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Summary record of the 39th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 4 November 2014, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Nilsson (Vice-Chair) (Sweden)

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^{*} Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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In the absence of Ms. Mesquita Borges (Timor-Leste), Ms. Nilsson (Sweden), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 66: Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (continued)

- (a) Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (*continued*) (A/69/18, A/69/186, A/69/318, A/69/328, A/69/329, A/69/334, A/69/340 and A/69/354)
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Agenda item 67: Right of peoples to self-determination (*continued*) (A/69/338 and A/69/342; A/HRC/25/67)

1. **Mr. Sargsyan** (Armenia), speaking under agenda item 67, said that the right to self-determination was a major component and effective guarantee of the promotion and respect for human rights. That substantive legal principle had come to be recognized as a fundamental right which Armenia saw as a binding and universal norm of international law to be implemented under its international obligations. Violating that right had a number of repercussions, including armed conflict, internal displacement and refugee crises.

2. The brutal response of Azerbaijan to the peaceful demand for self-determination by ethnic Armenians in Nagorny Karabakh, who had then responded in self-defence, had deprived the aggressor of any claim to authority over the people of that region. The conflict must be settled through negotiations based on a mutually agreed format and the principles of international law, including the right of peoples to self-determination.

3. However, Azerbaijan was undermining the peace process through war mongering, hate propaganda and persistent violations of the cease-fire agreement. All peoples should be given the opportunity to express their will and exercise their right to self-determination, whether or not that led to secession. The Scottish independence referendum of 2014 was a good example of how that could be accomplished. Lastly, he reiterated Armenia's appreciation of the major role played by the United Nations in guaranteeing the right to self-determination.

4. Mr. Waheed (Maldives) said that millions of people were still being deprived of the universally recognized right to self-determination. Because the denial of that basic right often entailed the denial of other fundamental rights, groups that were denied political status tended to be the poorest and most repressed in the countries in which they lived. Foreign military occupation and acts of aggression violated the principles of human dignity, justice and equality; therefore, the international community had a legal obligation to respond to calls for assistance from peoples living under occupation, such as the Palestinian people.

His Government was deeply concerned about the 5. tragic loss of life and the deteriorating human rights situation in the State of Palestine. In that respect, it supported a two-State solution, with a democratic, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine established in accordance with the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, and called upon the United Nations to guarantee the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. The right to self-determination was best addressed through constructive and participatory dialogue between all parties concerned. Diverse ethnic and religious groups within a territory must be incorporated into the decision-making process. Governments were legitimate only if they were supported by the will of the people that they governed.

Ms. Vadiati (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that 6. during the period covered by the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the right of peoples to selfdetermination (A/69/342), all of the United Nations human rights mechanisms had reaffirmed the unqualified right inalienable, permanent and of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to establish a sovereign, independent, democratic and viable contiguous State. Her Government shared the view expressed in the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that the international community should take action to protect the rights of the Palestinian people and ensure that Israel complied with international law.

7. Israel's prolonged occupation, which involved practices and policies that appeared to constitute

apartheid and segregation as well as de facto annexation of parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, was clearly depriving the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination. The only solution to the instability, extremism and conflict in the Middle East would be to restore the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and end the occupation of their lands.

8. The rights of indigenous peoples in Canada, including their rights to self-determination and to participate in decisions concerning the development and use of their lands, also required urgent attention. The free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples was required when activities were carried out within their territories.

9 Ms. Rasheed (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that Israel, the occupying Power, had deliberately ignored the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights with all aspects of international along and humanitarian law with respect to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel had violated, trampled on and violently withheld the inherent right to selfdetermination of the Palestinian people. The continued construction of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was an obstacle to the establishment of a Palestinian State and caused daily violations of many rights.

10. For eight years, the occupying Power had denied over 1.8 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip all of their basic human rights, and in the summer of 2014 it had cruelly unleashed the full fury of its military machine against the defenceless population of that region for the third time in six years. Furthermore, more than half of Palestinians were stateless and had no right of return.

11. The construction of illegal settlements by the occupying Power was a clear example of how the Palestinian people were being denied their right to self-determination. According to the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (A/HRC/25/67), Israel's activities arguably amounted to de facto "annexation". Israel had even continued to expand and entrench its illegitimate control during the nine months of peace negotiations in 2013-2014. Moreover, illegally transferred settlers carried out

frequent attacks against Palestinians, including children, with impunity. The constant failure by the occupying Power to hold those settlers accountable for their terrorist crimes had encouraged further violence. In the West Bank, attacks against Palestinians, their property or their agricultural lands occurred at the rate of one per day.

12. At the same time, Israel was also proceeding with its illegal occupation through the construction of the wall. If the only reason for the wall was to protect Israeli citizens, it begged the question of why Israel continued to move Israeli citizens into the West Bank, the very area from which it said the risk emanated. There was a clear international consensus that the settlements were illegal and that Israel had no legitimate claim to East Jerusalem. Her delegation urged the international community to make a real effort to enable the Palestinian people, who remained committed to bringing about a peaceful and legal end to the Israeli occupation, to enjoy their right to selfdetermination.

13. **Ms. Kupradze** (Georgia), speaking under agenda item 66, said that her country, as a State party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, supported all relevant human rights instruments and had undertaken significant measures over the past year in that regard, including the adoption of an anti-discrimination law and a seven-year human rights strategy and action plan. The 2014 National Human Rights Action Plan set forth specific activities to be undertaken within a clear time frame.

14. However, her Government continued to face major challenges in meeting its human rights commitments in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, where the ethnic Georgian population living under foreign military occupation was subject to the constant threat of harassment, kidnappings, physical abuse and other crimes. In addition, barbed wire fences had been put in place to restrict freedom of movement, and up to half a million internally displaced persons and refugees were being deprived of their right to a safe and dignified return. Her Government was sparing no effort to care for people on both sides of the occupation line, including providing free medical treatment to those living in the occupied regions.

15. The human rights situation in those occupied regions was particularly concerning because of the lack

of international presence: all international agencies except the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were denied access to Abkhazia and Tskhinvali. Her Government encouraged the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to continue its efforts to visit those regions and hoped to see an international response to the ongoing human rights violations there.

16. Her country was currently implementing an integration policy for ethnic minorities, which aimed to build a democratic civil society based on common values that fostered diversity. The policy was focused on six key areas: the rule of law, education and the State language, the media and access to information, political integration and civic participation, social and regional integration, and the preservation of culture and identity.

17. **Ms. Haile** (Eritrea) said that the issue of social media being widely used as a tool for spreading hate and intolerance, inciting violence and sloganeering should be addressed by the international community. States should also take measure to combat the increasing levels of xenophobic and racially motivated violence against immigrants in Europe and North America, which was compounded by a lack of legal protection for immigrants. Strategies should focus on improving integration in the areas of education, health, housing, food and work, which was important in the fight against racism and xenophobia.

18. Her delegation was fully committed to the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001) and the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference (2009). It also supported the calls to redress the historical imbalances created by racism and, in that regard, called on all States to support the International Decade for People of African Descent. Lastly, with regard to agenda item 67, Eritrea, which had sacrificed two generations in its quest for independence, fully supported the right of all peoples to self-determination.

19. **Mr. Canay** (Turkey) said that his Government had been pursuing a comprehensive human rights reform process since 2001, which had included amendments to the Constitution as well as legislative changes, such as making hate crime punishable by law. Unfortunately, crimes motivated by racism, xenophobia and related intolerance and ethnic discrimination occurred within the health care and education systems of even those countries that were most committed to the advancement of human rights. For example, in one European Union member State, a cartoon insulting the President of Turkey and the local Turkish community was published in a school textbook in a chapter on integration difficulties.

20. Such acts violated individual rights and incited hatred, Islamophobia and xenophobia and, therefore, had no place in democracies. States hosting immigrant communities should be particularly careful to protect the rights and well-being of those vulnerable groups by promoting positive perceptions and working to combat negative stereotypes, including in educational materials, as the feeling of being excluded was the biggest obstacle to integration.

21. Ms. Dávila Dávila (Colombia) said that it was important to ensure that people of African descent had full and effective access to justice and equal education. They often had less access to quality education, health care, adequate housing or social security than the rest of the population, faced discrimination within legal systems, were more likely to be victims of police violence and were less likely to vote in elections or to be elected. Colombia was a multicultural and multi-ethnic country, with persons of Afro-Colombian descent representing around 9.5 per cent of its population. The Government was taking measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, including the adoption of an anti-discrimination law in 2011.

22. Colombia had strongly advocated for the adoption of the resolution on the International Decade for People of African Descent within the United Nations and the Organization of American States, and in March 2014 it had joined the rest of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in committing to strengthen regional coordination and cooperation to combat racism, promote equality and encourage the economic development of people of African descent. In September 2014, it had signed the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance and the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance. His country would continue to work towards the realization of fundamental rights at the domestic and international levels.

23. **Ms. Melón** (Argentina), speaking under agenda item 66, said that her country's comprehensive

anti-discrimination plan had been in place for almost 10 years. A number of the goals set out in that plan had already been achieved and even exceeded. Initiatives included the creation of an anti-discrimination observatory for television and radio, which carried out studies and analyses as well as responding to individual complaints. Her Government had also passed a law to prevent the portrayal of offensive stereotypes in audiovisual communications.

24. Sport also had an important role to play in social inclusion and development. Her country's National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism had signed direct cooperation agreements with football clubs within a general framework developed in collaboration with the Argentine Football Association to combat incitement to hatred and racism in sport. The National Institute was also coordinating anti-discrimination measures in the education sector. International and regional anti-discrimination instruments should serve as a legal framework for working with social organizations and marginalized groups to move beyond tolerance to truly inclusive societies with a real respect for diversity.

25. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for the State of Palestine), speaking under agenda item 66 (a), said that the Palestinian people living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to suffer from an increased level of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Since 1967, the occupying Power had institutionalized racism and discrimination in its most barbaric form: prolonged foreign military occupation with elements of colonialism and apartheid. The most glaring example of that was the occupying Power's attempted Judaization of the Occupied West Bank, and in particular East Jerusalem, through the transfer of over 520,000 Israeli settlers to confiscated Palestinian lands.

26. In its report A/69/81-E/2014/13, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia confirmed that many of Israel's policies related to settlements activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory amounted to de facto segregation, including inequality and separation in the use of roads and infrastructure and access to basic services and water resources, restrictions on movement and preferential legal status for Israelis. Israel's persistent violation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination as well as the provisions of the 1973 International Convention on the Suppression

and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid was ample proof of its intention to pursue its apartheid-like policies at the expense of an entire people and, ultimately, at the expense of peace.

27. Israel's de facto segregation was particularly concerning owing to the spike in racist and xenophobic acts and discourse in the region, especially by Israeli settlers against Palestinians. Between 90 and 95 per cent of cases of violence committed by Palestinians against settlers went before the courts, compared with only 16 per cent of attacks by settlers against Palestinians and their property. That situation only reinforced the dangerous culture of impunity among the settlers. The rise in settler attacks came amidst an outburst of virulent anti-Arab racism in Israel, fuelled by the Israeli Government. During Israel's aggression against the Gaza Strip in 2014, hundreds of Israelis violently assaulted Palestinians while chanting violent hate slogans and posted hate speech on social media. The President of Israel himself had stated that his country was suffering from an epidemic of violence that must be addressed.

28. She was also deeply concerned that there were more than 50 laws that discriminated against Palestinian citizens of Israel in all areas of life, including political participation, criminal proceedings and access to land, education and State budget resources. In light of that situation, Israel had no basis for referring to itself as a democracy. The international community must take the necessary steps to end all Israeli violations and pursue accountability and justice for its crimes against the Palestinian civilian population. Israel, the occupying Power, must fulfil its obligations under international law and in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and allow the Palestinian people to realize their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination, in an independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

29. **Ms. Muedin** (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that while one in seven people around the world had migrated across or within borders, anti-migrant sentiment was widespread and growing, obscuring the overwhelmingly positive contribution migrants made to societies and economies. International and domestic exchanges on migration policy often reverted to highly politicized discourse followed by efforts to halt migration as well as increased negativity in the media, which sometimes spilled over into acts of violence and intimidation against minority groups.

30. The populist nature of the migration debates in many parts of the world had created a climate in which migrants were often seen as being responsible for problems such as unemployment, insecurity or a lack of social cohesion, which were actually rooted in much more complex processes of change, including the many development challenges being faced by all countries. In order to address misperceptions of migration and the discriminatory, xenophobic and intolerant views resulting from those misperceptions, discourse on migration and social issues often blamed on migrants should more open, balanced and comprehensive. Governments, the media, the private sector, civil society and migrants themselves all had an important role to play in that regard.

31. The International Organization for Migration welcomed Member States' reaffirmation of that view at the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2013. It also supported the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on Global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (A/69/354) and particularly welcomed the conclusions in paragraph 110 of that report. IOM was pursuing that objective through policies, programmes and public information efforts aimed at correcting misperceptions and providing reliable information on the situation of migrants and migration.

32. In 2013, her organization had launched a global campaign focusing on the diverse contributions that migrants made to their societies, which were not often mentioned in public discourse. IOM called on delegations to work together to eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance by improving the public perception of migrants and offered its strong partnership and commitment in that regard.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

33. **Ms. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan) said that the representative of Armenia's comments were illustrative of that country's deliberate efforts to mislead the international community. It should be recalled that Armenia's unilateral attempts to achieve the secession of Nagorny Karabakh from Azerbaijan had never been legitimate or peaceful, nor had Armenia's claims been consistent with the applicable national or international

legal norms. The unlawfulness within the Soviet legal system of any attempts aimed at either unification of Nagorny Karabakh with Armenia or its secession from Azerbaijan without Azerbaijan's consent had been confirmed at the highest constitutional level. Accordingly, Azerbaijan had been entitled to achieve independence within the territorial boundaries in existence during the Soviet era.

34. There was overwhelming documentary evidence proving that Armenia had initiated the war. It had attacked and occupied Azerbaijan, including the Nagorny Karabakh region and seven adjacent districts; carried out ethnic cleansing on a massive scale; and established an ethnically constructed subordinate separatist entity on the captured Azerbaijani territory. In 1993, the Security Council had adopted four resolutions condemning the use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories and demanding the immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

35. The Council had confirmed that Nagorny Karabakh was a part of Azerbaijan and had reaffirmed respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its international borders. In other words, what the representative of Armenia had described as the exercise of the right to self-determination by the ethnic Armenian group residing in Azerbaijan had been unequivocally qualified by the Security Council and other authoritative international bodies as the illegal use of force by Armenia, also involving the commission of other crimes of serious concern to the international community.

36. Armenia was attempting to legitimize its unlawful actions by portraying the unilateral secession, use of force, annexation of Azerbaijani territory and genocide that had taken place in Nagorny Karabakh as the exercise of the right to self-determination. There were no parallels to be drawn between the peaceful referendum in Scotland, which had been conducted legally and with the consent of all parties concerned, and the unlawful, unilateral secession of Nagorny Karabakh. Armenian claims that the region had the right to self-determination in that sense were untenable under international law.

37. No entity created through the unlawful use of force and ethnic cleansing had ever been admitted to the

United Nations. Armenia's actions posed a threat to the unity of all multinational societies and encouraged the spread of discrimination and intolerance on racial, ethnic and religious grounds. The intentional slaughter of civilians in Khojaly was not an isolated incident, but rather part of Armenia's policy of carrying out atrocities motivated by its beliefs in racial superiority and ethnic differentiation and to further expansionist aims.

38. **Mr. Barkan** (Israel) said that, if Palestine really desired self-determination, it must end its cooperation with Hamas and resume negotiations with Israel. An agreement leading to Palestinian self-determination could only be reached through direct negotiations; speeches at the United Nations or the war initiated by Hamas against Israeli citizens in the summer of 2014 would do nothing to further that aim.

39. **Mr. Sargsyan** (Armenia) said that it was regrettable that the representative of Azerbaijan continued to distort and misrepresent the decades-long struggle of the people of Artsakh (Nagorny Karabakh) for their inalienable right to self-determination and to make groundless and false accusations against Armenia and Artsakh. As was well known, it was Azerbaijan which, more than two decades earlier, had unleashed hostilities against Nagorny Karabakh and occupied Armenian territories, forcing hundreds of thousands of Armenians, including tens of thousands of defenceless women and girls, to abandon their homes and become refugees and internally displaced persons. That aggression had had unpredictable consequences for Azerbaijan itself.

40. Azerbaijan's decision to speak under the agenda item concerning the right to self-determination was provocative, given its denial of that same right to the people of Nagorny Karabakh. Its legally, politically, historically and morally deficient attempts to claim territorial integrity with respect to the region were invalid. The representative of Azerbaijan should recall that her country had been given jurisdiction over the Armenian region of Nagorny Karabakh illegally and unjustly by an arbitrary decision of the regional Communist party bureau in 1921.

41. With regard to the allegations that his Government was not implementing Security Council resolutions, it should be noted that the current situation in the region stemmed from Azerbaijan's decision to use force to suppress the people of Artsakh and impede their exercise of the right to self-determination. Azerbaijan itself had violated the Security Council resolutions urging all parties to pursue negotiations within the framework of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

42. Azerbaijan kept violating the 1993 Security Council resolutions, not only by failing to immediately cease all hostilities, but also by further intensifying its aggression and military operations against Nagorny Karabakh and Armenia, using mercenaries closely linked to notorious terrorist organizations. It was not surprising that the three permanent members of the Security Council who had been the mediators of the 1994 ceasefire agreement had made no mention of those resolutions.

43. Armenia continued to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict in cooperation with the leaders of Nagorny Karabakh. The main impediment to resolving the matter was Azerbaijan's refusal to engage in direct negotiations with the elected representatives of the Nagorny Karabakh Republic and its hostile stance against Armenia and ethnic Armenians.

44. The representative of Azerbaijan's decision to speak about combating racism and xenophobia was perplexing, as her country's President had recently made public threats to renew the war on Nagorny Karabakh, extolled the ethnic cleansing of Armenians living in Azerbaijan, and also claimed essentially all of Armenia's sovereign territory, including its capital city, Yerevan. There was no stronger power than the free will of people to determine their fate and their legitimate quest for freedom; aggression, violence and State-sponsored propaganda would not prevent the people from exercising that right.

45. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that Israel had made false allegations in order to divert attention from its own human rights violations, many of which amounted to war crimes. She asked the Israeli delegate whether he denied that his Government had violated the rights to self-determination, life, security, property, food, health care, education, water, livelihood and an adequate living standard of the Palestinians under its occupation.

46. Her delegation had been clear on its position with regard to the peace process. During the twenty-year process, the Palestinian people had witnessed further entrenchment of the occupation, the destruction of thousands of homes, the illegal construction of a wall, the institution of an illegal blockade affecting 1.8 million civilians, and the theft of their natural resources. In addition to being subjected to constant humiliation by the occupying forces, countless wars and acts of destruction had been carried out against them and thousands of them had been arrested, killed or injured.

47. While the international community appealed for calm, Israeli officials were making provocative declarations against the Palestinian people and Government. The President of Israel had stated at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly that there was no occupation, and the Minister of Defence had said that Israel would never allow the two-State solution. Such declarations and actions were predicated on the erroneous belief that such an immoral, unjust outcome would be accepted.

48. Palestine would never forego its inalienable human rights or give up on its pursuit of justice and peace. She was convinced that the international community would not accept such an injustice and would continue to demand that Israel respect international law and the consensus solution rooted in United Nations resolutions. Israel must stop using the peace process as a cover to continue its violations. Palestine would continue to reject such actions and sought to resume a genuine peace process that would allow international law and justice to determine the outcome: an independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

49. **Ms. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan) said that it was well known that, in accordance with international law, the principle of self-determination applied to three categories of peoples; the peoples of sovereign States, the peoples of colonially formed territorial units and peoples under foreign domination, subjugation and exploitation, including foreign military occupation. There was no doubt that the members of the Armenian ethnic minority group living in Nagorny Karabakh did not belong to any of those categories of peoples and would never be considered an independent subject with the right to self-determination. Armenia could not continue to demand its right to self-determination; it had already exercised that right with the creation of the sovereign State of Armenia.

50. Armenia was attempting to distort the meaning of the four Security Council resolutions and blame the victim, Azerbaijan, for non-compliance. The resolutions clearly stated that Armenia had no legitimate claim to Azerbaijan's territory. They had been adopted in response to the invasion of that territory by Armenian forces and demanded the full and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijan. Armenia had yet to comply with that demand.

51. Armenia's defence of its policy of violating international law while portraying itself as a victim was contradictory: it denied any involvement in the conflict while at the same time the Government openly claimed ownership of Nagorny Karabakh and claimed to be guaranteeing security in the region. Its role as guarantor was also mentioned in its national security strategy of 7 February 2007, but that document failed to explain how guarantees relating to a portion of Azerbaijan's territory were compatible with international law. With regard to the Armenian representative's comments on hate speech, it should be noted that high-ranking Armenian officials regularly made statements openly promoting ethnic and religiously hatred and intolerance, such as the President's reference to "ethnic incompatibility" between ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijanis in 2003.

52. **Mr. Sargsyan** (Armenia) said that Azerbaijan's claim to Nagorny Karabakh was illegitimate. The people of Nagorny Karabakh had exercised their inalienable right to self-determination in compliance with international law. They held free and fair elections and had stable political institutions, legitimate authorities, a functioning Government and an independent judiciary. In Nagorny Karabakh, unlike Azerbaijan, civil society continued to participate actively in the political process.

53. Armenia attached the utmost importance to justice, the rule of law, maintaining peace and security, promoting and protecting human rights, tolerance and anti-discrimination in the region. It called on Azerbaijan to end its hostile policies towards Armenia and Armenians, promote tolerance and equal treatment within its borders and with its neighbours and prepare its people for peace, rather than war.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.