



# General Assembly

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

### Summary record of the 384th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 6 September 2017, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Saikal (Vice-Chair) . . . . . (Afghanistan)

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*In the absence of Mr. Seck (Senegal), Mr. Saikal (Afghanistan), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

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

### **Adoption of the agenda**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

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

2. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that on 29 and 30 August 2017 he had accompanied the Secretary-General on his first visit to the State of Palestine since assuming office. During the visit, the Secretary-General had travelled to Ramallah, where he had visited a centre that supported women and juvenile survivors of gender-based violence, as well as the tomb of Yasser Arafat and the new Yasser Arafat Museum, which documented the Palestinian struggle. He had also held a number of meetings, including a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister and meetings with young people from civil society; with a group of Palestinian intellectuals and leaders of civil society organizations; with the chief Palestinian negotiator; and with representatives of the United States Government. His final meeting in Ramallah had been with five mothers of political prisoners and individuals who had been murdered.

3. The Secretary-General had also travelled to the Gaza Strip, where he had come face to face with the devastating humanitarian situation, the poverty and the lack of economic activity facing the Palestinian people. He had met with hundreds of Palestinians, among them many United Nations employees, at a school run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as well as with elected representatives of the UNRWA schools student body. At a press conference following the visit, the Secretary-General had described his dream that one day two States would live side by side in peace and security, and that all the obstacles to that dream, including the settlements, would be removed. He had also said that Palestinian unity was an important element in the success of their cause. Regarding Gaza, his dream was that it would have become an integral part of the State of Palestine under the guidance of the Palestine Liberation Organization by the next time he visited.

4. The visit had been quite successful and it had sent a positive message to the Palestinian people and invigorated UNRWA staff. The Secretary-General had expressed his sincere hope for a meaningful political process that brought about an end to occupation, the independence of the State of Palestine, with East

Jerusalem as its capital, and a new chapter in regional relations.

5. **Mr. Awawdeh** (Observer for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation) asked whether the Observer for the State of Palestine could comment on the serious developments in Hebron, where the Government of Israel had allowed the settlers to establish their own municipal council.

6. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that it was a truly dangerous development. Hebron was the most populated city in the occupied West Bank and home to more than 200,000 Palestinians but fewer than 1,000 settlers. The municipal council that the settlers were allowed to establish was a challenge to the authority of the municipal council of Hebron and an indication of further fragmentation and segregation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in favour of the settlers. In occupied East Jerusalem, there were many municipal councils. However, in the city itself, especially in the Old City, the Israeli occupying authority refused to recognize any municipal authorities for the Palestinian people, even though there were 50,000 Palestinians and only 3,000 Jews living there. It was an illegal and dangerous step that violated international humanitarian law regulating the behaviour of occupying Powers. He would be raising the issue with the Secretary-General and the Security Council, since it constituted a further escalation of the attacks on the rights of the Palestinian people and should be resisted by all.

### **Consideration of the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/AC.183/2017/CRP.2)**

7. **Mr. Inganez** (Malta), Rapporteur, introducing the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/AC.183/2017/CRP.2), which had been distributed to the Committee members prior to the meeting, said that the Secretariat would continue to update the report, as necessary, in consultation with the Rapporteur, in order to reflect any new developments which might take place before the report was submitted to the General Assembly.

8. **Mr. Ramírez Carreño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that as long as the United States and other countries continued to support Israel despite the latter's non-compliance with United Nations resolutions, Israel would not change its behaviour and any likelihood of progress would remain low. He was pleased to see that the report had made mention of activities spearheaded by his country when it was a member of the Security Council, and in particular the Arria-formula meeting on the negative impact of Israeli settlements on the Palestinian people that Venezuela had convened along with Angola, Egypt, Malaysia and Senegal, which had been attended by a number of Israeli

civil society organizations opposed to the occupation. His country had been among the sponsors of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), which had expressed concern that continuing Israeli settlement activities were dangerously imperilling the viability of the two-State solution. He stressed that the Secretary-General's report on implementation of the provisions of that resolution should be in writing, not presented orally as had been the case in the past.

9. His country had also taken part in the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, held in Baku in July 2017 against the backdrop of renewed Israeli aggression against the Aqsa Mosque compound. He would have liked to see more high-level representation of members of the Committee at that conference to signal a higher level of commitment to that question. The Committee's role was all the more important given the bleak picture just painted by the observer for the State of Palestine and the foot-dragging by the Security Council.

10. **Mr. Matjila** (South Africa) said that the report just delivered by the observer for the State of Palestine had made clear that things were becoming more difficult for the Palestinians. With the seventieth anniversary of the Nakba approaching, a free Palestine seemed further out of reach than ever. He was pleased that the boycott movement and other manifestations of solidarity with the Palestinian cause were gaining increasing traction in his country. He supported the recommendations set out in the Secretary-General's report and agreed that there should be more high-level representation at meetings of the Committee and other relevant venues. As a former refugee himself, he stressed that there could be no compromise on the right of return, although the territory to which Palestinian refugees might one day return was shrinking.

11. **Ms. Rodríguez Camejo** (Cuba) said that she was pleased that the Secretary-General had carried out his visit to Palestine. Her delegation had taken part in the consultations on the drafting of the Secretary-General's report. Even though resolution 2334 (2016) had passed without any votes against (albeit with one abstention), Israeli practices continued unchanged. Palestine remained occupied, the Gaza blockade was still in force, the separation wall was still standing, and settlement expansion and land confiscation continued unchecked. Nevertheless, Committee members should remain positive and not lose sight of the ultimate goal of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side in peace with Israel.

12. **Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) said that the report from the observer for the State of Palestine had made clear that the situation was deteriorating. He urged both the Committee members and the bureau to

streamline the Committee's organization of work to gear all its activities towards justice for the Palestinian people.

13. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia) said that the report was indeed powerful, but discussing the report at meetings of the Committee was preaching to the choir. He hoped that the report would be publicized and followed up on.

14. **Mr. Ajayi** (Nigeria) said that his own country would not feel fully independent as long as there were still other countries under occupation. Palestinians should not be left behind in the drive to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. His Government remained committed to the human rights and interests of the Palestinian people.

15. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that his delegation expected the report to be approved by the Committee. He shared the frustration of previous speakers that 50 years after the occupation, 70 years after the Nakba and 100 years after the Balfour Declaration, the situation was moving from bad to worse. Needless to say, that frustration was unimaginably worse for the millions of Palestinians who lived the tragedy daily. He urged the Committee members to show a resolve equal to that of Palestinians themselves, and to take inspiration both from dramatic successes such as that achieved by demonstrators in July 2017 in forcing the Israeli Government to remove obstacles to the right to pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and from more incremental gains such as that of the Palestinian villagers of Bil'in, who, through six years of weekly demonstrations, had managed to push the separation wall one kilometre back towards the Green Line. If Palestinians were not giving up, neither should the Committee. The occupation must come to an end, an independent State of Palestine must be established with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the refugee question must be resolved on the basis of the relevant resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

16. *The draft report was adopted.*

#### Other matters

17. The Chair recalled that the special meeting to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People would take place on 29 November 2017. It would mark the fiftieth anniversary of the military occupation and the seventieth anniversary of the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 181 and would be attended by a representative of the Secretary-General and the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council. He requested delegations to be represented at the ambassadorial level.

*The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.*