



# General Assembly

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

### Summary record of the 260th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 19 November 2001, at 10.30 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Fall ..... (Senegal)

## Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Consideration of draft resolutions on the question of Palestine

Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied  
Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem

Other matters

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*The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

### **Consideration of the draft resolutions on the question of Palestine**

*Draft resolutions entitled “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People”, “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat” and “Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat”*

2. **The Chairman** said that, while the text of the draft resolution on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat remained substantially the same as the text of the resolution adopted at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, a number of editorial and substantive changes had been made to the other two draft resolutions to reflect recent developments on the ground and in the peace process.
3. In the draft resolution on the Committee’s programme of work, operative paragraph 7 had been modified to request that, in addition to cooperating fully with the Committee, the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine should make relevant information and documentation available to the Committee.
4. In the draft resolution on the special information programme on the question of Palestine, a new preambular paragraph had been added noting the important contribution made by the United Nations towards the promotion of the Bethlehem 2000 Project, while operative paragraph 4 of the preceding version (General Assembly resolution 55/55), referring to the commemoration of Bethlehem 2000, had been deleted. Also, operative paragraph 3 (c) had been modified to include a request for the preservation, as well as the production, of audio-visual material on the question of Palestine.
5. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the three draft resolutions as modified.
6. *The three draft resolutions were approved.*

*Draft resolution entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”*

7. **The Chairman** said that a number of editorial and substantive amendments had been made to both the preambular and the operative paragraphs of the text. The end of the fifteenth preambular paragraph had been updated to include a reference to the two most recent donor meetings. The sixteenth preambular paragraph had been shortened to omit the reference to the clashes between the Israeli armed forces and the Palestinian police and the resulting casualties. New seventeenth and nineteenth preambular paragraphs had been added; they read:

*“Expressing its deep concern also over the continued imposition of closures and restrictions by Israel on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, as well as the continued incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas and attacks against the Palestinian Authority and its institutions,*

*“Affirming the urgent need for the parties to implement the recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee (Mitchell Committee) and to resume negotiations towards a final, peaceful settlement.”*

The latter preambular paragraph reflected the introduction of a reference to the recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee in operative paragraph 4. Lastly, operative paragraph 2 had been modified to eliminate the reference to specific implementation agreements and to include the hope that the peace process would be reinvigorated, while operative paragraph 3 had been shortened to eliminate the reference to the implementation of agreements and the final settlement between the parties.

8. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolution as modified.
9. *The draft resolution was approved.*
10. **The Chairman** requested delegations that intended to sponsor the draft resolutions to inform the Secretariat as soon as possible.

### **Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem**

11. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Permanent Observer for Palestine) said that, in the northern part of the Gaza Strip the previous night, four Palestinian police officers had been injured by the Israeli occupying forces. Two of them had subsequently been arrested and executed, and their bodies mutilated, before being handed over to the Palestinian Authority. The Israeli forces had also shelled a school, partially destroying it. That kind of atrocity confirmed that the Israeli forces continued to commit war crimes and that there were no longer any rules. Unfortunately, the situation would continue until the international community took decisive action.

12. Regrettably, the Security Council had failed to pronounce itself on the most recent Israeli occupation of Palestine, despite the steps taken to elicit action from it, including the submission of a formal request and a draft resolution on the subject. That failure was having a profound political significance. Indeed, since the adoption of resolution 1322 (2000), the Security Council had taken no action with regard to the situation in Palestine, even though it continued to be active in other fields. The international community should be prepared to take significant measures to support the peace process through the Security Council.

13. The general debate in the General Assembly had reflected a strong international consensus on the need to resolve the Middle East peace process and to establish an independent Palestinian State and an equally strong consensus against international terrorism. In his statement, President Bush had affirmed his commitment to a just peace in the Middle East and had said that it was necessary to work towards the day when there were two States within secure and recognized borders. It was significant that, for the first time, a President of the United States had used the term "Palestine" at the United Nations in what was an important step towards a more balanced United States position and increased engagement in the Middle East peace process. The President appeared to have taken the decision not to meet with President Arafat in New York solely for domestic political reasons. However, the United States Secretary of State was due to make a long-promised comprehensive policy statement and there were indications that the United States was resolved to follow up his statement with action. He hoped that such action would fulfil the expectations of

the Palestinian people, despite the insistent efforts of some Israeli leaders to prevent any advances.

14. During a mission to the Middle East by a high-level European Union delegation, the Prime Minister of Israel had repeated his usual position, aimed at preventing implementation of the Mitchell Report recommendations. The Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers of the European Union, Mr. Javier Solana, had publicly criticized that stance. The situation on the ground was very complex and the Israelis and their supporters were making it more difficult each day. It was necessary to wait and see what kind of follow-up there would be to President Bush's speech and what final position the United States would adopt.

15. Meanwhile, the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in November 2001 had adopted an important declaration on Palestine, reaffirming its traditional position in favour of the rights of the Palestinian people and its support for the peace process. The declaration also mentioned that Israel should fulfil its obligation to respect the rights established in the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 1949. In that respect, the reconvening of the Conference of High Contracting Parties to that Convention in Geneva on 5 December 2001 was important.

16. The General Assembly would soon be voting on the draft resolutions concerning Palestine. At that time, the international community would have a further opportunity to express its commitment to resolving the question of Palestine, and to show solidarity with the just struggle of the Palestinian people, by sending another message to the occupying Power that it could not continue its current policies against Palestine. Peace had to be established on the basis of the two-States solution.

#### **Other matters**

17. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People would take place on 29 November and urged all members of the Committee and observers to attend and to be represented at the ambassadorial level.

*The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.*