



STATEMENT BY DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND
MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 30 – REPORT OF THE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN
RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES AT THE 63RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON NOVEMBER 05, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

India appreciates the opportunity to discuss the 40th annual report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs in the occupied territories. We thank the members of this Committee for their efforts on behalf of all Member States.

The report notes, once again, the "serious deterioration" of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the Syrian Golan, all of which arise from the Israeli occupation. The peoples of these territories continue to suffer from various types of Israeli military action, resulting in a significant toll of injuries and loss of life. Damage to infrastructure and the policy of isolating an entire section of the population in Gaza contributes to a worsening of the human rights situation of the people, irrespective of whether one chooses to call it "collective punishment" or not. Cumulatively, restrictions on access, the expansion of settlements and the continued construction of the separation wall, isolation of territories, deprivation of energy and water, and continued violence against civilian populations breed frustration, rage and privation. As a result, economic hardship and alienation creates fertile ground for extremism, which, in turn, causes violent action and reaction. Thus, the cycle of violence and counter-violence is perpetuated, making peace, dialogue and compromise harder to achieve.

Mr. Chairman,

The Report of the Special Committee reiterates many of its previous recommendations, underscoring how important it is for us to collectively urge the implementation of its conclusions. This report, and its predecessors, clearly outlines measurable failure to raise human rights standards of the people in the Occupied Territories in nine essential

areas. There is, therefore, a need for measures to be taken by all parties, but beginning with the Government of Israel, including to stop its policy of confiscation of Palestinian land, not only for the impact it has on the present, but also given its potential impact in undermining a solution in future. Much more requires to be done by Israel in the Occupied Territories, including to restore the freedom of movement for Palestinians, to expand access, to end closures, especially in Gaza, and to ensure respect for international law and the principle of appropriate use of means and methods of warfare. Similarly, the use of mass arrests, arbitrary detentions and curtailment of basic services must cease. The expansion of settlements, especially over the past year, is particularly worrisome. Such developments underscore the necessity of Israel fully abiding by its own commitments under the roadmap.

At the same time, the report notes the need for all Palestinian parties to comply fully with the requirements of the road map, as elaborated by the Quartet, and to fully restore the rule of law in areas under its control. Separately, we welcome efforts by regional States to address the division in Palestinian polity and society.

Mr. Chairman,

India unequivocally condemns all acts of terrorism, as well as any provocation and incitement to violence in the strongest terms. Equally, we have always criticized harsh and disproportionate retaliatory measures, and any measures that adversely affect communities as a whole. We exhort all parties to exercise utmost restraint, to abide by their commitments under the Road Map, and to take forward the ongoing negotiations to reach a peaceful solution. The contours of a just and mutually-acceptable solution are well-known: the goal is to achieve, in a reasonable time-frame, a sovereign, independent, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, within well-defined and secure borders, living side-by-side and at peace with Israel. The commitment of the international community to reaching such a solution remains undiminished. We hope for a renewed effort to do so, in pursuance of the objective established at Annapolis last year.

Mr. Chairman,

It is in this context that we support giving the Special Committee a renewed mandate "in line with current realities". We also support the resolutions tabled under this Agenda item.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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