and development of the Middle East region. Constructive measures should be taken and interference avoided, so that the talks can move forward without interruption. We call upon Israel to cease immediately all its settlement activities and the construction of the separation wall on occupied Palestinian territory, including the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

At present, the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories remains grave and the plight of the Palestinian people continues to worsen. That is neither conducive to regional stability nor conducive to creating the proper conditions for the resumption of talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis. We hope that the parties concerned will implement the relevant resolutions of the United Nations in good faith and that the Israelis will completely lift the blockade of Gaza at an early date, so that the people of the Gaza Strip will regain the necessary space for a normal and dignified existence, with employment and development opportunities. The international community should continue to play close attention to the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and provide more assistance and support to the Palestinian people.

China is concerned about the continued existence of internal division among Palestinians and hopes that the Palestinian parties will place the overall interest of their people above anything else and settle their differences through dialogue and consultation, so as to achieve reconciliation and unity in a joint effort to create an independent State of Palestine and bring peace, stability and development to its people.

The Syria and Lebanon tracks are important parts of the peace process in the Middle East. A comprehensive settlement of the situation in the Middle East is impossible without progress on those two tracks. China firmly supports Syria and Lebanon in their just cause to safeguard their national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and recover their occupied territories. China supports the Arab States in their initiative aimed at achieving comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and a responsible major Power, China has contributed positively to the peace process in the Middle East by working in its own way to promote peace and negotiations, including by providing financial and

humanitarian assistance within its capacity. China appreciates the untiring efforts of the international community over the years to bring about peace for the benefit of Israel, the Palestinians, Syria and Lebanon and is ready to join other parties in working to bring about a lasting, comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East region at an early date.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): As we all know, the Middle East has been subject to conflict for far too long. For too long, the peoples of that region have been unable to lead their lives in anything that even vaguely approaches peace and security. That should be an unbearable judgment on all of us.

Any lasting peace, of course, can only be brought about through peaceful means. A just and enduring peace between Israel and the Palestinians must be predicated on a two-State solution: a viable and secure State for the Palestinians and a secure State for Israel, within defined borders. To achieve that, a great deal must be done, of course. There have already been unnecessary delays. Israel's decision in September not to extend its settlement moratorium did not help the peace process. We are encouraged by reports that Israel is considering a further moratorium on settlement construction in the West Bank, and we urge it to do so. A freeze on settlement activity would unquestionably assist peace efforts.

Australia's own strong position remains that Israel and the Palestinians need to meet their respective obligations under the Road Map. We commend the efforts by the United States in that regard. We urge all parties to begin negotiations as soon as possible and to address final status issues, including the status of Jerusalem and settlements. We call on all parties not to undertake any unilateral actions that seek to prejudge the outcome of those negotiations. The positive engagement of the broader international community, including the Quartet members and the countries of the region, is also essential. That is why Australia particularly welcomed the Arab Peace Initiative as a very constructive contribution towards a comprehensive peace.

At the same time, Australia unambiguously supports Israel's sovereign right to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. We support Israel's right to self-defence, including in the face of Hamas rocket attacks into southern Israel. Terrorism should simply be condemned wherever it occurs. It is

unfortunate that not everyone in this Hall always does so.

However, our support for the principle of self-defence in no way alters our continuing, very fundamental concern about the humanitarian situation of the people of Gaza. While we recognize the steps that Israel has taken recently to ease its restrictions on goods entering Gaza, it must do more to help increase the flow of necessary goods and supplies. We have spoken elsewhere of our concern that schools in Gaza have not been able to open and that there are United Nations organizations still facing difficulties in getting goods into Gaza for their work. The situation in Gaza remains serious. It must be addressed. We again call on the parties to act urgently to alleviate what is an unacceptable humanitarian situation.

We support those who are standing strongly against those who offer only the false hope of confrontation, violence and terrorism. The continuing rejection by Hamas of the Quartet principles and its refusal to recognize Israel are major obstacles to peace. We call on Hamas to release Gilad Shalit unconditionally and without delay.

One way Australia has been demonstrating its commitment is through the development and humanitarian assistance that we give to the Palestinian territories — around \$150 million in the past few years. On the humanitarian side, a long-standing part of Australia's contribution to peace has been through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, to which we have provided around \$90 million since 2001. The Australian Foreign Minister will visit the region in the coming weeks, and he will have more to say about Australia's ongoing strong support to the agency.

Briefly, with regard to Lebanon, we are concerned at recent rhetoric. We remain firm in our support for the sovereignty, the political independence and the unity of the Lebanese State and its people. The independence of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon as an international judicial instrument needs to be respected. It should be allowed to complete its work. We reiterate our call for Hizbullah to disarm in accordance with Security Council resolution 1559 (2004). We welcome Israel's in-principle announcement to withdraw from the northern part of Al-Ghajar. We call for the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) by all sides. There must be an end to the smuggling of arms.

In conclusion, Australia — like all of us — recognizes that the path towards peace will inevitably be very hard. It will require strong political leadership and, above all, courage and vision. It is very easy to be glib when people speak of a historic opportunity. Glibness and cynicism unfortunately often make history, but they do not make progress. We have a chance now for progress. Compromise is essential on both sides, as well as genuine, not ritualized, support from the broader international community.

When this item is debated again next year, my delegation looks forward to there being two principal speakers: the State of Israel and the State of Palestine. As my Foreign Minister said here in the general debate this year, all Member States should welcome the prospect of both an Israel and a Palestinian State at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Khazae (Islamic Republic of Iran): The newly released reports on the question of Palestine, particularly the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/65/35), once again bear witness to the unfortunate reality that, in the period under consideration, the Israeli regime has continued with its crimes against the defenceless Palestinian people and has been systematically altering the Palestinian land through unlawful policies and practices. It is evident that such a regime cannot be a righteous and trusted partner in negotiations for a peace agreement.

The arrogant and occupying Powers have made use of all their force, distortion and violence over the past decades in order to establish their control. They are trying to make the Middle East a platform for their expansionist policies for other regions of the world. They are not satisfied with anything less than bending the region to their will.

In that respect, I have to make it clear that in the history of the existence of the Zionist regime, there has been nothing but crimes: the killing of men, women and children in Palestine, the use of banned weapons and the stockpiling of nuclear weapons, indiscriminate assassinations, attacks on civilians and aid convoys in international waters, and war crimes in Lebanon and Palestine. All those ugly acts have become routine affairs for the occupying regime.

The arrogant and occupying Powers have long attempted to create divisions in the Middle East region. They want to divide peoples composed of varied

religions and denominations that have lived together in harmony and coexistence. They want to harm brotherly relations among nations and peoples, such as the friendly relations that so happily exist among the Lebanese, Syrian, Iranian and other nations and peoples in the region.

In Lebanon, we find that the sinful hand of treachery assassinated the former Prime Minister, a respected person, and then we see how news is fabricated to direct accusations at other respected groups and leaders in an effort to sow seeds of division.

Creating sectarian sensitivity and denominational tension and division is a well-known tactic. The enemies of humanity did not and do not want the people of the region to be united, independent and developed. However, the region's nations know well that the symbols of might are unity and solidarity.

The only way to solve the Palestinian issue and establish peace rooted in the region is to admit the sovereign right of Palestine and to end the occupation. The Palestinian people should be allowed to freely express their opinions regarding their future. There is no doubt that the Palestinian people can exercise their national sovereignty themselves.

In November last year, the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/10 on the follow-up to the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict. But no concrete action has been taken to bring to justice the Israeli perpetrators of the crimes reported in the Goldstone report (A/HRC/12/48).

The question remains, when and where impunity for the criminals will end. The time has come for the United Nations to prove that it is an effective organization representing the will of the people of the world. Rather than recognizing occupation, the United Nations should recognize the legitimacy and right of the Palestinian people to exercise their sovereignty and should bring the criminals to justice.

Those are prerequisites to lasting stability in the Middle East. Trust and confidence, together with the active engagement of the international community, is the only way forward to peace.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to address the situation in the Middle East in the General Assembly.

The United Nations has been addressing the situation in the Middle East since the Organization was founded. It is not easy, but we believe achieving peace between Israel and its neighbours is one of the most important challenges we face today. Japan is convinced that progress towards a comprehensive peace in the Middle East will ease tension in the region and contribute to further prosperity.

Japan supports a two-State solution in which Israel and a future independent Palestinian State live side by side in peace and security. Japan remains convinced that a two-State solution achieved through sincere negotiations is the only way to achieve durable long-term peace. We strongly encourage both parties to continue the direct negotiations that started at the beginning of September. We support the United States efforts to restart the negotiations.

The two parties must abide by their obligations under previous agreements, most importantly the Road Map. We call on Israel — as we have done on so many previous occasions — to freeze its settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. We strongly urge it to extend the settlement freeze. Any step that could prejudice the final status negotiations should not be taken.

At the same time, we call upon the Palestinian Authority to continue its efforts to improve security and fulfil its commitment to cease violence and work against incitement.

Japan strongly supports the State-building efforts of the Palestinian Authority under the leadership of President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad. During his visit to Japan last week, Japanese leaders expressed to Prime Minister Fayyad our continued commitment to assist the Palestinians. We are providing approximately \$100 million in assistance during the current fiscal year.

Japan will continue to advance the “corridor for peace and prosperity” initiative with a view to building an agro-industrial park in Jericho by the end of 2012. Japan is also considering working together with East Asian countries to assist Palestinian State-building efforts.

Japan supports the vision that the borders under the two-State solution should be defined through negotiations and be based on the 1967 lines, with mutually agreed swaps, in a way that will achieve the

peaceful coexistence of a viable Palestinian State and Israel, both with secure and recognized borders.

The final status of Jerusalem should be resolved through negotiations in a way that reconciles the positions of both parties on their future capital. Japan stresses that it will not recognize any act that may prejudice the final status of Jerusalem, including Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem. We express deep concern about acts that change the existing conditions of East Jerusalem, such as the demolition of Palestinian houses.

The Palestinian refugee issue should be resolved through negotiations between the parties concerned.

Japan appreciates and commends the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East. Japan has decided to make a contribution of \$10 million, in addition to the regular contributions we have made so far.

With regard to the Gaza Strip, the measures taken by Israel to ease the blockade is a positive step, but Japan remains concerned about the humanitarian situation there. We stress the importance of further easing the blockade while preventing the inflow of weapons into the Gaza Strip.

Japan welcomes Israel’s easing of restrictions on movement and access in the West Bank, which has contributed to the development of the Palestinian economy, and hopes that Israel will further ease such restrictions.

Japan has recently made clear its stance on peace in the Middle East, as I have just elaborated in a policy paper. In addition to the assistance we provide to the Palestinians, we have also invited promising Israeli and Palestinian youths to spend time together in Japan as part of a confidence-building measure.

Regarding Lebanon, we reaffirm our support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon and the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions. We are alarmed by some of the statements made within Lebanon about the present situation, and we call on all parties to act responsibly. We strongly support the work of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and in maintaining calm in its area of operation. We also firmly support the work of the Special Tribunal for

Lebanon, an independent international judicial body. The Tribunal should continue to carry out its mandate without any interference, which will contribute to ending impunity. We also look forward to early resumption of talks on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our call on both parties to make the difficult decisions now to advance peace. We believe that waiting may create circumstances that will make it more difficult to achieve peace. Japan will continue to make its efforts to realize a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Road Map, the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this agenda item.

I would like to inform members that the Assembly will take action on draft resolutions A/65/L.18 and L.19, under agenda item 36, after taking action on draft resolutions A/65/L.14 through L.17, under agenda item 37.

Agenda item 37

Question of Palestine (*continued*)

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

The President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on this item at its 53rd and 54th plenary meetings, on 29 and 30 November.

Before the Assembly takes action on the draft resolutions one by one, I remind members that they will have an opportunity to explain their votes on all four draft resolutions before and after action is taken on all of them.

The Assembly will now proceed to take action on draft resolutions A/65/L.14 through A/65/L.17.

We turn first to draft resolution A/65/L.14, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People". I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department of General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to

announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.14, Cyprus has become a sponsor.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.14. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania,

Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay.

Draft resolution A/65/L.14 was adopted by 112 votes to 9, with 54 abstentions (resolution 65/13).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Kyrgyzstan advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour; the delegation of Japan advised the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.]

The President (*spoke in French*): We turn next to draft resolution A/65/L.15, entitled “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat”. I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department of General Assembly and Conference Management): Since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.15, Cyprus and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have become sponsors.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.15. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines,

Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Draft resolution A/65/L.15 was adopted by 110 votes to 9, with 56 abstentions (resolution 65/14).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Kyrgyzstan advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President (*spoke in French*): We turn now to draft resolution A/65/L.16, entitled “Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat”. I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): Since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.16, Cyprus and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have become sponsors.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.16. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Tonga.

Draft resolution A/65/L.16 was adopted by 167 votes to 8, with 2 abstentions (resolution 65/15).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Kyrgyzstan advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now turn to draft resolution A/65/L.17, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): Since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.17, Maldives and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have become sponsors.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.17. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi,

Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Tonga.

Draft resolution A/65/L.17 was adopted by 165 votes to 7, with 4 abstentions (resolution 65/16).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Kyrgyzstan advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President (*spoke in French*): Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote after the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Weissbrod (Israel): As it does every year, Israel voted against the draft resolutions under agenda item 37, on the question of Palestine. Our position has not changed precisely because the one-sided language and one-sided narrative of those resolutions remains the same. Indeed, they are completely divorced from reality. Let me give three examples.

The first concerns resolution 65/16, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". How can we adopt a resolution about a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine that calls on only one side to make compromises? How can we adopt a resolution about a peaceful settlement that neglects to mention the fundamental security threats that stand in the way of that peaceful settlement, such as the fact that 1 million Israeli civilians live in daily fear of rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip, the constant arms smuggling to the Gaza Strip and so on.

The resolution before us says nothing about Hamas violence towards Israeli citizens or against its people or against United Nations personnel and facilities.

How can we talk about a peaceful settlement in a resolution that does not mention that Corporal Gilad Shalit has been held captive by Hamas for the last four and a half years, his whereabouts unknown and his rights denied? Why is there no reference to the positive developments that have taken place over the past year?

This resolution, for example, says nothing about the measures enacted by Israel to promote economic activity for the Palestinians. Despite legitimate security concerns and continued terrorism, Israel has removed hundreds of roadblocks and checkpoints in the West Bank. According to the International Monetary Fund, that helped to spur economic growth of 9 per cent in the area during the first half of 2010. The resolution ignores the fact that as of June 2010, Israel allows entry of all goods into Gaza, except for dual-use items that can be used for military purposes.

Those are only a few examples of the many egregious flaws in that resolution.

I turn now to resolutions 65/13 through 65/15, which refer to the many United Nations bodies dedicated to the Palestinian issue. The disproportionate number of entities focused on that issue reflects a clear misallocation of United Nations resources, given the many important challenges facing the Organization.

Israel believes that Member States should focus on supporting entities that provide real support for the Palestinian people, instead of continuously using United Nations bodies to perpetuate and politicize its agenda.

For all those reasons and others, Israel voted against these resolutions.

Mr. Erdman (United States of America): With respect to the situation in the Middle East, the United States is working vigorously towards a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, resulting in two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. In that context, we are disheartened to be presented with unbalanced resolutions that place demands on Israel but fail to acknowledge the obligations and difficult steps required of both sides.

The resolutions under today's agenda items, in combination with 13 other draft resolutions that will come before the General Assembly once again this year, clearly illustrate a pattern of institutional bias directed at one Member State of the United Nations. That pattern is unlike that of the General Assembly in its handling of any other issue. These resolutions are biased, wasteful and redundant, and do nothing to advance the peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict that we all seek.

Let me again highlight three annual resolutions that renew the mandate of United Nations bodies established more than a generation ago and that perpetuate this institutional bias.

The resources expended by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories should be directed towards more pressing issues, including direct assistance to Palestinians. We reiterate our call for all Member States to review seriously how, if at all, the continued existence of those bodies actually contributes to a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The draft resolutions related to the Arab-Israeli conflict that the Assembly will be consider in the coming weeks presuppose the outcome of permanent status negotiations, making it that much more difficult for the parties to resolve them. Those issues properly belong in bilateral negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

The United States is committed to working with the parties to achieve a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, including a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We believe that through good-faith negotiations, the parties can mutually agree on an outcome that ends the conflict and reconciles the

Palestinians' goal of an independent and viable State based on the 1967 lines, with agreed territorial swaps, and the Israeli goal of a Jewish State with secure and recognized borders that reflect subsequent developments and meet Israeli security requirements.

Those who want a Palestinian State should do all they can to support the parties' efforts to bring about a just and lasting peace and should do nothing to hinder them. Again, the United States sees no contradiction whatsoever between support for the Palestinian people and support for Israel.

The United States recently announced an additional \$150 million in direct assistance to the Palestinian Authority, bringing our total direct budget support for the year to \$225 million. In addition, the United States remains the largest single donor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, having contributed \$237.8 million to date in 2010.

It is impossible to see how support for the resolutions before us today contributes to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. We cannot support these resolutions, but we will remain focused on direct negotiations — the only means by which the parties will be able to conclude an agreement to achieve Palestinian aspirations for sovereignty while ensuring the long-term security of Israel.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 37.

Agenda item 36 (*continued*)

The situation in the Middle East

Draft resolutions (A/65/L.18 and A/65/L.19)

The President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on this item earlier in today's plenary meeting.

The General Assembly will now take decisions on draft resolutions A/65/L.18 and A/65/L.19.

The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.18. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Australia, Cameroon, Panama, Tonga.

Draft resolution A/65/L.18 was adopted by 166 votes to 6, with 4 abstentions (resolution 65/17).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Kyrgyzstan advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President (*spoke in French*): We will now consider draft resolution A/65/L.19, entitled "The Syrian Golan". I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): Since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.19, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Maldives have become sponsors.

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.19. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of

Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Draft resolution A/65/L.19 was adopted by 118 votes to 7, with 52 abstentions (resolution 65/18).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Kyrgyzstan advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President (*spoke in French*): Three Member States have requested the floor to speak in explanation of vote after the voting. Before giving the floor to those speakers, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Dunlop (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegations of Argentina and Brazil on the situation in the Middle East. I wish in particular to explain the votes of the delegations of Argentina and Brazil on resolution 65/18, on the Syrian Golan, which the General Assembly has just adopted.

Argentina and Brazil voted in favour of that resolution because we believe that its essential aspect is linked to the illicit nature of the acquisition of territory by force. Article 4, paragraph 2, of the United Nations Charter prohibits the threat or use of force

against the territorial integrity of a State. That is a standard of international law.

At the same time, I wish to clarify the position of our delegations with regard to paragraph 6 of the resolution. Our vote does not prejudice the contents of that paragraph, in particular the reference to "the line of 4 June 1967".

Argentina and Brazil believe that it is important to make progress in the search for a solution in the Syrian-Israeli track in the Middle East conflict in a manner that will put an end to the occupation of the Golan Heights. That is why on this occasion, once again, on behalf of the Governments of Argentina and Brazil, I wish to urge the authorities of Israel and Syria to resume negotiations in order to find a definitive solution to the Syrian Golan situation, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation expresses its deep appreciation and gratitude to the General Assembly, which since 1981 has continuously voted in the majority for peace, justice and law and which has now adopted resolution 65/18, entitled "The Syrian Golan", as well as the other resolutions relating to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East.

The continuing response of the international community in support of these resolutions shows the adherence of Member States to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and their rejection of foreign occupation, backing thereby our legitimate right to recover our territory occupied by Israel for more than 40 years.

Voting for these resolutions by the overwhelming majority of the Member States sends a clear international message to Israel to the effect that occupation, assassination, expansionist and aggressive policies, the construction of settlements, the imposition of faits accomplis and annexation of the territories of others by force are all rejected practices that violate the Charter as well as the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

For those reasons, those practices have been condemned by the international community. The world says with one voice that comprehensive and just peace can be achieved by going back to the terms of reference, including the resolutions that have just been

voted upon. That presupposes the need for an Israeli partner in order to achieve peace, which is not the case right now. It also means the return of all occupied Arab territories, including the Golan and Jerusalem, to the lines of 4 June 1967, and the establishment of an independent Palestine with Al-Quds as its capital, because the continuation of occupation runs counter to peace and requires exhausting all means to terminate that occupation.

Israel's provocative actions of late, particularly with regard to conducting a so-called plebiscite on the destiny of the Golan and Jerusalem, are completely rejected and internationally deplored. Moreover, they are illegal. Nor do they change the fact that the Golan is an occupied Syrian territory and is thus non-negotiable. The recovery of the Golan in full to the 4 June 1967 line is the only basis for establishing peace.

Once again, I reiterate my country's thanks to all the States that sponsored the draft resolution entitled "The Syrian Golan". I wish also to express our gratitude to those who voted in favour of it.

By the same token, I would like to reiterate my country's call for achieving just and comprehensive peace on the basis of resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981), as well as the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative. I also wish to assert Syria's insistence, more than ever, on liberating the Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, purging it of settlements and terminating Israeli occupation by all means guaranteed under international law, under the aegis of which we are meeting here.

Once again, we would like to emphasize that Syria's calls for peace do not mean concessions to be made by Israel and pronounced by it as painful. Rather, these are usurped rights and lands that must be returned in full to their original owners. This is the meaning of a genuine, just and comprehensive peace around which there is international unanimity.

Mr. Salsabili (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to put on record here in the Assembly that my delegation, in the spirit of solidarity with the Palestinian people and cause, and with other peoples under occupation, voted in favour of all the resolutions just adopted — resolutions 65/13, 65/14, 65/15 and 65/16 — under agenda item 37, "The question of

Palestine", and also resolutions 65/17 and 65/18, under agenda item 36, "The situation in the Middle East".

Nevertheless, I would like to express my delegation's reservations on those parts of the resolutions that might be construed as recognition of the Israeli regime.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I would like to begin by expressing to you, Mr. President, the deepest appreciation for the patience and principled commitment to justice in our region that you have demonstrated yesterday, during the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and today, by being with us in both the morning and afternoon meetings of the Assembly. The delegation of Palestine would like to put on record our deepest appreciation for such a principled position.

We would also like to express our gratitude and thanks to all countries that sponsored the resolutions related to the question of Palestine and to the situation in the Middle East, and to all those who voted in favour.

We believe that the results of the voting serve as a clear demonstration of where the international community stands on the issue of justice as it relates to the question of Palestine. We are very grateful for that support. It gives our people additional strength to continue their struggle to end occupation and, hopefully, to actualize the dream of all of us. President Barack Obama so accurately articulated that dream in September (see A/65/PV.11) when he said that maybe next year, around this time, a new State will be joining the United Nations.

Some people think these resolutions, when they are adopted by such an overwhelming majority, are one-sided. The entire international community and huge blocs of nations — the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Arab Group, the European Union, the African Group, the Caribbean Community — in short, everywhere one looks, there is a huge number of countries that voted in favour. Are all of those people pushing an agenda with a one-sided viewpoint? I do not believe so. I think that assertion is ridiculous, and I do not believe that anyone can take it seriously.

With regard to the issue of asking one side to make concessions, I think we, the Palestinian people, made historic concessions in 1974, when we accepted the notion of the two-State solution. We legislated that in our proclamation of independence in 1988.

I think that when the Arab nations adopted the Arab Peace Initiative — which calls for the total withdrawal of Israel from all the areas it occupied in 1967 and for the independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in exchange for the normalization of relations with the State of Israel — we made painful concessions, while the other side is not even accepting small concessions as are reflected in a resolution that is so balanced, such as the one on peaceful settlement.

The last comment I want to make is: what is the value of these resolutions? These resolutions uphold international law, and that is the biggest help that can

be provided to a serious negotiation process leading to peace between us and the Israelis. That is the value of these resolutions, and if some think we are not in the business of upholding international law in the United Nations, I would like them to explain to me and to all of us what kind of business, then, we are engaged in. I think that upholding international law is a huge contribution to any peace process and to the success of that process.

We thank you again, Mr. President, and would like to say that it has been a very inspiring two days for us, the Palestinian people. I am sure that this will help us to accomplish our objectives as soon as possible.

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 36.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.