



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

(Please check against delivery)

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hussein Haniff,
Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations,
at the Debate on
The Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestine Question,
at the United Nations Security Council,
New York, 23 January 2013**

Mr. President,

On the outset, I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to you, and your country, Pakistan, on assuming the Presidency of the Security Council for this month. On a similar note, I wish to thank Mr. Robert Serry, Special Coordinator of the Middle East Process for his statement. My delegation wishes to associates itself with the statements made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by Djibouti on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

2. My delegation commends the convening of this important debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Question of Palestine. Today, the situation in Middle East continues to be the focus of our work. I take this opportunity to congratulate the State of Palestine for its elevated status in the General Assembly. Malaysia is confident that Palestine would be accorded its rightful place among the community of nations in the United Nations soon.

Mr. President,

3. In November last year, we witnessed the will of the international community when the UN General Assembly accorded Palestine the non-member observer state status. While we rejoice of this development, we condemn the racist and uncivilised actions of Israel in relation to this event since then. Israel has continued its expansionist policy by approving new illegal settlements in the West Bank and the E1 area close to East Jerusalem. On 8 January, PM Nentanyahu claimed that Israel's construction and expansion of these illegal settlements do not pose any threat to the peace process. This is absurd and preposterous. This move by Israel is a clear proof that Israel views international law and world opinion with disdain. What is more apparent is that Israel is not interested in peace. My delegation views that further expansion of illegal settlements will scuttle the two-State solution.

4. The reality on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continues to be illegally altered by Israel. Israel seems adamant at destroying the will of the Palestinians to govern themselves. Israel's seizure of Palestinian tax revenues is not only unlawful and shameful, but another act of atrocity aimed to weaken and punish the Palestinian National Authority. The world cannot turn a blind eye to these illegal actions by Israel. Major powers should proof to the world that their foreign policy and actions on the issue of Palestine are decided in their capitals, and not in Tel Aviv.

Mr. President,

5. Israel must be made to realise that its future and security lies within the principles of the establishment of a Palestinian State under the two-State solution, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State. Israel must also cease all illegal settlement activities and the demolition of Palestinian structures which are in violation of international law. Israel must be forced to respect and restore the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Israel must heed to international calls to lift the illegal blockade on Gaza immediately. Only then can Israel and Palestinians live side by side in peace and security.

6. If seeing is believing, than Malaysia believes that the situation in the OPT needs our fullest and immediate attention. My delegation would like to underscore the urgency to resume direct negotiations. We urge members of the Quartet to show political leadership and intensify efforts in persuading Israel to return to negotiations. My delegation is of the view that the peace talks must resume before any hope of the two-State solution dissipates completely. We must come together to ensure that Israel is not allowed to further destroy any hope of peace.

7. My delegation also wants to emphasise that the territorial integrity and independence of Syria and Lebanon cannot be denied. Their internationally recognised territories have been under continued occupation by Israel. Malaysia sees no other way, but for Israel to cease all illegal settlement activities and to withdraw from the Syrian Golan based on 4 June 1967 borders. Malaysia also calls Israel to withdraw from all occupied Lebanese territory immediately without any conditions. Israel must respect all relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolutions 497 (1981) on the Syrian Golan and 1701(2006) regarding the occupied Lebanese territory.

Mr. President,

8. My delegation would also like to underline our concerns on the humanitarian situation in Syria. We believe a political solution to this protracted crisis is still achievable. We underscore the significance of the Joint Communiqué of the Action Group for Syria in Geneva of 30 June 2012, as an important document for all sides to implement. We strongly believe that a Syrian led process for Syria is viable, and an inclusive political solution that is acceptable to the Syrian people, which meets the collective aspirations and legitimate rights of the people, must be the prime motivation of all parties involved.

9. Malaysia is also deeply concerned with the humanitarian situation of the estimated four million displaced persons who are seeking safety, shelter and other basic needs in Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Egypt. We urge the international community to extend assistance in support of the UN Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan to alleviate the sufferings of the people due to the violence.

Mr. President,

10. The impasse in the Middle East is not impossible to resolve, but we need pragmatic solutions based on international principles and norms. It requires all influential powers to display strong political leadership to consider mutually reinforcing needs of peoples and nations in the region. It goes without saying that the Security Council must play its intended role by fulfilling its mandate to enforce the Council's resolutions in the quest for a sustainable solution to the Question of Palestine, thus, returning its credibility. These efforts, we must collectively pledge, to rid of the world of insecurity and conflict, and replacing them with sustainable peace and security.

I thank you, Mr. President.