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

Summary record of the 326th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 1 October 2010, at 10.30 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Badji (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Update on events since the previous meeting of the Committee

2. **The Chair** said that on 20 August 2010 the Quartet had issued a statement reaffirming its strong support for direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians to resolve all final status issues. The Quartet had expressed its determination to support the parties throughout the negotiations.

3. On 30 August 2010, the Cabinet of the Palestinian Authority had endorsed a document entitled "Home Stretch to Freedom", which determined priorities for the second year of the two-year programme "Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State".

4. On 31 August 2010, the Bureau of the Committee had issued a statement welcoming the decision of the Israeli and Palestinian sides to resume negotiations towards resolving all permanent status issues by 2011, leading to the establishment of a Palestinian State on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Bureau had also called for a complete ban on all settlement construction.

5. On 1 and 2 September 2010, the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, and the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, had met in Washington, D.C., under the auspices of the United States of America in order to initiate direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. They had decided to begin work on a framework permanent status agreement, and to meet every two weeks thereafter with a view to resolving all core issues within one year. The second round of negotiations had taken place on 14 and 15 September 2010.

6. On 7 September 2010, the General Assembly had decided to appoint the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as a member of the Committee. He welcomed the delegation of that country, which had a valuable role to play in furthering the Committee's work.

7. On 21 September 2010, the Quartet had expressed its strong support for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, urged the continuation

of the settlement moratorium and condemned violence against civilians.

8. On the same day, the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee had met at United Nations Headquarters and agreed on donor priorities in support of the Palestinian State-building agenda. It had urged Israel to further relax access and movement restrictions, called on donors to fulfil their commitments and endorsed a new donor conference for the years 2011-2013.

9. On the same day, the Committee of independent experts established by the Human Rights Council had reported that domestic investigations undertaken pursuant to the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (A/HRC/12/48) had in certain cases remained incomplete, and in other cases fallen short of international standards.

10. On 22 September 2010, the international fact-finding mission to investigate violations of humanitarian law resulting from the Israeli attacks on the aid flotilla had reported to the Human Rights Council that several violations had been committed, and that there was clear evidence to support prosecutions.

11. On 26 September 2010, the partial moratorium on Israeli settlements had expired. Despite the urgent pleas of the international community, including the members of the Quartet, the Government of Israel had chosen not to extend it. Construction in some settlements had resumed immediately.

12. At the opening and general debate of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, numerous speakers had expressed their support for the two-State solution and welcomed the resumption of direct negotiations, calling on all parties to refrain from any unilateral actions on the ground, including settlement construction.

13. **Mr. Valero Briceño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) thanked the Committee for welcoming his country as a member, following the recent decision of the General Assembly at its plenary meeting on 7 September. The Venezuelan Government and people would continue to support the cause of the Palestinian people, particularly in light of the occupying Power's refusal to comply with the international community's request to suspend its settlement activities. That Power's repeated human rights violations, delaying tactics and broken promises endangered peace and

international law. His country was committed to working to fully achieve the Committee's noble goals.

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and developments in the political process

14. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) said that the campaign of colonization and Judaization had continued in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Civilians had been displaced, homes demolished and settlements built. The construction of the Separation Wall had continued. Thousands of extremist settlers had recently held demonstrations in Jerusalem. An attempt was being made to ethnically cleanse East Jerusalem of its 250,000 Palestinian inhabitants.

15. The slight loosening of the blockade on the Gaza Strip was only a small step towards the required change. Food, medication and reconstruction materials should immediately be allowed into the area. The international community should not relent until the siege was lifted.

16. The proximity talks, which had been intended as a preparation for direct negotiations, had not been productive. The Palestinian Authority had submitted specific proposals via the United States Special Envoy for Peace, Mr. George Mitchell, but had received no response.

17. The President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, had nevertheless faced significant pressure from all quarters to enter into direct negotiations with Israel. In return, he had been promised an extension of the current partial moratorium on settlement expansion for 24 months or as long as necessary. The League of Arab States had expressed its support for negotiations provided that the moratorium remained in place.

18. President Abbas had agreed to direct negotiations on the grounds that the Quartet had called on Israel to abide by its obligations under the road map, freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth, and dismantle outposts. At the general debate of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the President of the United States of America, Mr. Barack Obama, had delivered an inspiring statement expressing the hope that within a year Palestine could achieve full membership in the United Nations.

19. Despite such a rare international global consensus, Israel was currently refusing to extend the moratorium and had yet to face any negative consequences. If no solution could be found, Israel's intransigence would cause negotiations to collapse. In the absence of a freeze of settlement activities, including natural growth and including in East Jerusalem, President Abbas would have to take historic and unprecedented decisions.

20. At the general debate, an Israeli cabinet minister who was completely detached from reality had delivered a cynical, hateful and racist statement to the General Assembly. The Observer Mission of Palestine had condemned the statement and called on all Member States to express their outrage.

21. **Ms. Rubiales de Chamorro** (Nicaragua) proposed that the Committee should condemn the statement delivered by the representative of Israel at the general debate.

22. **The Chair** said that the Bureau had agreed to meet at the request of the Observer for Palestine in order to discuss the question.

Consideration of the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/AC.183/2010/CRP.2)

23. **Mr. Borg** (Malta), Rapporteur, introducing the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/AC.183/2010/CRP.2), said that in accordance with established practice the Secretariat would continue to update it, as necessary, in consultation with the Rapporteur, in order to reflect any new developments which might take place before it was forwarded to the General Assembly.

24. **The Chair** noted that the report was substantive, containing information about the current situation and a number of balanced recommendations.

25. **Mr. Ali** (Malaysia) said that, although he welcomed the reflection of the Committee's activities over the past year, perhaps in the future the report could also examine how effective its work had been overall. Some qualitative and quantitative assessment of how far the Committee had come towards achievement of its mandate would be appreciated.

26. **The Chair** noted that, since the Committee was dealing with highly political issues and there were so many variables to consider, its effectiveness was hard to measure.

27. **Mr. Borg** (Malta), Rapporteur, noted that for 35 years the Committee had continued to highlight the plight of the Palestinian people and keep the issue alive within the United Nations, something of which it could be proud. The increase in the Committee's membership over the years illustrated the importance of its work. There had been an increase in the number of its activities and the Committee's exposure was being enhanced by the use of modern information technology. He supported the idea of having an assessment, but agreed with the Chair that the Committee's achievements in recent years were not easy to compare to its earlier activities and could be difficult to quantify. Indeed, its many current achievements built on the solid ground created over the years.

28. **The Chair** invited the Committee to adopt the draft report chapter by chapter.

Chapter I

29. **Mr. Söylemez** (Turkey) proposed some amendments to paragraph 6. The third sentence should end with the words "by its navy" and be followed by new text reading: "On 31 May, Israeli forces attacked, in international waters, a multinational humanitarian aid convoy sailing to Gaza. This military assault, in violation of international law, left nine innocent Turkish civilians dead and many more wounded. It triggered an immediate condemnation by the international community, including the Security Council, and led to national and international investigations. The Human Rights Council dispatched an international independent fact-finding mission and the Secretary-General established a United Nations Panel of Inquiry." The paragraph would then continue as drafted.

30. **The Chair** said that the Bureau would take note of the proposed amendment and try to reflect it in the report.

31. *Chapter I was adopted.*

Chapters II and III

32. *Chapters II and III were adopted.*

Chapter IV

33. **Mr. Söylemez** (Turkey) said that, since the investigations into the incident were still under way,

paragraph 24 should be shortened. He proposed deleting the sentence that read: "The activists had rejected Israeli warnings and an order to dock at an Israeli port as they attempted to break the blockade." The next two sentences would then be amended and merged as follows: "During the take-over of one of the vessels, 'Mavi Marmara', nine Turkish nationals" and then continue as drafted. In paragraph 25, he proposed an amendment to the second sentence, so that it would read: "On 23 July, the United Nations Human Rights Council established an independent international fact-finding mission to investigate violations of international law resulting from the attacks on the flotilla and the report of this mission (A/HRC/15/21) was adopted by the Council on 29 September."

34. **The Chair** said that the proposed amendments would be taken into consideration.

35. *Chapter IV was adopted.*

Chapters V and VI

36. *Chapters V and VI were adopted.*

Chapter VII

37. **Mr. Söylemez** (Turkey) proposed inserting a reference to the report of the Human Rights Council's fact-finding mission in paragraph 85, before the existing reference to the Secretary-General's establishment of the Panel of Inquiry.

38. **The Chair** said that the proposed amendment would be taken into account.

39. **Mr. Ali** (Malaysia) asked how much of the Committee's work and resources it intended to devote to capacity-building for the Palestinian Authority, helping disadvantaged Palestinians and assisting civil society.

40. **The Chair** said that the Committee had a limited budget but the Bureau had already discussed the possibility of making savings in some areas in order to finance such activities. One important activity which had already achieved some success was the training programme for future Palestinian diplomats. Indeed, a former trainee was currently part of the Palestinian delegation. It would be possible to quantify such activities, but budget allocation was within the purview of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. If the Committee wanted to take decisions on the allocation

of resources, that would require further analysis and resources, and it was not currently in a position to do so.

41. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) noted that, in addition to the two Palestinian trainees working in the field of diplomacy, there were two trainees in Geneva working in other fields. It was his understanding that the programme might be further expanded to comprise a total of eight trainees from different Ministries in the Palestinian Authority. That might require a reallocation of the Committee's resources away from seminars and conferences. Indeed, the content of some seminars and conferences had recently been adjusted to bring them into line with current needs, concentrating on final status issues in particular. Perhaps a pamphlet could be produced to explain how the Committee's focus had been adjusted in recent years and outline its future plans for addressing the needs of the Palestinian people.

42. He had already suggested on a number of occasions that the Secretary-General should consider the Committee as his advisory body on the question of Palestine. The Committee should continue to pursue that idea. The Committee should also seek meetings with the Quartet, since it was the only Committee representing the United Nations on the question of Palestine. Perhaps the Bureau could also meet with the Congressional committee dealing with foreign relations or the United States Special Envoy for Middle East Peace. Even though the Committee disagreed with the United States on a number of issues, discussion would still be valuable.

43. **Ms. Rubiales de Chamorro** (Nicaragua) agreed that President Abbas was poised to make some crucial decisions. Paragraph 86 of the draft report stated that the Committee would offer constructive support to the permanent status negotiations and, indeed, the Quartet should not be able to ignore the Committee's position. The role of the Committee should therefore be strengthened and the Secretary-General should convey its position.

44. *Chapter VII was adopted.*

45. **The Chair** said that he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft report as a whole.

46. *The draft report, as a whole, was adopted.*

Other matters

47. **Ms. Rubiales de Chamorro** (Nicaragua) urged all members of the Committee to participate actively in the discussions in other committees which related to the Committee's mandate. In particular, she called on all members to support the proposal made by Turkey in the context of the informal negotiations on agenda item 74 (a) of the current session on oceans and the law of the sea, with regard to the attack on the convoy constituting a violation of maritime security.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.