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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 24th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 7 November 2014, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal)

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

Agenda item 51: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (*continued*) ([A/69/128](#), [A/69/316](#), [A/69/327](#), [A/69/347](#), [A/69/348](#) and [A/69/355](#))

1. **Ms. Sughayar** (Jordan), noting that her country was the one with the closest ties to the Palestinian people and the one most directly affected by events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, said she regretted that Israel continued to show a lack of respect for the United Nations by refusing to give the independent international commission of inquiry access to the Occupied Territory.

2. The Government of Israel was responsible for a long list of human rights violations, including settlement construction, forced evictions, arbitrary arrest and excessive use of force. It terrorized, tortured and killed Palestinians, restricted their freedom of worship and continually attempted to alter the demographic and geographical make-up of Jerusalem. Israeli provocation and attempts to impose facts on the ground would not succeed in changing the legal status of the holy city of Jerusalem, but would instead fuel religious tension and extremism. While the Israeli Government claimed in international forums to support peace efforts and regional integration, such claims were completely undermined by its actions on the ground.

3. The restrictions imposed by Israel on Palestinians' freedom of worship, including attacks by Israeli forces on Al-Aqsa Mosque, were an affront not only to Palestinians but to Muslims worldwide. In view of the complex situation in the Middle East, particular efforts must be made to promote peaceful coexistence and combat extremism; peace could only be achieved once Israel learned to respect the wishes and religious sites of its neighbours.

4. Her Government had long endeavoured, in cooperation with the international community, to counter Israel's illegal practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, defend the rights of Palestinians and protect Islamic and Christian religious sites in Jerusalem, especially Al-Aqsa Mosque. Israel should make peace possible by respecting the sanctity of Al-Haram Al-Sharif, completely ceasing settlement construction, lifting the illegal blockade of Gaza and

abiding by its obligations under international law, including the Jordan-Israel Treaty of Peace. Her delegation supported all efforts to reopen bilateral negotiations with a view to setting a deadline for ending the Israeli occupation and achieving a just and lasting settlement, based on the two-State solution, which would guarantee a better life for future generations.

5. The neutral position maintained by certain States on the question of Palestine did nothing to advance the interests of either side or to promote peace efforts. Jordan therefore urged the international community to put pressure on Israel to cease its illegal practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and called on the Human Rights Council and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to document the unacceptable violations committed in East Jerusalem by the Israeli authorities on a daily basis.

6. **Mr. Al-Thani** (Qatar) affirmed his country's solidarity with the Palestinian people's just struggle to end Israeli occupation of its land and exercise self-determination. The report of the Special Committee ([A/69/355](#)) once again highlighted Israeli occupation practices that blatantly violated international humanitarian and human rights law, including home demolitions; the continued construction of the illegal separation wall and its isolation of Palestinian communities and hindrance of Palestinian freedom of movement; the condoning of settler violence; the arrest without charge of Palestinians, including children; and the ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees. Such practices were, moreover, a major obstacle to the two-State solution.

7. His delegation was alarmed by Israel's continued policy of collective punishment and terrorization of the population of the Gaza Strip, which it had subjected to a blockade and repeated attacks, most recently in August 2014. Israel's strategy of suffocating the Palestinian economy and threatening the livelihoods of Palestinian communities by cutting off their water supply was equally distressing. Dialogue must be established with a view to resolving the conflict on the basis of the two-State solution.

8. Qatar vehemently opposed the Israeli forces' raid of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as provocative visits to the site by Israeli settlers. As the occupying Power, Israel should be held responsible for any damage to the

holy site. The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was deteriorating dangerously. Israeli forces' repressive practices and repeated military aggression reminded the international community of the importance of declaring its unconditional support for the Palestinian people. Security, peace and stability in Israel and in the broader region required courageous steps towards implementing a solution based on the establishment of a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, living side by side in peace with Israel, in line with the international will expressed by United Nations recognition of the State of Palestine.

9. **Ms. Al Turk** (Lebanon) said that recent developments, including the Israeli military campaign against the Gaza Strip and the situation in East Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, attested to the gravity of illegitimate Israeli practices and underscored the collective responsibility to put an immediate end to them. The last few years had witnessed an unprecedented rise in settlement construction and confiscation of Palestinian land; the systematic encroachments had brought the total area of land expropriated since the start of the occupation to 1 billion square metres.

10. Claims that Israeli forces had withdrawn from Gaza neglected to mention that Israel retained full control over crossing points, seaports and airports. Moreover, Israeli military activities impeded access to fisheries and arable land, while one third of Gaza families were food insecure as a result of the Israeli blockade.

11. The Palestinian people's very existence was being targeted by Israeli occupation forces, which were destroying homes, evicting Bedouin residents of East Jerusalem, uprooting olive trees, rationing water access and restricting freedom of movement. In addition, Israel's actions in East Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, where it had prevented worshippers from praying at Muslim and Christian holy sites and abetted incursions by Israeli settlers, had been condemned by the international community as grave violations of international law.

12. The law was implemented selectively by Israeli occupation forces in the State of Palestine. Thousands of Palestinians, including children, had been imprisoned, and cases of torture and other forms of

ill-treatment had been reported. It was time for the Security Council to resume its efforts to achieve peace in the region on the basis of the relevant resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative. The international community had pledged \$5.4 billion to rebuild the Gaza Strip; in order to protect that investment, it was necessary to revive the peace process to enable the Palestinian people to live with dignity in an independent State of Palestine within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

13. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia) said that the report of the Special Committee ([A/69/355](#)) clearly illustrated Israel's continued violation of the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people and its non-cooperation with the Special Committee, despite the latter's repeated requests for meetings and access to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel continued to build and expand settlements and the separation wall, thus illegally undermining the territorial integrity of the Palestinian State.

14. Israeli occupying forces and Jewish extremists continued their incursions into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and their attacks on innocent Palestinians. Moreover, Israel remained in violation of its international legal obligations under the road map, failing to heed repeated calls from the international community to cease transferring its civilian population into the Occupied Palestinian Territory. As a result, hundreds of Palestinian families had been displaced from their homes, and their Palestinian residency had been revoked; thousands of Palestine refugees were also threatened with forcible transfer. In addition, Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem faced violence, discrimination and racism at the hands of Israeli extremists.

15. Namibia unequivocally condemned those actions, which were inflaming an already volatile situation and had the potential to further diminish the viability of the two-State solution. They attested to Israel's lack of genuine commitment to a peaceful solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. His Government called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to end its illegal blockade of Gaza and to cooperate with the Special Committee. The international community must demand that Israel should put an immediate end to its illegal settlement activities and other provocations, including in occupied East Jerusalem. Furthermore, the Human Rights Council should take immediate action to investigate genocidal actions against the Palestinian

people. For its part, Israel must ensure accountability for its repeated military operations in the Gaza Strip and cooperate with the independent international commission of inquiry.

16. The Organization and the international community must adopt measures to address Israel's track record of non-cooperation with the United Nations, particularly the implementation of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Namibia called for the immediate establishment of a committee to investigate the Israeli occupying Power's violations of Palestinians' human rights, and urged States to continue to provide the affected Palestinian communities with the necessary humanitarian assistance.

17. **Mr. Chir** (Algeria) said that his delegation regretted Israel's persistent disregard of the Special Committee's requests for access to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as Israel's continuous violations of the relevant United Nations resolutions. Algeria condemned the recent criminal military aggression perpetrated by Israel against the defenceless population of Gaza. The targeting of civilians, private property, infrastructure and United Nations buildings was tantamount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Israel's provocations in occupied East Jerusalem were particularly distressing; attempts to change the status quo of the holy sites and illegal settlement activity had fuelled tensions that could undermine the peace process. Algeria strongly condemned Israel's escalating settlement construction throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the seizure of land near the Palestinian town of Bethlehem.

18. Israel's ongoing violations had exacerbated conditions on the ground and deepened existing doubts about its claimed commitment to the two-State solution. The Algerian Government was particularly concerned about the disastrous impact of the seven-year blockade of Gaza on the humanitarian and economic situation of its 1.7 million inhabitants. Algeria called on Israel to lift the blockade and allow the resumption of normal socioeconomic activities in Gaza. Further, his delegation deplored the fact that over 5,000 Palestinians remained in Israeli prisons, as well as reports that detainees had been subjected to torture and psychological mistreatment, including denial of family visits, access to education and medical care. Israel must fulfil its obligations under

international humanitarian law by ensuring the safety and welfare of all prisoners.

19. In order to hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law and bring an end to its illegal actions, Algeria called for the timely dispatch of the independent international commission of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council in July 2014 to investigate all violations of international humanitarian and human rights law resulting from the recent Israeli military aggression in Gaza. Lastly, the international community should work seriously to achieve a permanent and sustainable political solution, namely the establishment of an independent, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. A long-term solution would require the withdrawal of occupation forces from all Arab lands.

20. **Mr. Adam** (Sudan) said that the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had deteriorated over the last year. Israeli forces had arbitrarily arrested defenceless Palestinian civilians, often using excessive force, and had destroyed homes and pursued a policy of building new settlements on Palestinian land. Such violations of international law must be investigated and their perpetrators held accountable.

21. The Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip had turned the territory into a vast prison with abysmal living conditions, from which protection of the most basic human rights was absent. The Sudan condemned Israel's recurrent crimes, such as the recent violation of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, and supported Palestinian efforts to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital and to ensure the return of Palestine refugees to their homes. His delegation urged the international community to put an end to Israel's persistent violations of international law and to implement all Security Council resolutions pertaining to the question of Palestine. Those efforts should lead to Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab lands and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine.

22. **Mr. Ben Sliman** (Tunisia) said that Israel continued to violate the human rights of Palestinians and other Arabs under its occupation, in contravention of its obligations, as an occupying Power, under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) and international humanitarian law.

Occupation forces and Israeli settlers continued to attack Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The recent desecration of the Al-Aqsa Mosque was part of a systematic Israeli campaign to alter the legal status of East Jerusalem. Tunisia forcefully condemned those practices and rejected Israeli attempts to Judaize Jerusalem and violate Islamic and Christian holy sites.

23. The most recent Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip had resulted in a high number of civilian casualties. Damage to infrastructure had deprived the civilian population of many basic needs. Tunisia reaffirmed its support for the independent international commission of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council to investigate the Israeli military campaign against Gaza. It also called on Israel to lift the blockade of the Gaza Strip, reopen all crossing points and ensure the free movement of persons and goods and the delivery of humanitarian aid. In that context, it welcomed the outcome of the international donor conference held in Cairo in October 2014 and urged all parties to fulfil their pledges.

24. Israeli occupation forces persisted in their policy of settlement expansion in spite of the broad international consensus against it. That policy entailed the forced transfer of Palestinian communities. Furthermore, the blockade of Gaza, which had lasted over eight years, and the degradation and ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli custody were part of Israel's broader attempt to hobble the peace process. As the current situation was unacceptable, the international community must assume full responsibility for bringing the illegal Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory to an end and substantively changing the way in which the Security Council dealt with the question of Palestine. That would create real opportunities to attain a just and comprehensive settlement based on the two-State solution. In closing, Tunisia reiterated its full support for the establishment of an independent, sovereign, viable and geopolitically unified State of Palestine within the 1967 borders and encompassing the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

25. **Ms. Alsuwaidi** (United Arab Emirates), welcoming the recent decision by Sweden to recognize the State of Palestine, said that the report of the Special Committee highlighted the dangerous violations of international law and international humanitarian law that had been perpetrated by Israel against the

inhabitants of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan over decades. Thousands of Palestinian detainees, including women and children, were being subjected to torture, corporal punishment and other forms of ill-treatment and were prevented from receiving medical care.

26. Israeli settlers routinely inflicted violence on Palestinians in full view of the Israeli authorities. The war waged by Israel against Gaza in the summer of 2014 had caused a humanitarian crisis as a result of the savage, deliberate destruction of residential areas, the territory's sole power plant, schools, hospitals and water and sanitation networks. Israeli authorities continued to impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the affected population. Moreover, Israel's attempts to desecrate the Al-Aqsa Mosque and other holy sites in Jerusalem and to alter the Islamic nature of the site constituted a flagrant violation of the principles of Muslims worldwide.

27. Her Government condemned all Israeli abuses in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and other occupied Arab lands, and particularly deplored Israel's illegal settlement activities, including the recent decision by that country's Prime Minister to build over a thousand new housing units in East Jerusalem. In its most recent raid on the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, Israel had used tear gas on Palestinians present at the site. Such acts were part of a concerted effort to Judaize the first *qibla* and the third holiest site in Islam. Civilized societies must oppose both the extremism of the so-called ISIL and that of Israel, which provoked Muslims and violated the sanctity of their holy sites.

28. The United Arab Emirates urged the international community to compel Israel to put an end to its settlement policy and its aggression in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to comply with its obligations under international law and international human rights law. The international community should heed all the recommendations set out in the Special Committee's report (A/69/355), promote the mandate of the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and ensure future payment of reparations, and protect the Palestinian people and the residents of the Syrian Golan from Israeli occupation practices. Her Government hoped that the General Assembly would strengthen the Special Committee's mandate until Israel had withdrawn completely from the Occupied

Palestinian Territory and other occupied Arab territories.

29. **Mr. Abuhadida** (Kuwait) said that Israel continued its systematic settlement expansion in defiance of international law and duly adopted resolutions. Its recent decision to build 1,000 new settlement units in East Jerusalem were the clearest proof of its obstinacy and insistence on provoking Arab and Islamic peoples worldwide. Such actions also undermined Israel's credibility in efforts to reach a lasting political settlement that included the establishment of an independent State of Palestine within the 1967 borders.

30. Israel's savage attack on Gaza in July 2014 had wreaked unprecedented devastation. Israel's imposition of the logic of force, regardless of the repercussions, stood in sharp contrast with the international community's calls for it to abide by the principles of international law. For its part, Kuwait reaffirmed its full support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to secure its legitimate political rights, end the Israeli occupation of its land within a specific time frame and establish an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. His country also demanded the release of Palestinian prisoners and the dispatch of an international fact-finding mission to investigate the conditions in Israeli occupation prisons and verify the extent of Israel's compliance with international law in that regard. Kuwait rejected Israel's illegal and inhuman blockade of the Gaza Strip and demanded that it should implement United Nations resolutions calling for its withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories.

31. His delegation reiterated its support for Palestine's request for full membership in the United Nations. It valued the efforts of the United States of America to bring about a breakthrough in the peace process and hoped that all parties would put pressure on Israel to accept internationally agreed resolutions. The international community should assume responsibility for compelling Israel to cooperate with the Special Committee and implement its recommendations, thereby ending its flagrant violations of international humanitarian law in the occupied territories.

32. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh) said that Israel's wanton and indiscriminate killing of over 2,200 unarmed innocents in Gaza during its "Operation Protective Edge" campaign in July 2014 was all the

more appalling in light of the fact that Israel's own people had suffered discrimination and ill-treatment for years. The people of Israel had clearly failed to learn the lessons of their own history and to uphold the human dignity of others. Nevertheless, he hoped that they would reflect upon the savage and disproportionate actions of their Government and end the age-old hatred and killing by implementing the two-State solution.

33. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as at 31 July 2014, the number of displaced Palestinians in the Gaza Strip alone had amounted to more than 273,000, the vast majority of whom had been forced to take shelter in United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools. The Agency, some of whose buildings had been destroyed and personnel had been killed by the bombing campaign, had exceeded its capacity to absorb the displaced, increasing the risk of epidemics due to overcrowding. The water supply had been disrupted and schools and health centres had been damaged and were faced with shortages, causing the price of essential goods to skyrocket. In addition, journalists had been killed and Palestinian juveniles had been kidnapped, tortured and used as human shields by Israeli soldiers. The right to self-defence enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations did not permit such unjustifiable savagery, which was in clear violation of international humanitarian and human rights law and in some cases was tantamount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

34. Israel's continued expansion of settlements and approval of new settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory posed an existential threat to the Palestinian State and the two-State solution. Moreover, the violation by Israel of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination — qualified by the International Court of Justice as a violation of an obligation *erga omnes* — was a matter of concern to all States. The international community must therefore exert pressure on the Israeli Government to halt the expansion of illegal settlements, freeze the expansion plan and dismantle existing settlements, in line with its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

35. The over 5,000 Palestinian detainees in Israeli custody, nearly 200 of whom were children, were subjected to inhumane, brutal treatment. Bangladesh urged the Israeli Government to safeguard all

inhabitants against acts of violence; to cease the illegal detention of Palestinians; to stop destroying homes and confiscating land; to desist from transferring Israelis into the territories it occupied; to lift its embargo against Palestinians; and to open all border crossings to allow free movement of goods, persons and humanitarian aid. Reiterating its full solidarity with the Palestinian people, his Government demanded Israel's complete and unconditional withdrawal from the Occupied Palestinian Territory and all other occupied Arab lands.

36. **Ms. Sameer** (Maldives) said that the report of the Special Committee ([A/69/355](#)) once again demonstrated that it was urgent, for the sake of the people of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, that the Israeli Government should fulfil the duties that came with the privilege of membership in the United Nations, a privilege that Palestine was still unjustly denied. Only statehood for Palestine and a two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, would ensure long-term peace in the Middle East.

37. The grave human rights abuses inflicted upon the Palestinian people by Israel had been compounded by that country's military operations in the Gaza Strip in 2014 and the authorities' interference with humanitarian aid to the area. The Gaza blockade constituted collective punishment of the Palestinian people and must be lifted.

38. The Israeli Government continued to use zoning laws to further expand settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and applied discriminatory residency laws in East Jerusalem. In the virtual absence of legal remedies, Palestinian property continued to be destroyed and Palestinians themselves were subjected to brutal physical violence, which was either ignored or perpetrated by Israeli security forces. The long-term psychological effects on the inhabitants of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially children, would be devastating. Also distressing was the ill-treatment of children in Israeli detention.

39. Her Government supported the Special Committee's recommendations and called upon Israel to cooperate with that Committee. In addition, it urged the Israeli Government to put a halt to new settlements, dismantle existing settlements and desist from its flagrant violation of international law and United Nations resolutions. Her country reaffirmed its

solidarity with the cause of the State of Palestine, as Palestinians should be able to enjoy protection within their borders and the full exercise of their human rights. All relevant United Nations entities must take immediate steps to protect civilians living under foreign occupation and domination, including those in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan.

40. **Mr. Sylla** (Senegal) said that his delegation hoped that the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Committee ([A/69/355](#)) would not, as in previous years, remain a dead letter. Jerusalem was racked by tensions incited by the unacceptable behaviour of the Israeli police forces in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Such counterproductive and useless provocation must cease, as it constituted an attack on the city's holy status as the common patrimony of the three revealed religions.

41. The report attested to Israel's continued violation of its obligations as an occupying Power and its refusal to uphold human rights and international humanitarian law. The overall situation had deteriorated significantly as a result of the brutal 50-day military campaign against the Gaza Strip, which amounted to collective punishment of its civilian population.

42. Despite Israel's non-cooperation in the preparation of the report of the Special Committee, the latter had been able to gather ample information on multiple human rights violations, including degrading treatment of Palestinian prisoners, excessive use of force, arbitrary restrictions on access to parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the illegal expansion of settlements and the gratuitous and systematic violence inflicted on Palestinians by Israeli settlers. Israel's withdrawal from the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the immediate cessation of settlement expansion were prerequisites for the Palestinian people's full enjoyment of its rights.

43. Senegal urged the international community, in particular the Security Council, to ensure the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the Special Committee in order to promote and protect the rights of the Palestinian and Arab peoples living under occupation.

44. **Mr. Kim** Yong Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation was gravely concerned about the continued Israeli violations of the human rights of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples.

Israel's ruthless military attacks in July 2014, which had resulted in a death toll in the thousands and the destruction of homes and infrastructure, constituted crimes against humanity. Nevertheless, the Security Council had not taken any measures to put an end to those inhumane acts. Such inaction was directly related to the political and strategic interest of the United States of America in supporting Israel.

45. The dire situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory underscored the urgency of resolving the Middle East conflict, including the question of Palestine. Such issues should be resolved in the interest of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and international law. Israel must immediately withdraw from all occupied Arab territories, including the Golan, and compensate the Arab peoples for the moral and material damage inflicted on them. In closing, he reiterated his delegation's support for the Palestinian people's fight to regain its legitimate national rights and establish an independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

46. **Mr. Mashabane** (South Africa) said that South Africa welcomed the accession of the State of Palestine to various international treaties and hoped that that process would guarantee the Palestinian people protection and access to justice. His delegation concurred with the recommendations highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (A/69/347) calling upon Israel to comply fully 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* and to respect its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. Israel must cease all actions that led directly or indirectly to forced evictions or transfers of civilians, including demolitions, confiscations and plans for demolitions. In particular, Israel's continued illegal settlement activities were a wilful attempt to undermine efforts towards a negotiated political settlement.

47. His delegation was especially concerned about reports of medical neglect, torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian women and children in Israeli custody; in that regard, it called for the Israeli Government to either charge or release detainees held in administrative detention. Israel must also lift the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip, which had recently entered its eighth year and continued to aggravate the already dire

humanitarian situation in the territory. Lastly, he reiterated South Africa's support for the current ceasefire agreement between Israel and the Palestinians and for the continuation of the just Palestinian struggle for self-determination, independence and sovereignty, in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

48. **Mr. Alnaqshabandi** (Iraq) said that the Israeli occupation authorities had committed flagrant human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including forced evacuation of civilians, home demolitions, construction of the separation wall and settlements, arbitrary arrests of civilians, continued attempts to isolate East Jerusalem from the remaining Arab territories, and attacks on worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque and obstruction of access to the holy site. The most recent Israeli military attack on the Gaza Strip had killed over 2,000 civilians, including women and children, and had displaced thousands more, in addition to destroying infrastructure, schools and hospitals. Israel's conduct was in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

49. The continued Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan constituted a violation of international human rights law and United Nations resolutions calling for Israel's withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967. In closing, his delegation stressed the importance of the resumption of negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli occupation Government and of ensuring that the latter desisted from measures to alter the character of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and cooperated with international efforts to reach a just, comprehensive and lasting resolution of the conflict, culminating in the establishment of a State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, within the 1967 borders.

50. **Mr. Sharoni** (Israel) said that the current meeting offered yet another window into the theatre of the absurd. Instead of seeking to advance human rights or promote Palestinian development, the report of the Special Committee (A/69/355) furthered a biased narrative that advanced a clear political agenda aimed at discrediting Israel. While his Government was committed to facilitating international efforts to develop the Gaza Strip and assist the Palestinians in building a strong and vibrant economy, it believed that development must go hand in hand with the demilitarization of Gaza. In return for its 2005 withdrawal from Gaza to the pre-1967 borders, evacuation of all Israeli settlements and army bases

and handover of the territory to the Palestinian Authority, Israel had been repaid with a decade of terrorist attacks, missiles and terror tunnels. During that time, Hamas had stolen hundreds of millions of aid dollars intended for the development of Gaza to build its terror infrastructure. Mechanisms must be put in place to certify that all funding and construction materials reached their intended humanitarian destination. Israel, together with the Palestinians and the United Nations, had agreed to establish a mechanism to rehabilitate the Gaza Strip that also addressed Israel's legitimate security concerns and enabled the Palestinian Authority to play a central role in governing Gaza.

51. Extremist ideology was spreading throughout the Middle East like a malignant disease, with groups such as ISIS, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram, Hezbollah and Hamas espousing a fundamentalist vision in which minorities were persecuted, women were subjugated and freedoms were repressed. Instead of pointing fingers at Israel, which was combating that enemy on the front lines, Member States should aim their condemnations at extremists whose sole interest was inflaming the region. In the summer of 2014, his country had been the target of Hamas's unrelenting terrorist attacks for 50 days, an assault that no country should be expected to tolerate. In response, Israel had launched Operation Protective Edge in self-defence and had done everything in its power to avoid harming innocent civilians. In addition, it had accepted 11 different ceasefire proposals, but Hamas had rejected every one and had continued to fire rockets. Every civilian casualty had been a tragedy, but the blame for the broader tragedy lay squarely with Hamas. Ensuring the demilitarization of Gaza was the only way to bring about a durable and sustained quiet in the region.

52. Israel had recently adopted a number of measures to stimulate economic growth in the West Bank and was taking steps to increase the flow of goods and people between the West Bank and Gaza. It had also developed a new programme that allowed 20 Palestinian factories in Area C to export directly to the Israeli market without undergoing additional security checks. Dialogues between the Israeli and Palestinian Ministries of Finance had recently resumed and had resulted in real-time information sharing between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Continued Israeli investment in upgrading commercial crossings had led to an increase in the volume of goods

transferred in the last few months. Israel supported international involvement in developing industrial zones in the West Bank, as those zones would create thousands of jobs. Nevertheless, none of those achievements or developments had been cited in the Special Committee's report.

53. The terrorist attack that had taken place a few days earlier in Jerusalem, like other attacks, had been directly linked to statements of incitement against Israel by the Palestinian leadership. Such statements and the glorification of terrorists only fuelled hatred, violence and extremism. The Palestinian Authority must put an immediate end to ongoing incitement against Israel in the Palestinian media and in schools. It must also play a constructive role by demonstrating a commitment to bilateral negotiations instead of unilateral actions, which would only hold the region captive to resentment and hatred and would leave a legacy of violence and intolerance to future generations. Only direct negotiations would yield concrete solutions to the challenges at hand. Israel called on its Arab neighbours to join it in taking concrete and courageous steps towards peace and to use the Committee's resources to improve the lives of the people in the region.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

54. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the Special Committee was neither biased nor one-sided. It had considered the situation within the framework of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. It had reported, not distorted, the facts regarding the egregious, systematic violations perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people under its occupation. Israel's deliberate, consistent non-compliance with international law and its complete disrespect for the United Nations and the international community set the country apart. Nevertheless, Israel continued to justify its violations by distorting the truth and attacking those who spoke it, even in the Fourth Committee, before which it had had the audacity to present its candidacy as Vice-Chair after decades of disregarding the Committee's resolutions.

55. In his statement, the representative of Israel had failed to recognize the core of the ongoing conflict, which was his country's decades-long occupation of Palestinian land and its oppression, dispossession and

subjugation of the Palestinian people. Outright denial of the occupation was the newest element of Israeli propaganda. The Gaza Strip remained occupied territory that was both blockaded and controlled by Israel from the land, air and sea, a fact that was recognized by the overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations. Israel must recognize the brutality and criminality of its occupation and the international community's complete rejection of it and unanimous demands for its end. Only recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people and an end to the illegitimate occupation could lead to a viable, just solution whereby peace could be achieved and the Palestinian people could truly know the freedom, peace, security and dignity that they had long been denied by the occupation.

56. The notion that Israel was helping the Palestinian people by permitting the delivery of assistance while continuing to commit countless crimes was based on a flawed and destructive logic that was antithetical to peace. The international community had made its position regarding Israel's illegal policies and practices in the occupied State of Palestine abundantly clear, as demonstrated by the many compelling expressions of solidarity with and principled support for the Palestinian people during the Committee's deliberations.

57. **Mr. Abdul Razak** (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Vice-Chair of the Special Committee, said that Israel should heed the Special Committee's recommendations regarding Israel's cooperation with it in implementing its mandate, in accordance with Israel's obligations as a Member State. As in previous years, Israel had not responded to the Special Committee's request for a meeting, nor had it cooperated with the Special Committee's field mission earlier in 2014. As a result, the Special Committee had been unable to gain access to the occupied territories to which its mandate related.

58. The Special Committee had taken great care to remain objective in the conduct of its work. Its report was not intended to be political and had been based, inter alia, on interviews with United Nations officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations and the sworn testimonies of actual victims and witnesses of Israeli violations from within and outside Israel and the occupied territories. Despite Israel's continued non-cooperation, the Special Committee had endeavoured to incorporate, where available, views

and information from various official Israeli sources. The report covered the period from 27 June 2013 to 5 June 2014, although important information received up until August 2014 had been considered where relevant. For instance, the views of an Israeli medical association that opposed the force-feeding of Palestinian detainees on hunger strikes had been taken into account, as had the recommendations of the Israeli Government-appointed Turkel Commission, which had reviewed the country's accountability mechanisms.

59. The best way for Israel to dispel its belief that the work of the Special Committee offered a one-sided narrative was to agree to that Committee's requests for meetings and provide information of the kind that had been shared at the current meeting by the representative of Israel. Israeli authorities should also allow access to the Occupied Palestinian Territory so that the situation on the ground could be reflected in future reports. For its part, the Special Committee would continue to make every effort to implement the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

60. **Mr. Sharoni** (Israel) said that Israel was proud to be Vice-Chair of the esteemed Committee. Turning to the comments made by Committee members, he stressed that the Middle East was complex enough without being cynically used by the representatives of Bolivia, Bangladesh, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Sudan to divert attention from the humanitarian and economic troubles in their countries. It was truly absurd to hear some of the world's most oppressive tyrannies lecture Israel about human rights.

61. Peacemaking required compromise, hard choices and courageous leaders who embraced tolerance, denounced prejudice and rejected terrorism. When Israel had dealt with leaders willing to make peace, it had done so. The remarks made by some delegations underscored the tendency to point fingers instead of taking responsibility. He wondered why they did not condemn Hamas for using Palestinians as human shields and stealing from them to buy rockets and build terror tunnels, and why anyone would favour destructive unilateral actions over constructive bilateral efforts. In order to secure a brighter future, Palestinians must renounce the dead-end path of unilateralism and start making history by making peace. Only through direct negotiations would it be possible to find concrete solutions to the challenges at hand.

62. **Ms. Al Turk** (Lebanon) reminded the representative of Israel that the subject at hand was illegal Israeli practices. Speaker after speaker had addressed those practices, and figures had clearly attested to the scope of the atrocities. Her delegation had stated on several occasions that peace was possible. It was in her country, Lebanon, that Arab leaders had gathered 12 years earlier to launch the Arab Peace Initiative. In the years since, Israel had resorted to military aggression a number of times, most recently against Gaza in the summer of 2014.

63. **Mr. Sharoni** (Israel) said that his delegation welcomed the interest in Palestinian rights expressed by the representative of Lebanon. However, before discussing Israel, she should consider the state of refugee camps throughout Lebanon, where Palestinians were kept in some of the worst conditions in the region and were subjected to consistent violence, extreme discrimination and economic and social oppression.

64. **Mr. Llorentty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), recalling the countless United Nations resolutions condemning the criminal behaviour of the State of Israel, said that the international community had reached a critical juncture. It was imperative to take a stand and denounce the genocidal actions perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people, including the construction of the wall and illegal settlements, persecution, and the imprisonment of children, women and the aged, lest a failure to do so should be construed as support for such acts. The Plurinational State of Bolivia would therefore continue to condemn Israel's conduct, both at the United Nations and in other forums.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.