



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
17 December 2013

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 23rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 8 November 2013, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. García González (El Salvador)

Contents

Agenda item 52: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices
Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the
Occupied Territories

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit (srcorrections@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).

13-55482 (E)



Please recycle A small graphic of a recycling symbol consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 52: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories ([A/68/313](#), [A/68/355](#), [A/68/378](#), [A/68/379](#), [A/68/502](#) and [A/68/513](#))

1. **Mr. Kohona** (Sri Lanka), speaking as Chair of the Special Committee and introducing its report ([A/68/379](#)) examining the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan, said that it contained information gathered during the Special Committee's mission to the region in June 2013 and through consultations with the Member States that had sponsored General Assembly resolution [67/118](#). It was regrettable that, as in previous years, the Government of Israel had failed to respond to requests to meet with the Special Committee and allow access to the occupied territories. However, the Special Committee had sought information from a wide range of sources regarding Israeli practices affecting human rights in the occupied territories, and its investigations during the past year had confirmed a number of disturbing trends.

2. Although Israel had symbolically released Palestinian prisoners in August and October 2013, the imprisonment and ill-treatment of Palestinians, including children, continued in a systematic and institutionalized manner. The Special Committee's report also cited the routine demolition of homes and forced displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank, as well as the continuing construction of the separation wall and violence by Israeli settlers, something which the Israeli authorities did little to prevent. Israeli settlements also continued to be maintained or constructed, with the active assistance of multinational corporations and non-governmental organizations.

3. In the Gaza Strip, Israel's sea, air and land blockade continued for the seventh year and the humanitarian and socioeconomic conditions had deteriorated further as a result. Israel had maintained a substantial prohibition on exports from Gaza and enforced an arbitrarily restrictive fishing zone. The report also drew attention to the exploitation of natural resources in the Syrian Golan and raised other serious concerns such as the continued presence of landmines and restrictions imposed by Israel on family visits.

4. In response to Israel's actions, the Special Committee had made a number of recommendations, including an appeal to Israel to conduct prompt and impartial investigations of injuries and deaths of Palestinian prisoners, and also of allegations of mistreatment of children in detention. Furthermore, Israel should cease issuing demolition orders and provide building permits to Palestinian communities in East Jerusalem, and should immediately comply with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*.

5. Recalling the many United Nations resolutions and reports concerning the illegality of Israel's policies and practices in the territories it had occupied since 1967, the Special Committee called on Israel to end the blockade of Gaza, and urged the international community to investigate transparently the activities of foreign-registered companies that profited from Israel's settlements in the West Bank and the occupied Syrian Golan. Israel violated its obligations as the occupying Power by legitimizing the exploitation of natural resources through the issuance of drilling licences to companies for oil and gas exploration. It should, moreover, inform such corporations of their responsibilities and the possible international legal ramifications. Finally, Israel must take action to remove all landmines in the occupied Syrian Golan.

6. The Special Committee strongly believed that the violations of the human rights of Palestinians and other Arabs would end only if Israel withdrew from the territories it had held since 1967. Should the current negotiations falter, the simmering popular discontent in those territories could result in another round of serious violence.

7. **Mr. Šimonović** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights), introducing five reports of the Secretary-General under agenda item 52, said that the report on the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories ([A/68/355](#)) outlined the activities undertaken by the Special Committee and by the United Nations Secretariat in support of the Special Committee's work.

8. The report on the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the

Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories (A/68/313) summarized the responses from the Syrian Arab Republic and from Cuba to a request for information on the steps taken to implement General Assembly resolution 67/119.

9. The report on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan (A/68/513) contained information from a variety of sources, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), other United Nations entities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the media. The report focused on the leading role of the Government of Israel in the creation and expansion of settlements, including in the occupied Syrian Golan, and its failure to maintain public order and the lack of accountability for settler violence.

10. In similar vein, the report of the Secretary-General on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (A/68/502), was based on OHCHR monitoring and information-gathering activities, and contained information from other United Nations entities, Israeli and Palestinian NGOs, and media sources. The report covered Israeli policies and practices fragmenting the territory of the State of Palestine, actions by the Israeli security forces leading to the death and injury of civilians, and the extent to which alleged human rights violations were investigated by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian authorities.

11. The final report, on the occupied Syrian Golan (A/68/378), was a compilation of the responses from the Permanent Missions of the Syrian Arab Republic, Colombia, Cuba and Burkina Faso to a request for information on steps taken to implement General Assembly resolution 67/122.

12. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the reports of the Special Committee, the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and other United Nations entities presented an accurate portrayal of the human rights situation in the occupied territories resulting from the policies pursued by Israel as the occupying Power. Contrary to Israel's assertion that the

reports were one-sided, the evaluations they contained were based on the Charter of the United Nations and other human rights instruments, all of which were applicable to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as determined by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the International Court of Justice.

13. Even the most basic review revealed massive violations of the rights of people living in the occupied territories, and Israel's continuing refusal to cooperate with the Special Committee was a breach of its obligations. He echoed the Special Committee's call for the General Assembly to consider an appropriate resolution and to hold Israel accountable. Lastly, he asked the Chair of the Special Committee what specific measures would be recommended to the General Assembly in order to bring Israel into compliance with its obligations under international law.

14. **Mr. Kohona** (Sri Lanka), speaking as Chair of the Special Committee, replied that the recommendations in the report (A/68/379) called on Israel to comply immediately with Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, as well as the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the separation wall. The report also contained a recommendation that the international community should investigate the business practices of companies registered in their own respective countries that profited from and exploited Israel's settlements in the West Bank and the occupied Syrian Golan.

15. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine) reiterated that Israeli violations continued to affect every aspect of life and every human right of the Palestinian people. The decades-long Israeli occupation had inflicted immense suffering and undermined all efforts to date to realize peace based on the two-State solution. The international community should uphold its responsibilities for the protection of human rights and of civilians in armed conflict, in order to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive solution. Israel had clear legal obligations but, even as peace negotiations had resumed, every passing day revealed that it was more interested in maintaining control over Palestinian land, primarily through its settlement activities, but also through other unlawful practices aimed at isolating, separating and subjugating the Palestinian people.

16. Israel continued systematically to violate the Palestinians' rights to self-determination, food, housing and freedom of movement, thereby impairing the fabric of Palestinian society and causing multiple other human rights violations. Military strikes against the Gaza Strip and West Bank continued, as did the use of excessive force against Palestinians participating in peaceful protests against the occupation. The occupying forces damaged and destroyed civilian properties; in the November 2012 attacks on Gaza alone, hundreds of homes and other properties had simply been obliterated.

17. Israel's illegal construction of settlements and confiscation of vast areas of land, as well as the construction of the wall, continued unabated even in the midst of a peace process, further fragmenting the territory, separating Palestinian villages, and resulting in the further exploitation of natural resources. Hundreds of checkpoints and the permit regime associated with the wall severely impaired normal economic and social life. The recent provocative declarations by Israeli officials regarding plans to construct thousands more settlement units were further confirmation of Israel's flagrant disregard for international law and for the overall consensus on that matter, which was that settlement activities had a destructive impact on the two-State solution and prospects for peace.

18. Such actions on the part of Israel constituted grave breaches of international humanitarian law, in fact war crimes, as concluded by the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. As part of its settlement campaign, Israel continued to destroy Palestinian property, forcibly displacing civilians, and the fact-finding mission had noted that the volume of information received on dispossession, evictions, demolitions and displacement pointed to the magnitude of those practices. Further, the role of Israeli non-governmental organizations in petitioning the Israeli Supreme Court for the demolition of Palestinian communities as a means of aiding and abetting the settlement enterprise was deplorable.

19. Extremist Israeli settlers continued to terrorize Palestinians by violently attacking civilians and destroying and vandalizing homes and vehicles, all

under the protection of the Israeli Government, which bore ultimate responsibility for those crimes. Israel had also pursued its arbitrary and abusive imprisonment of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children, who were being subjected to forced interrogations, solitary confinement and denial of access to medical care, education, family visits and due process. More than 5,000 Palestinians remained in Israeli prisons, including 137 administrative detainees being held without charge, and 80 Palestinians had been imprisoned by Israel for over 20 years. Referring to the 2013 report of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on the plight of Palestinian children in Israeli prisons, she said that ill-treatment appeared to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized, in grave breach of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

20. Similarly, the devastating impact of the illegal Israeli blockade of Gaza constituted collective punishment of the entire Palestinian civilian population, and the humanitarian crisis had deepened in the past year. Were it not for the assistance provided by United Nations agencies and other international aid organizations, the situation would be untenable and, as noted in the Special Committee's report, if it persisted, by 2020 the human habitability of Gaza would be in doubt.

21. The human rights situation in the Palestinian territories was indeed critical as a result of Israel's violations, despite the international community's current concerted push for peace. As the occupying Power, Israel must cease all of its illegal policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and commit in word and deed to the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map. Moreover, all States should uphold their responsibilities under international law in relation to Israel's illegal policies. The international community should pay attention to the plight of the thousands of Palestinian political prisoners by monitoring the conditions of their captivity and reiterating the call for their release.

22. Likewise, the inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip must end and the Palestinian people must be allowed to move freely in and out of that territory. If peace was to be achieved, a goal to which the Palestinian leadership remained committed through

negotiations to resolve the final status issues of refugees, settlements and so on, a complete cessation of all Israeli violations was imperative; only when the occupation ended could the State of Palestine live in peace and security with Israel. Indeed, it was the collective duty of the international community to ensure Israel's compliance, so that the Palestinian people could finally realize its human rights and national aspirations to live in freedom and dignity in an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

23. **Mr. Khzaee** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, expressed serious concern at the findings of the report of the Special Committee, which stated that Israel's policies and practices continued to violate the fundamental human rights and dignity of the Palestinian people and other Arabs living under occupation. The Non-Aligned Movement called for the implementation of the recommendations in the report to ensure respect for international human rights and humanitarian law by Israel, the occupying Power.

24. Further, the Movement condemned the continuing brutal military campaign against the Palestinian people, through which the occupying Power committed grave human rights violations, including the use of excessive force. It was disturbing that such violations were being committed with impunity and contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention, relevant United Nations resolutions and the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. Measures must therefore be taken in accordance with international law to remedy that injustice.

25. The Movement condemned the ongoing systematic and abusive Israeli detention and interrogation practices whereby Palestinians, including children, were held in inhumane conditions. Israel's use of torture and other forms of physical and psychological mistreatment remained a grave source of concern. As stated in the Declaration on Palestine Political Prisoners, adopted in August 2012 at the Sixteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, all such prisoners should be immediately released and their plight should be addressed by the international community.

26. Similarly, Israel's illegal settlement construction, under the full protection of its military forces, was proceeding apace across the West Bank, facilitated by other illegal measures, including land confiscation.

Such activities undermined the contiguity of the West Bank and the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. The Non-Aligned Movement called for urgent action by the international community to compel the occupying Power to cease completely its destructive settlement campaign and abide by all of its obligations under international law. Furthermore, the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza was being subjected to collective punishment owing to the ongoing sea, air and land blockade, which had entered its seventh year in June 2013. The Non-Aligned Movement emphasized that Israel must comply scrupulously with its obligations as the occupying Power, and promptly and unconditionally end its illegal blockade and open all its crossing points.

27. With reference to the Syrian Golan, the Movement reaffirmed that all the unlawful actions committed by Israel constituted a clear violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel should abide by that resolution and withdraw completely to the borders of 4 June 1967.

28. Further, the Movement expressed deep concern at the lack of progress in the Middle East peace process. Israel's persistent illegal behaviour and refusal to commit to the two-State solution confirmed that its expansionist policies totally contradicted its Government's claimed commitment to the peace process. Intensified international and regional efforts were needed to promote accelerated negotiations between the parties in order to achieve a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful settlement to the conflict. The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to such a settlement, to the immediate restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination and sovereignty in an independent State, and to a just solution for Palestinian refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

29. **Mr. Storaci** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that bringing an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict remained one of the European Union's main priorities and that the

European Union was fully committed to ensuring the success of the ongoing direct negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive peace through the two-State solution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

30. The conflict could be resolved through a comprehensive peace agreement based on the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Quartet road map and the Arab Peace Initiative. In that regard, all parties should refrain from actions which could undermine negotiations and the prospects for peace. The European Union deplored continuing Israeli plans to expand settlements in the West Bank, a process that constituted an obstacle to peace. It also condemned in the strongest terms settler violence against Palestinian civilians and expressed deep concern about the worsening living conditions of the Palestinian population in Area C of the West Bank and collective demolitions of their homes in recent months.

31. Israel should improve access, administration and cooperation mechanisms for international donors, of which the European Union remained the largest. The European Union was particularly concerned about the slowing economic development and ensuing fiscal difficulties in the Palestinian territory. Of similar deep concern was the number of Palestinians recently killed by the use of live ammunition by Israeli forces, as well as the continued incursions by those forces into Area A of the West Bank. Such incursions jeopardized the internationally recognized success of Palestinian institution-building efforts.

32. The European Union had regretted the loss of civilian lives in the Gaza Strip hostilities of November 2012, and strongly condemned the use of violence deliberately targeting civilians. The current situation in Gaza was unsustainable. While recognizing Israel's legitimate security concerns and expressing its appreciation for certain recent positive measures Israel had taken, the European Union called for the immediate and sustained opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from the Gaza Strip, in accordance with Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) and the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access.

33. Support for human rights defenders had long been an established element of the European Union's

external relations policy. In both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, human rights defenders played an important role in promoting the common values of democracy and peace. The European Union remained concerned about Israel's extensive recourse to administrative detention without trial. Likewise, Israel's continuing extension of the separation barrier and restrictions on movement severely limited access for Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to Christian and Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem. Respect for freedom of religion should also be maintained by the de facto authorities in the Gaza Strip.

34. While welcoming Israel's commitment to cooperate on implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2013 UNICEF report on children in Israeli military detention, the European Union expressed concern at the high number of Palestinian children held in Israeli detention and at reports of their ill-treatment.

35. In sum, the European Union would continue to work with its partners to contribute to a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and would provide political and financial support with an emphasis on full respect for international humanitarian and human rights law.

36. **Mr. Seck** (Senegal) said that the importance of the Special Committee's report could be gauged by the seriousness, scope and persistent nature of the illegal practices referred to therein. Since its establishment in 1968, the Special Committee had shown a constant commitment to fulfilling its mandate. However, despite the Special Committee's international legitimacy, Israel's continuing refusal to cooperate with it was regrettable.

37. In that regard, all parties, especially the occupying Power, should demonstrate responsibility and open-mindedness in assisting the Special Committee in its work. That was particularly important as the massive and repeated violations of the human rights of those living in the occupied territories breached the fundamental rights to life, self-determination and freedom of movement. The legitimate and inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination could be exercised only through the creation of an independent, viable State, restored to the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

38. Unfortunately, that right was compromised by the continued Israeli settlement-building process in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, a process which, in the view of the international fact-finding mission, made the creation of a viable Palestinian State impossible. Like other peoples the world over, the Palestinian people should enjoy the right to security and dignity. The Israel Defense Forces should show greater restraint and take measures to prevent settler violence and end the culture of impunity.

39. Palestinians' freedom of movement was hampered by the imposition of multiple checkpoints and the seven-year blockade of the Gaza Strip, as a result of which unemployment had reached unprecedented levels and 80 per cent of the Gazan population was dependent on humanitarian aid. The erection of physical barriers, notably the separation wall, should cease immediately and the advisory opinion issued in 2004 by the International Court of Justice should be respected unconditionally. Furthermore, the tragic fate of Palestinian detainees held in Israeli prisons should not be forgotten and urgent measures should be taken to bring to an end the suffering they endured.

40. Like all other members of the international community, Israel must demonstrate respect for international law in all its aspects; likewise, that community and the United Nations should shoulder their responsibilities in ensuring respect for the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories. In its work as an investigative and oversight body, the Special Committee should receive the support of all concerned.

41. **Mr. Haniff** (Malaysia) said that Israel's continued refusal to allow the Special Committee to visit the occupied territories only confirmed the suspicion that it did not wish the international community to know of the actual situation there. Despite Israel's claims that the Special Committee's report was biased, the findings coincided with those of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. They were further supported by the conclusions of the Human Rights Inquiry Commission established by the Commission on Human Rights to investigate violations of human rights and humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

42. Once again, the report painted a very dismal picture of the life endured by the Palestinians and other Arabs under Israeli occupation. The harsh and repressive regulations governing the movement of people, housing, public health and sanitation had been devised by the Israeli authorities to keep the Arab population firmly under their control. As attested by the witnesses who had appeared before the Special Committee, those regulations had been enforced with characteristic heavy-handedness through such acts as house demolitions and inhumane treatment of detainees. Israel should end those practices and observe the principles enshrined in international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) of 12 August 1949, which was applicable to all of the occupied Arab territories, including East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan.

43. The human rights situation was particularly acute for Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, where Israel systematically confiscated Arab property for so-called security or administrative reasons. The intention was clearly to Judaize Arab East Jerusalem by bringing in Jews to replace the Arabs, thereby changing the city's demographics. In that regard, the relentless construction and expansion of new Jewish settlements ran counter to the will of the international community.

44. The human rights situation of the people living in the occupied Arab territories was not likely to improve as long as Israel relied on its policy of using force rather than dialogue and negotiations. Israel could not hope to build a peaceful and prosperous nation upon the misery and helplessness of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories. The sooner Israel came to terms with the legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian people and that of the inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan, the sooner the tragic situation could be resolved in the interests of peace and security for all concerned. However, a final settlement must be based on the two-State solution, with Israel living side by side with the newly established State of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, and on Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab lands. Until all those aims were achieved, the work of the Special Committee would remain as relevant as when it had first been established in 1968, because the international community could not afford to turn a blind eye to the continuing acts of

repression and injustice against those living under foreign occupation. The Special Committee should therefore continue its work with a renewed mandate to monitor the human rights situation of the inhabitants of the occupied territories, including Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan, for as long as those territories remained under the illegal occupation of Israel.

45. **Mr. Hamed** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, for more than 60 years, Israel had committed gross and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. He wondered how many more innocent victims would be killed, how many illegal settlements and racist separation walls built and how many Muslim and Christian holy sites desecrated before certain States were shamed into supporting measures to end Israel's occupation of Arab land so that the Palestinians could return to their homes and establish a free and independent sovereign State in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The victims of great injustice, the Palestinians were prepared to accept a homeland in a mere 22 per cent of historical Palestine. Although the overwhelming majority of Member States fully supported the Palestinians in that endeavour, it was shocking that certain States continued to demand that the Palestinians should make further "painful" concessions, as if the many concessions they had already made in the interests of peace had not been painful enough.

46. Reports of dozens of investigative committees and fact-finding missions had been submitted over the years — were those not sufficient to attest to the gravity of the situation? Numerous United Nations resolutions had called upon Israel to end its occupation of Arab land and had condemned its ongoing human rights violations — were those not sufficient to dissuade certain States from providing unlimited military, economic and political support to Israel? While those States shed hypocritical tears and claimed they upheld international humanitarian law, they impeded all measures to hold Israel accountable for its actions and were therefore accessories to its gross human rights violations and schemes to perpetuate its occupation.

47. Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan was characterized by oppressive terrorist policies, racial discrimination and arbitrary detentions. Israel refused to allow Syrian children to study the school curriculum of their homeland and Syrian citizens of the Golan were denied medical treatment if they refused to carry

Israeli identity cards. The Israeli authorities were, moreover, building settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan at a feverish pace and a racist apartheid wall to the east of Majdal al-Shams. They refused to provide international organizations with maps of the minefields they had sown and prevented Syrians from exploiting their natural resources. At the same time, Israel was depleting their water sources and had granted oil and gas exploration rights in the occupied Syrian Golan to Israeli and multinational companies, in clear contravention of international law and United Nations resolutions. Syria strongly condemned all such actions and emphasized that it reserved the right to prosecute all companies that exploited the natural resources of the occupied Syrian Golan in international tribunals.

48. The Syrian delegation fully supported the recommendations of the Special Committee and urged the Organization to impose sanctions on Israel until it complied with its international obligations, including Security Council resolution 497 (1981).

49. **Mr. Sahebzada Khan** (Pakistan) said that the continued policy of non-cooperation with the Special Committee by Israel, as occupying Power, was clear proof that it lacked sincerity and paid no heed to the international community. Despite tentative steps towards the resolution of final status issues, the situation on the ground in the occupied territories remained bleak. By recording extensive testimonies, the Special Committee had shown that the condition of Palestinian prisoners and detainees remained a cause of serious concern, and home demolitions, settler violence and the blockade of the Gaza Strip continued to make life extremely difficult for the Palestinians. Similarly, the detention of children and the use of physical and psychological forms of torture against them constituted crimes that were both indescribable and despicable.

50. Continued illegal settlement activity had the real potential to render a two-State solution unviable. The independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements had concluded that such creeping annexation by Israel prevented the establishment of a contiguous and viable Palestinian State and undermined the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

51. Pakistan strongly supported the view that a just, sustainable and equitable resolution of the Middle East conflict had to be based on a sovereign and independent State of Palestine within the pre-1967

borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. Pakistan had welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/19 in November 2012 and believed that a long-term solution to the problem could not be found without the withdrawal of the occupying forces from all Arab lands, including those of Lebanon and the Syrian Golan. It reiterated its unrelenting support for the Palestinians in their struggle for peace and self-determination.

52. **Mr. Kim** In Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that despite the concerns and efforts of the international community regarding the Middle East, Israel continued to commit human rights violations against Palestinians and other peoples of Arab countries. Such acts infringed State sovereignty and territorial integrity and were being carried out more and more openly with the backing of certain countries, in particular the United States of America.

53. That being the case, the settlement of all issues relating to the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, was a high priority and should be pursued in compliance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Above all, Israel must immediately withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and provide due compensation for all the moral and material losses it had caused.

54. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea reiterated its support for and solidarity with the Arab peoples in their struggle to bring about a peaceful and fair solution to the Middle East issues. In particular, it supported the cause of the Palestinian people in seeking to restore its legitimate national rights, including the foundation of an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.