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Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

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**Report of the Committee on the Exercise of
the Inalienable Rights of the
Palestinian People**



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Note

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Letter of transmittal

[1 September 2020]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly and circulation to all the competent bodies of the United Nations for necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 10 of Assembly resolution [74/10](#) of 3 December 2019.

The report covers the period from 4 September 2019 to 1 September 2020.

(Signed) Cheikh **Niang**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The present report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [74/10](#), adopted on 3 December 2019. It covers the implementation by the Committee of its programme of work ([A/AC.183/2020/1](#)), formulated to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination. Its objectives include maintaining international awareness, mobilizing efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace, enhancing international solidarity with the plight of the Palestinian people until those objectives are achieved and supporting the Government of the State of Palestine in its capacity-building efforts towards a viable and sustainable future independent State of Palestine.
2. Chapter II consists of an overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine during the reporting period, from 4 September 2019 to 1 September 2020.
3. Chapters III and IV contain an outline of the mandate of the Committee as set out by the General Assembly and information on the membership of the Committee and the organization of its work.
4. Chapter V covers the action taken by the Committee, including its participation in meetings of the Security Council and its continuing dialogue with intergovernmental organizations and civil society. It also covers international conferences, visits of delegations and capacity-building workshops organized by the Committee, as well as other mandated activities carried out and events held by the Division for Palestinian Rights on behalf of the Committee.
5. Chapter VI provides an overview of the special information programme on the question of Palestine implemented by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution [74/13](#).
6. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee to the General Assembly are set out in chapter VII of the report.

Chapter II

Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine

7. During the reporting period, the political, security, human rights, humanitarian and socioeconomic situation continued to deteriorate across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, owing to the ongoing entrenchment of the 53-year Israeli occupation and its illegal settlement activity, compounded by the ongoing illegal Gaza blockade and the threat of further de jure annexation of Palestinian lands. Moreover, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has inflicted an additional negative shock on the fragile socioeconomic fabric of the State of Palestine and its vulnerable population, especially in the Gaza Strip.

8. As documented in regular United Nations reports to the Security Council,¹ Israel, the occupying Power, took no steps to abide by Council resolution 2334 (2016), including to immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Instead, the construction and expansion of settlements, the construction of the separation barrier and bypass roads, the confiscation of land, the demolition of homes, the seizure of Palestinian-owned structures, the destruction of agricultural, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, evictions and threats of the forcible transfer of Palestinian families, human rights abuses and settler violence, including the intimidation, injuring and killing of Palestinians, continued to negatively affect the lives and livelihoods of the Palestinian population, including women and girls.

9. Arbitrary arrests, discrimination, administrative detention, including of children (see A/74/845-S/2020/525), restrictions on freedom of movement, violations of the right to worship, restrictions on access to education and health care and killings by Israeli security forces continued in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem.²

10. The United Nations has frequently stated that the 53-year-old Israeli occupation prevents the Palestinian people from enjoying their human rights in freedom and peace. The actions described above constitute violations of international law and the human rights of the Palestinian people, are contrary to the legal obligation of Israel to protect the life and health of Palestinians under occupation and further jeopardize the possibility of realizing the two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 lines and a just peace.³ Furthermore, the impunity with which Israeli forces operate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory have been deemed a serious threat to a rules-based international order (see A/74/507).

11. The Secretary-General has reported limited compliance with paragraph 5 of resolution 2334 (2016), in which Member States were called upon to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between Israel and the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem. The database of business enterprises operating in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, was published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on 28 February 2020 (A/HRC/43/71).

¹ A list of briefings to the Security Council on the question of Palestine is available at www.un.org/unispal/document-source/security-council.

² United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Longstanding access restrictions continue to undermine the living conditions of West Bank Palestinians”, Humanitarian Bulletin: Occupied Palestinian Territory, March–May 2020.

³ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and others, *Humanitarian Response Plan: OPT* (2020).

12. The illegal Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip entered its thirteenth year, inflicting ongoing human rights violations and humanitarian and socioeconomic distress on the Palestinian civilian population, including Palestine refugees who constitute most of that population. The situation of Palestinian residents in Gaza has been described as “collective punishment” (see [A/74/507](#)). On 20 November 2019, the Committee was briefed by the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, who indicated that the overflow of injuries caused by Israeli security forces firing on Palestinian civilian protesters during the Great March of Return, coupled with severe underfunding and the ongoing fuel and electricity shortages in Gaza, severely undermined the delivery of essential health, water and sanitation services. In addition, the chronic shortage of medicines and hospital beds, combined with population density, could have an irreparable impact if the COVID-19 pandemic spreads throughout the Strip.

13. The threat of conflict has persisted, as tensions and the cycle of violence between the two sides has remained inflamed. Israeli forces continued to carry out daily military raids and to perpetrate acts of violence against the Palestinian civilian population under occupation. In mid-November 2019, rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel, followed by Israel Defense Forces military strikes, two days after Israel and Palestinian Islamic Jihad had agreed to an Egyptian-mediated ceasefire. Additional exchanges of fire occurred in March, late June and early July 2020; in August, following the launch of incendiary balloons from Gaza, Israel retaliated with airstrikes, the prevention of fuel imports to the Strip and the reduction of the Gaza fishing zone from 15 to 8 nautical miles, causing serious distress among civilians. In April 2020, following the call issued on 23 March by the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire,⁴ the five United Nations Special Envoys for the Middle East, including the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, appealed for a ceasefire in the region and for an increase in local, regional and global cooperation to stop the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus.⁵

14. The implementation of the Egyptian-brokered intra-Palestinian reconciliation agreement of October 2017 in view of reuniting Gaza and the West Bank under a single, democratic and legitimate national Government made limited progress, despite ongoing efforts to revive unity talks. In June 2020, Fatah and Hamas issued an unprecedented joint press statement against Israeli threats and plans to annex parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

15. Measures taken by Israel to consolidate its unlawful annexation of Jerusalem and its surroundings threatened the legal status of the city, as well as its demographic composition and its historically multicultural and multireligious character. A new bypass connecting Jewish settlements to the north and south of Jerusalem – the so-called “American Road” – risks cutting off the eastern part of the occupied city from the rest of the West Bank. Incitement and provocation by Israeli officials and extremist settlers against the Haram Al-Sharif and the Aqsa Mosque also continued, violating the historic and legal status quo and aggravating religious tensions.

16. The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has underscored the vital role played by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In a context characterized by

⁴ United Nations, “Secretary-General calls for global ceasefire, citing war-ravaged health systems, populations most vulnerable to novel coronavirus”, 23 March 2020.

⁵ Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, “Joint appeal by the United Nations Secretary-General’s envoys to the Middle East”, 11 April 2020.

worsening living conditions, widespread poverty and underdevelopment, the Agency provides vital educational, health, relief and social services and emergency assistance, including food aid, to more than 5.6 million Palestine refugees. On 31 August 2018, the Government of the United States of America announced that it would stop funding UNRWA, depriving the Agency of a long-standing source of donor support. At an extraordinary ministerial-level meeting hosted by the Governments of Jordan and Sweden on 23 June 2020, 75 Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) pledged \$130 million in financial aid to sustain UNRWA operations, a contribution that was still far short of the funding gap. The Secretary-General has repeatedly echoed calls for the international community to guarantee predictable financing to sustain the work of the Agency at a time of regional instability, volatility and great vulnerability for Palestine refugees in its five fields of operation in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

17. The “Peace to Prosperity” plan, unveiled by the United States Administration on 28 January 2020, was rejected by the Government of the State of Palestine, the African Union Commission,⁶ the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)⁷ and the League of Arab States (LAS), along with other individual Governments, who cited the failure of the plan to guarantee the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to achieve international consensus on a just solution in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Following the release of the plan, the Government of Israel announced its intention to annex 30 per cent of the Occupied Palestinian Territory by 1 July, including most of the Jordan Valley and more than 230 illegal Israeli settlements. Although settlement activity and de facto annexation measures have continued, the 1 July date passed with no formal action taken by the Israeli Government.

18. At the Security Council debate held on 24 June 2020 (see [S/2020/596](#)), the Secretary-General called the predicament in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, a “watershed moment” and urged Israel to abandon its annexation plans. Most Council members warned that annexation would constitute a grave breach of international law. At its 43rd session, the Human Rights Council condemned Israeli annexation plans and called on the High Commissioner to compile a report on the impact of annexation, to be presented in March 2021. On 16 June, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967 and 47 other independent experts of the United Nations human rights system issued a statement⁸ expressing that the annexation of occupied territory was a serious violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and contrary to the fundamental rule affirmed many times by the Security Council and General Assembly that the acquisition of territory by war or force is inadmissible.

19. On 19 May 2020, the Palestinian leadership declared that it did not consider itself bound by “agreements and understandings” with the Governments of the United States and Israel, or by any of the obligations based on those understandings and agreements, including those related to security. The President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, reiterated his call for negotiations under an international framework, first made at the Security Council debate held on 11 February (see

⁶ Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, statement at the thirty-third ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Addis Ababa, 9 February 2020.

⁷ Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), “Against the background of the US administration’s announcement of its ‘Peace Plan’: OIC holds on to UN resolutions and the Arab peace plan”, 29 January 2020.

⁸ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Israeli annexation of parts of the Palestinian West Bank would break international law – United Nations experts call on the international community to ensure accountability”, 16 June 2020.

S/PV.8717), including an expanded Quartet, and pledged to return to negotiations without preconditions. Several diplomatic initiatives, including by the Secretary-General, have been or are being pursued to create the conditions for such a meeting.

20. International and regional opposition to annexation has been widespread,⁹ from leaders in Europe, including the High Representative¹⁰ of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, leaders across the Arab world, OIC (see A/74/926-S/2020/584), LAS (see A/74/835-S/2020/356), the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see S/2020/341) and leaders in Latin America. Members and representatives of Israeli and Palestinian civil society, humanitarian organizations and think tanks, as well as legal scholars and academics, also expressed their opposition to annexation, as did hundreds of individuals from the professional sphere and the world of sports, arts and culture, trade union and political representatives and human rights activists, as well as faith-based leaders, members of the Elders group and Palestinian and international women leaders. On 25 June 2020, several members of the United States Congress and over 20 advocacy organizations sent a letter¹¹ to the Government of Israel, calling on it to shelve annexation plans and negotiate with the Palestinians. Multiple opinion polls revealed division among Israelis over the issue as well.

21. On 20 December 2019, the International Criminal Court announced that the statutory criteria under the Rome Statute of the Court had been met for the opening of a war crimes probe regarding the situation of Palestine and alleged crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Prosecutor requested from Pre-Trial Chamber I a jurisdictional ruling on the scope of the territorial jurisdiction of the Court under article 12 (2) (a) of the Rome Statute in the State of Palestine.¹² The Pre-Trial Chamber will rule on the matter in due course.¹³

22. The reporting period has seen the unprecedented spread of COVID-19. On 5 March 2020, the Prime Minister of the State of Palestine, Mohammad Shtayeh, declared a state of emergency after the first confirmed cases. Stringent measures and aggressive testing by the Government of the State of Palestine, combined with coordination with Israeli authorities, initially contained the spread of COVID-19 in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. As reported by the World Health Organization (WHO), by 27 August, the total number of cases amounted to 26,762 infected persons and 152 deaths. The socioeconomic repercussions of the pandemic are dire, including economic contraction and gender-based violence, which reportedly increased by 47 per cent, and violence against children, a trend regrettably also seen in many parts of the world. The public health implications of the pandemic and the negative shock to the Israeli and Palestinian economies will have profound implications for public welfare, employment, social cohesion, financial and institutional stability in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On 21 July, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process warned the Security Council that the Palestinian Authority was on the verge of “total collapse” owing to the impact of COVID-19 and Israel’s pending

⁹ United Nations, Division for Palestinian Rights, “Bulletin on action by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine”, vol. XLIII, No. 6 (June 2020).

¹⁰ United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, “Middle East peace process discussed at European Union conference of Foreign Ministers (press conference by High Representative Borrell, excerpts)”, 16 June 2020.

¹¹ Members of Congress, United States of America, letter to Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Gantz, Alternate Prime Minister, Defense Minister, and Gabriel Ashkenazi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 25 June 2020.

¹² Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor, International Criminal Court, statement on the conclusion of the preliminary examination of the situation in Palestine, and seeking a ruling on the scope of the Court’s territorial jurisdiction, 20 December 2019.

¹³ International Criminal Court, “Preliminary examination: State of Palestine”, 2020.

annexation plans (see [S/2020/736](#)), although that assessment was rejected by the Government of the State of Palestine. On 3 April, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians called for strong international donor support, and, on 2 June, 25 donor countries of the Liaison Committee committed themselves to creating conditions for a viable two-State solution.

23. The international community, including the African Union, the European Union, OIC, LAS and the Non-Aligned Movement, continued to reaffirm its support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and their quest for statehood, sovereignty and independence. The 140 countries that have formally recognized the State of Palestine and the compendium of United Nations resolutions adopted to date exemplify the international consensus on the question. In 2019, the State of Palestine served as Chair of the Group of 77 and China, the largest grouping in the General Assembly, demonstrating its ability and competence to engage as a rightful member of the international community and upholding its rights and obligations in that regard.

24. On 13 August 2020, the United States announced that it had brokered an agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates to work towards the full normalization of relations between the latter two countries.¹⁴ Under the deal, Israel would “suspend declaring sovereignty” over areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The three States would continue their efforts “to achieve a just, comprehensive and enduring resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict”.

25. The State of Palestine subsequently rejected and denounced that agreement.¹⁵ Some regional partners expressed concern about the unilateral action taken by the United Arab Emirates. On 19 August 2020, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia confirmed that his country remained committed to peace with Israel on the basis of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative (see [A/56/1026–S/2002/932](#)). The Secretary-General expressed the hope that the agreement could create an opportunity for Israeli and Palestinian leaders to re-engage in meaningful negotiations that would realize a two-State solution in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.¹⁶ Several European countries and other Arab countries welcomed the decision by Israel to suspend its planned annexation. Other Member States from Africa, Asia and Latin America expressed concern as to whether the agreement was aligned with earlier global and regional agreements and about the fact that that it did not involve the full participation of the people of Palestine.

¹⁴ White House, “Joint statement of the United States, the State of Israel and the United Arab Emirates”, 13 August 2020.

¹⁵ Palestine Liberation Organization, Department of Public Diplomacy and Policy, “Statement by the Palestinian leadership”, 13 August 2020.

¹⁶ Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the announcement of an agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, 13 August 2020.

Chapter III

Mandate of the Committee

26. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty and return to the homes and property from which they had been displaced, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. The mandate of the Committee has evolved considerably over the years into greater advocacy for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the mobilization of assistance. Additional information about the Committee is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat (www.un.org/unispal).

27. On 3 December 2019, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution 74/10) and requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the resources necessary for its programme of work (resolution 74/12) and to continue to implement the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat (resolution 74/13). The Assembly also adopted resolution 74/11, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”, in which it reaffirmed the near-consensus international position regarding the components of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution.

28. The work of the Committee is fully aligned with the decisions of the main intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with the work of the Secretary-General and the programmes, funds and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, with which it collaborates extensively.

Chapter IV

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

29. The Committee is composed of 25 Member States, representing different regional groups and supporting the international consensus for a two-State solution: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

30. The 24 observers of the Committee are Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, LAS and OIC.

31. The Bureau of the Committee is elected each year from among the permanent representatives of Committee members. At its 399th meeting, on 4 February 2020, chaired by the Secretary-General, the Committee elected, in their personal capacity, Cheikh Niang (Senegal) as Chair; Adela Raz (Afghanistan), Ana Silvia Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba), Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia), Neville Melvin Gertze (Namibia) and Jaime Castillo Hermida (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs for the year. Adela Raz (Afghanistan) was also elected as Acting Rapporteur. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participates in the work of both the Committee and the Bureau as an observer.

32. The day-to-day tasks of the Committee are undertaken by its Bureau. Members of the Bureau represented the Committee at all international conferences organized by the Committee, including by chairing and moderating conference sessions, and on all delegation visits. On the margins of the conferences and during delegation visits, they held meetings with senior officials of the respective host countries.

33. The Committee members and observers have actively advocated the rights of the Palestinian people, including in the Security Council. Currently, three Committee members, Indonesia, South Africa and Tunisia, and two observers, the Niger and Viet Nam, serve on the Security Council as elected members.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

34. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and observers wishing to participate in its work were welcome to do so. Committee activities regularly involve civil society organizations, including those from Israel.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 74/10 and 74/12

A. Introduction

35. In the implementation of its programme of work, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, the Committee is guided by its mandate to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 lines. Its work and activities are also fully aligned with Security Council and Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine; the women and peace and security agenda; the programme of the United Nations country team; international law, including humanitarian law; human rights frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights; and, more recently, the Sustainable Development Goals and their achievement by the State of Palestine. As authorized by the Assembly, the Committee has adjusted its approved programme of work in view of developments.

36. Taking a rights-focused approach, the Committee has made every effort to support the universally recognized rights of an occupied people and the rights of all States and peoples to live in peace and security. To that end, the Committee engaged the diplomatic community on the question of Palestine through formal and informal intergovernmental processes; employed the good offices of the Secretary-General; organized public awareness-raising activities that involved conferences, meetings, speakers' panels and the media, including social media; promoted partnerships with Governments, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, regional bodies and civil society organizations; and built capacities for the future State of Palestine.

37. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdowns, starting from April 2020, the Committee converted its meetings and activities to online events, using a variety of platforms, in line with General Assembly decision 74/544, in order to ensure continuity in the delivery of its mandate.

B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community

38. Through its diplomatic engagement with permanent missions in New York and around the world, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the realization of the two-State solution and a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

39. During the reporting period, the Committee held seven meetings at United Nations Headquarters (four of which were held online), including a special meeting on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see paras. 54–58 below). It also held eight Bureau meetings, including with special guests and briefers, and the annual Bureau retreat.

40. On 3 October 2019, prior to a legal seminar convened by the Committee in Galway (see para. 77 below), a Committee delegation led by the Chair of the Committee met in Dublin with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defense of Ireland, Simon Coveney, to discuss the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Mr. Coveney assured the

delegation of his country's continued engagement and support for Palestinian rights and for a just solution to the question of Palestine, which ranked high on the foreign policy agenda of Ireland.

41. On 20 November 2019, the Committee endorsed four draft resolutions for submission to the General Assembly. They concerned the mandates of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights, the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat. On 3 December, the Assembly, having before it the report of the Committee (A/74/35), adopted the four draft resolutions (resolutions 74/10, 74/11, 74/12 and 74/13).

42. At its meeting on 4 February 2020, the Committee elected its Bureau members for 2020 (see para. 31 above). At the same meeting, the Committee officially adopted its programme of work for 2020 (A/AC.183/2020/1).

43. On 24 February, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights, organized its annual briefing session, which was open to all permanent missions to the United Nations, to familiarize delegates with the Committee's mandate and programme of work. A total of 35 participants attended the informative and interactive session, including members of the Security Council. The Department of Global Communications also gave a presentation on the special information programme on the question of Palestine.

44. On the margins of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held on 28 February in Kuala Lumpur, on the theme "South-East Asian support for the Rights of the Palestinian People" (see para. 59 below), the Committee delegation met, inter alia, with the then-Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir bin Mohamad, who reiterated his country's commitment to supporting the cause of the Palestinian people and to finding a just solution to the question of Palestine in line with the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders.

45. On 2 and 3 March, a Committee delegation visited New Delhi and met with representatives of the Government, political parties and think tanks. The delegation discussed the implications of the plan proposed by the United States and the crucial role of India, as a member of the Committee having good relations with both Israel and the State of Palestine and a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the 2021–2022 term, in contributing to a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

46. On 5 May, the Committee issued a statement¹⁷ in which it warned that the planned annexation of parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory by Israel threatened the two-State solution and called on the international community, in particular the Security Council, to shoulder its responsibilities and take urgent action to counteract the threat of annexation.

47. At its 400th meeting, held online on 18 May, the Committee heard a briefing by the Prime Minister of the State of Palestine, who elaborated on the steps that his Government and the international community should take in order to support the two-State solution. The Prime Minister called upon the international community to use its political and economic weight to salvage the two-State solution and prevent Israeli annexation. The briefing also included an update of the impact of COVID-19 in Palestine.

¹⁷ United Nations, "Israel's planned annexation of occupied territory threatens two-state solution, Palestinian rights committee warns, urges global community to counter threat", press release, 5 May 2020.

48. At the 401st meeting, held online on 14 July, Committee members called for sustained international pressure to stop the planned annexation by Israel of parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as it represented a threat to the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and, if carried out, would grossly violate international law and United Nations resolutions, undermine the credibility of the United Nations, increase the suffering of the Palestinian people, who were already hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, and undermine the prospects for the achievement of a just and lasting solution.

49. On 16 July, the Bureau held its annual meeting with the Secretary-General, who outlined his vision on the question of Palestine and efforts to restart dialogue within an international framework. The Chair conveyed the Committee's appreciation for the principled position expressed by the Secretary-General at the Security Council meeting on 24 June and called for sustained international pressure to stop the annexation by Israel of parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The need for accountability was stressed.

50. On 22 July, the Bureau held its sixth annual retreat to discuss activities planned for the remainder of 2020 and for 2021. The Bureau agreed to support United Nations and other efforts to overcome the current impasse; to step up outreach to key partners and to continue to adapt the Committee's working methods in the context of COVID-19. The Bureau also reviewed the proposed programme budget for 2021. The decisions adopted at the retreat were shared with the Committee.

51. Statements on behalf of the Committee were delivered before or provided to the Security Council in the context of its quarterly debates on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on 28 October 2019 and 21 January, 23 April and 21 July 2020 (see [S/PV.8648](#), [S/PV.8706](#), [S/2020/341](#) and [S/2020/736](#)). In those statements, the Committee highlighted the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, called for a halt to the illegal policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power and drew attention to its key activities and recommendations. It also appealed to the Security Council to take appropriate action that would lead to a just, comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the conflict in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

C. Raising awareness of the question of Palestine

52. The Committee has raised awareness about the political, human rights and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the situation of Palestinian women, by facilitating up-to-date briefings by experts and exchanges of ideas on specific issues at Committee meetings at Headquarters, during side events, international conferences and visits of Committee delegations, as well as through the dissemination of publications, information and the Committee's website. Details of each of the activities can be found on the website.

53. The Committee maintained an expanded social media presence to disseminate information on the question of Palestine. During the reporting period, the Committee Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter accounts recorded steady growth in the number of visitors. All Committee events, including those held online, are regularly broadcast via United Nations Web TV and across its social media pages, garnering thousands of viewers per event, resulting in an aggregate total of 57,484 views since March 2020 (see para. 45). These efforts resulted in increased engagement with the public, extended outreach to new audiences and higher numbers of followers across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. In addition to English, the Committee is also increasingly posting in Arabic on its website and social media channels.

54. As the major awareness-raising event organized by the Committee, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, commemorated on 27 November, saw an impressive display of support and solidarity by Member States, civil society and the public.

55. At the special meeting of the Committee on that date, statements were delivered by the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General. Other speakers included the Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, high-level representatives of the African Union, LAS, OIC and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations. Messages of solidarity were received from 19 Heads of State, 6 Heads of Government, 8 Ministers for Foreign Affairs and others and were published on the Committee's website.

56. All speakers expressed their unwavering support for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and called upon the international community to work towards that objective. Many stressed the urgency of an expeditious solution and the responsibility of world leaders to make the Palestinian question a priority, underscoring the centrality of a just solution to regional and global peace and stability.

57. As is customary, similar events were coordinated in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. The messages of the Chair and the Secretary-General were delivered at those events, and the United Nations was represented at the highest levels. The commemorations were attended by representatives of members and observers of the Committee and other Member States, who expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for the two-State solution. A message from the Secretary-General was issued in all six official languages.

58. The annual exhibition organized by the Committee on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, was entitled "Palestine: the most universal national cause". It was displayed from 26 November 2019 to 6 January 2020 in the Visitors Lobby at Headquarters. The display represented advocates and activists from a wide range of disciplines, including political and religious leaders, diplomats, artists and athletes who, through their words and action, expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian People.

59. The International Conference on the Question of Palestine on the theme "South-East Asian support for the rights of the Palestinian People" was held in Kuala Lumpur on 28 and 29 February in cooperation with the Government of Malaysia and the Perdana Global Peace Foundation. The event brought together Palestinian and international experts, as well as civil society actors in South-East Asia, in support of the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad, delivered the keynote address. Speakers highlighted activism against the Israeli occupation and urged the United Nations and its Member States to fulfil their obligations under the Charter and international law towards the Palestinian people, including through sanctioning Israel.

60. On 14 April, the Bureau of the Committee held a public online event with the Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza, Matthias Schmale, on the theme "The COVID-19 pandemic in Gaza and ways to mitigate its impact on Palestine refugees". The event addressed developments in the occupied Gaza Strip, the latter's preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic, the assistance to Palestine refugees in the Strip provided through UNRWA and the need for continued international resolve to support the Agency, including with emergency funding.

61. On 21 April, the Committee held an online conversation with representatives of Palestinian civil society on the theme “The COVID-19 pandemic under occupation – national resilience and international support”. The event highlighted how the Palestinian population in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza was coping with the COVID-19 pandemic under the ongoing occupation and political uncertainty in Israel and threats of annexation.

62. The United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine was held online on 4 June, on the theme “The Question of Palestine: threats of annexation and the prospects for peace”. Prominent speakers – a member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and former member of the Palestinian negotiation team, Hanan Ashrawi; a former Israeli Minister and participant in the 1993 Oslo Accord negotiations, Yossi Beilin; and the founder and president of the Arab American Institute, James Zogby – raised awareness among Member States and civil society of the imminent threat posed by the illegal plans of Israel to annex areas in the occupied West Bank and the dangerous repercussions thereof, if implemented. They called for international efforts to avert such illegal actions and to mobilize efforts to achieve a just solution.

63. On 18 June, the Chair issued a video message in support of a solidarity campaign marking “53 years of occupation” initiated by the Negotiations Affairs Department of PLO.

64. The International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, jointly organized with OIC, was held online in two separate panel discussions, on 28 July, on the theme “Annexation in practice – Palestinian lives in Jerusalem” and on 27 August, on the theme “Annexation in practice – Palestinian youth in Jerusalem”. The Conference raised the awareness of Member States and civil society on the situation of the Palestinian population in the occupied city after over 50 years of Israeli annexation policies and measures. The Conference also demonstrated how actions in Jerusalem epitomize gradual annexation by Israel of Palestinian land.

65. The United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, now in its twenty-sixth year of operation, remains a valuable resource on the question of Palestine for diplomats and researchers around the world, averaging 35,000 visitors per month. It consists of more than 37,000 documents and is considered to be the largest and most comprehensive online repository on the subject. The collection ranges from the latest United Nations documents to rare records dating back decades. Since its launch, the new site has received more than double the number of page views per month. Efforts to make all of the information on the website available in all six official languages of the United Nations are under way, with a special emphasis on Arabic.

66. Further to its monitoring mandate, the Committee also produced monthly bulletins compiling all official documents of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations relating to the question of Palestine. The Committee also produced a compilation of United Nations resolutions and decisions and a quarterly newsletter on the activities of the Committee and has introduced an annual compilation of United Nations reports on the question of Palestine.

67. Through its weekly publication entitled “NGO Action News”, the Committee continued to raise awareness of the work of civil society and United Nations actors in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and around the globe towards the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

68. All publications of the Committee are disseminated through a mailing list of over 5,000 subscribers, including research libraries and universities, as well as

prominent personalities and opinion leaders active on the question of Palestine, and are published on the Committee's website under the Publications section.

D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities

69. The Committee continued its cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and United Nations system entities and expressed its appreciation for the active participation of representatives of those bodies at various events held under its auspices. OIC continued to jointly organize the Committee's annual International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem. The African Union, LAS and OIC regularly attended the meetings of the Committee as observers and participated in its work.

70. The Committee continued to attach great importance to enhancing relations with national and regional parliaments and their interparliamentary organizations. In March, as part of its visit to India, the Committee delegation held a meeting with a representative of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party to appeal for support to promote a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

71. During its activities, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights, which conducted regular visits to Palestine, continued its long-standing cooperation with the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations country teams, UNRWA, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Global Communications (including the United Nations information centres and the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe, in Brussels), the Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations System Staff College.

72. On 5 November, the Chair of the Committee met with a group of Palestinian journalists participating in the annual training programme organized by the Department of Global Communications (see para. 81 below). The Chair briefed the group about the work of the Committee and engaged the journalists in a lively informal discussion on the situation in the Middle East and the work of the United Nations.

73. The Committee continued its collaboration with civil society organizations promoting the rights of the Palestinian people. As is customary, a civil society representative was invited to speak at the special meeting of the Committee held on 27 November to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. On the margins of the commemoration, the Chair held closed consultations with civil society representatives, including from Israel and the State of Palestine.

74. Representatives of civil society organizations, including from Israel, were invited to attend all public events of the Committee. Those meetings and interactions allowed the Committee to inform civil society about its mandate and activities, at Headquarters and abroad, as well as to learn about civil society concerns and actions. In turn, the rich exchanges have informed the programme of work, statements and reports of the Committee. The Committee has also continued to provide a space in which Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations can interact, through the facilitation of their participation in Committee events, at a time when such interaction is increasingly circumscribed on the ground.

E. Capacity-building

75. As requested in General Assembly resolution [74/12](#), the Committee continued to identify training opportunities to expand the capacity of officials of the State of Palestine. The Committee continued to assess the impact of its programmes.

76. In November, on behalf of the Committee, staff of the Division for Palestinian Rights met with Palestinian and United Nations country team counterparts in Jerusalem to explore areas of cooperation. The Committee is supporting the development of a Palestinian-owned communications strategy led by experts in the field. The Committee is sponsoring diplomatic protocol training, in collaboration with the Government of Jordan, in the spirit of South-South cooperation. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 those two in-person activities were postponed.

77. On 4 and 5 October, the Committee convened a closed-door legal seminar at the Irish Centre for Human Rights of the National University of Ireland in Galway on ongoing settlement activities by Israel and the threat of annexation of occupied Palestinian territory and third-party responsibilities under Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). The seminar brought together 12 prominent practitioners in the fields of international law and human rights and yielded practical recommendations on possible ways to hold the occupying Power accountable for settlements, annexation or other international law violations, highlighting accountability as essential for enabling the achievement of a just solution.

78. From 21 to 25 October, the Government of Senegal and the Committee organized a study visit for Palestinian officials on best practices in water management and promoting South-South cooperation, held in Dakar. Through briefings and discussions with 15 Senegalese experts, the 10 Palestinian participant hydrologists and officials from the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates working on the issue of water resources gained an overview of the legal and institutional framework of the Senegal River Basin Development Organization, its main achievements and challenges.

79. In collaboration with the United Nations System Staff College, the Committee supported the participation of two diplomats, from the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates and the Palestinian International Cooperation Agency, in a training session on South-South and triangular cooperation in implementing the 2030 Agenda on 29–31 October, in Turin.

80. From 28 October to 6 December, the Committee carried out its annual six-week capacity-building training programme on multilateral diplomacy for two Palestinian diplomats in New York, coinciding with the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly. The objectives of the programme were revised, and the classroom training element of the programme was customized to the job functions of participating Palestinian officials.

81. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Committee prioritized online training. From 22 to 24 April, the Committee, in collaboration with UNITAR, supported the participation of three senior officials of the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates in the online training workshop on leadership in crisis. From 18 to 20 May, the Committee, in collaboration with UNITAR, supported the participation of three senior female Palestinian Government officials in an online workshop on women's leadership.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 74/13

82. The Department held its annual International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East on 11 and 12 September in Ankara. The Seminar was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. During the two-day event, diplomats, journalists, media experts and youth representatives of Israel, Palestine, Turkey, European countries, the United States and other parts of the world discussed, among many issues, media-related dynamics as they relate to coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict and awareness and misperceptions in that regard.

83. The Department organized its annual training programme for Palestinian journalists from 4 November to 6 December at Headquarters, and in Washington, D.C., for the week beginning 18 November. Seven Palestinian journalists from Gaza, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic participated in the 2019 programme, bringing the total number of graduates of the programme to 203.

84. During the reporting period, all of the open intergovernmental meetings held at Headquarters related to the question of Palestine were covered by United Nations Web TV, United Nations Photo and aired live and on demand for viewers around the world by United Nations Web TV.

85. The Meetings Coverage Section issued 67 press releases related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process in English and French.

86. From September 2019 to June 2020, UNifeed produced 30 stories related to the question of Palestine.

87. On 5 September, the Department signed an agreement with the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, which now carries content from United Nations News, a trusted international news source for the people in the region.

88. The Social Media Section featured issues relating to the question of Palestine on all its social media accounts (in all six official languages, as well as in Portuguese, Kiswahili and Hindi), which have a total follower count of over 30 million.

89. United Nations News teams produced more than 200 stories and content on issues affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. These included an interview with the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory on the situation of youth in the Gaza Strip, and an Arabic feature story highlighting an initiative by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in Palestine called “Creative Palestine,”¹⁸ which is a joint creative laboratory for Palestinians that connects designers and businessmen with various arts and design institutions and universities.

90. As part of the COVID-19 communications response, Arabic News provided authoritative facts on the pandemic and produced inspiring stories, in a region where mistrust of news outlets is high, including about the welcoming by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process of the strong Palestinian-Israeli cooperation to curb the spread of COVID-19, and an interview with the Head of WHO in Gaza about the Palestinians’ right to health as related to the pandemic.

¹⁸ United Nations Industrial Development Organization, “Energizing Palestinian products, creating positive impact”, 20 January 2020.

91. In the light of the COVID-19 crisis and the shift to different ways of work, the Department used available online networks, platforms and social media accounts to promote virtual events and activities organized by the Committee, including the United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine on 4 June, the online conversation with Prime Minister of the State of Palestine, Mohammad Shtayyeh, on 18 May (see para. 47 above), and two other special events, on 14 April and 21 April, related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

92. With regard to the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in 2019, the Department worked closely with the Committee and Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to provide communications support for a number of public events that were held at Headquarters on 27 November. The Department updated the International Day of Solidarity website in the six official languages and supported the revitalization of the Committee's website, including by assisting in migrating data to preserve its rich historical records.

93. The global network of United Nations information centres organized commemorative events to mark the International Day of Solidarity in various capitals, including Ankara, Cairo, Canberra, Harare, Lusaka, Moscow, Nairobi, Pretoria and Rabat. Messaging about the Day was promoted across the centres' social media accounts and websites. For example, the information centre in Beirut promoted the Secretary-General's message and posts about the Day on its social media platforms. The message was also promoted on the website of the information centre in Beirut, which recorded more than 4,000 page views in November and December. The information centre in Cairo organized a media briefing at its premises to launch the 2019 report on United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) assistance to the Palestinian People by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (TD/B/EX(68)/4), which was attended by media professionals from Egypt and the region. The information centre promoted the event on its website and social media platforms and facilitated interviews with the UNCTAD representative.

94. From September 2019 to March 2020, approximately 110,000 visitors were briefed on the question of Palestine at the updated permanent exhibit located along the route of the guided tour of Headquarters. Tours have subsequently been suspended owing to the closure of United Nations premises to the general public in line with COVID-19 safety measures.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

95. On the basis of its deliberations at Committee and Bureau meetings, briefings, visits of delegations, international conferences and events involving Member States, civil society organizations and regional organizations, the Committee has developed the recommendations set out below.

A. Immediate action by the Committee in response to annexation

96. As affirmed in its statement of 5 May,¹⁹ the Committee rejects the stated intention of the Government of Israel to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, which would constitute a most serious violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and the 1949 Geneva Conventions and would undermine the contiguity of the Palestinian territory and the physical viability of the two-State solution based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine, in accordance with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions, internationally agreed parameters, the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative.

97. The Committee supports the Secretary-General's clear position on the question of Palestine, based on international law, countless United Nations resolutions and the search for a just solution.

98. The Committee will continue to advocate the resolution of the question of Palestine on the basis of an international framework and against annexation and in support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence.

99. The Committee notes the concerns expressed by the Palestinian leadership, and the response of the international community, with regard to the agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, which suspended, but did not commit Israel to halting, plans to further extend its sovereignty over Palestinian territory and its people. The agreement neither bound Israel to negotiations with the Palestinians, guided by the internationally agreed parameters, nor included the Palestinian people. To that end, the Committee reiterates that annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory is illegal. Any initiative aimed at a just solution to the question of Palestine must, foremost, consider the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, engage the Palestinian leadership and be based on the two-State solution, according to international law, United Nations resolutions and agreements between the parties.

B. Action taken with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council

100. The Committee urges the Security Council and the General Assembly to ensure the implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace affirmed in relevant United Nations resolutions, including Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and Assembly resolution [74/11](#). The Committee requests the Secretary-General to continue to submit his reports to the Council on the implementation of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) in written format and, pursuant to paragraph 5 of the resolution, to include references to implementation of the provision by Member States. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Committee also calls upon the Council to examine practical ways and

¹⁹ United Nations, "Israel's planned annexation of occupied territory threatens two-State solution".

means to secure the full implementation of relevant Council resolutions, including the use of sanctions on States and private entities violating Council resolutions.

101. The Committee deplores the use of excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate force by Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians, including during the protests in the Gaza Strip in 2018 and 2019, and reiterates its call for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory ([A/HRC/40/74](#)). The Commission was mandated by the Human Rights Council to investigate violations committed in the proximity of the fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip during those protests.

C. Advocacy and outreach activities with the international community and civil society

102. The Committee will continue to mobilize the international community to stop Israel's annexation plan and exert efforts to achieve the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders. As the United Nations marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, the Committee reiterates that the question of Palestine, whose fate is inherently bound to the history and existence of the Organization, should prompt the Member States to act on their commitment to the ideals and shared values of democracy, accountability and prosperity for everyone. The international community must redouble its efforts to advance the long-overdue realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and regional peace in the Middle East and maintain international peace and security.

103. Any resolution of the conflict requires a comprehensive regional solution, such as that offered by the Arab Peace Initiative. The Committee calls upon regional organizations, such as the European Union, LAS and OIC, to take on a more politically active role in mediating an end to the conflict.

104. The Committee calls upon the international community to shift from a humanitarian to a human rights framework in addressing the plight of the Palestinian people. It demands an end to the 13-year Israeli air, land and sea blockade of Gaza and the lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#). It calls upon international donors to fulfil without delay all pledges to expedite the provision of humanitarian assistance, the reconstruction process and economic recovery, which are essential to alleviate the distress of Palestinians, including women and children, who face additional and gender-specific challenges that need to be addressed through targeted actions. It stresses the urgency of providing funding to UNRWA to ensure its vital humanitarian and development assistance to the Palestine refugees.

D. Action by Member States and regional organizations

105. The Committee urges Member States and the Organization to call upon Israel to respect its obligations under international law to protect civilians. Further to the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution [ES-10/20](#), the Committee emphasizes the need for the implementation of an international protection mechanism that can credibly ensure the safety and welfare of Palestinian civilians.

106. The Committee emphasizes the importance of the acknowledgement by Israel of the Nakba and its impact upon the Palestinian people as a necessary requirement for a viable and lasting peace. Palestine refugees should be treated as dispossessed nationals of a country – the State of Palestine – rather than as stateless refugees. It

strongly advocates the right to return as well as just compensation for Palestine refugees, as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution [194 \(III\)](#).

107. The Committee deems unilateral decisions by Member States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the transfer of embassies in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as null and void, as they are in violation of Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [476 \(1980\)](#) and [478 \(1980\)](#). The Committee calls upon Member States to rescind those decisions and reiterates that the historic status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem must be respected and that the international community shares the responsibility to preserve the legal, demographic and historical multicultural and multireligious character and status of the city.

108. The Committee underscores the responsibility of States and private entities not to contribute to grave Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, including with respect to settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It welcomes efforts by Governments, parliamentarians and civil society actors to sanction support, including economic, for illegal Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

109. The Committee welcomes the release of the database of all business enterprises involved in certain activities relating to Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank ([A/HRC/43/71](#)), prepared by OHCHR pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution [31/36](#) and calls upon Member States to implement the relevant obligations under international law, including as set out in paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), in which the Council called upon Member States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.

110. The Committee looks forward to the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the effects of annexation, as requested by the Human Rights Council in paragraph 16 of its resolution [43/31](#). The Committee expresses appreciation for the work of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and his reports submitted to the Human Rights Council.

111. The Committee underscores the importance of preventing the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and is encouraged by the numerous statements in support of international legality by members of the international community, including international civil society. Such a collective position, including in the Arab world, will be paramount to prevent annexation and to bring an end to the occupation in line with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

E. Support action in response to the coronavirus disease pandemic

112. The Committee expresses concern about the unprecedented spread of COVID-19 throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and commends the stringent measures adopted by the Government of the State of Palestine to contain the spread in the region. The Committee urges the international community to direct its attention to the dire socioeconomic situation, the deteriorating living conditions of Palestinians in the occupied territory and the predicament of the Palestinian Government, which is on the verge of “total collapse” owing to the twin combination of the adverse impact of COVID-19 and the ongoing Israeli occupation and pending annexation plans, and provide support and assistance.

F. Action by the Secretariat and other United Nations entities

113. The Committee notes with appreciation the contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights in support of its mandate and requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support for all aspects of its mandate and highlights the growing importance of cooperation among developing countries and regional and subregional organizations within the framework of South-South and triangular cooperation for sharing replicable experiences towards the achievement of self-determination and independence.

114. The Committee encourages the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue with efforts to disseminate information on the question of Palestine by broadening outreach and promoting multilingualism, with a special emphasis on Arabic, on its website and social media platforms. It also requests the Division to continue to implement projects aimed at further promoting the Committee's mandate.

115. The Committee requests the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications, which has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public.

116. The Committee intends to continue to work closely with other United Nations actors and entities, including the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and UNRWA, to synergize efforts in fields of common concern and uphold the permanent responsibility of the Organization towards the question of Palestine until it is justly resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner and in accordance with international law. The Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation to OIC and other partners for the contribution of extrabudgetary resources and their active participation in its conferences and events.

117. The Committee further encourages all Member States to work collectively to sufficiently and predictably fund UNRWA.

118. The Committee will continue to promote inclusivity and gender balance in all its activities, including its capacity-building programme for the civil servants of the State of Palestine, and encourages a full utilization of online capacity-building opportunities, especially in the context of COVID-related travel restrictions.

