



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

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**Statement by Mr. Saiful Azam Martinus Abdullah,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations,
at the Open Debate on
The Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestine Question,
at the United Nations Security Council,
New York, 24 April 2013**

Mr. President,

I wish to thank you and your country Rwanda, for convening this important open debate in the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. My delegation also expresses its appreciation to Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs for his earlier briefing. Malaysia associates itself with the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and with the statement delivered by Djibouti on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

Mr. President,

Let me begin by addressing the most pressing priority for my delegation, which is the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Despite last month's visit to the Middle East by the President of the United States, we have yet to see any meaningful progress on a two-State solution.

Malaysia is deeply disturbed on the condition of thousands of Palestinian prisoners and detainees who are under unlawful detention by the occupying Power. It is a mockery to the rule of law that Israel, which again and again declares itself as the only democracy in the Middle East, unlawfully detains elected Palestinian officials as well as women and children.

We are extremely concerned that a number of detainees have died in prison, which many Palestinians fear was due to torture by their Israeli captors. My delegation also condemns the disproportionate use of violence by Israel against peaceful protestors who opposed the treatment of Palestinian prisoners, and this had unfortunately resulted in casualties, including several teenagers.

Mr. President,

Malaysia continues to strongly condemn the ongoing settlement activities by Israel, which the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice, as well as the Security Council itself have all declared illegal. If indeed there is a sincere belief that these settlements should be outlawed, then these same bodies should join Malaysia to condemn the even more heinous practices of preventing Palestinians to build and farm in their own lands.

We should not fool ourselves into believing that Israeli settlers are innocently exploring untaken plots of land and untapped resources, seeking a brighter and more virtuous future. The harsh reality is these illegal settlers have consistently engaged in violence and harassment towards Palestinians, and invaded, stole from or damaged Palestinian-owned olive groves, deliberately done during the olive harvest period.

Even the water from aquifers in the region is diverted by settlers into Israeli pipes, which amongst others will be used for irrigating crops originally tended by Palestinians. One does not need to hazard a guess who will also benefit from selling back overpriced water to its rightful Palestinian owners, who are themselves denied the right to drill for water in their lands.

Sadly, while at the village level Israeli settlers coordinate to build up houses on Palestinian soil, the macro-level planning and development on the E1 area is just as coordinated in preventing the continuity and viability of the State of Palestine. The international community may have awoken a little too late to prevent these illegal settlement activities, but we should not hesitate now to condemn and take action on incidents of settler violence and other illegal acts, before the consequences become even greater.

The illegal blockade in Gaza remains in place despite the urgent need to resolve the serious humanitarian situation there especially with regard to food security of the population. Israel also continues to restrict the entry of building materials, including those which could be utilised for building much-needed educational and health facilities. The occupying Power is literally taking away the building blocks for the peace process, and at the same time is starving the population to death. As such, Malaysia demands a complete and immediate end to this illegal blockade.

What then is left for the Palestinians when their homes, lands, food, water, groves, mosques, schools and hospitals are taken away? There are many wrongs which need to be righted when it comes to the question of Palestine. In this regard, Malaysia reiterates its support for the achievement of the independence of the State of Palestine in all of the Palestinian Territory occupied by Israel in 1967, including East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. President,

Malaysia would also like to underline our concerns on the situation in Syria. We have always believed that a political solution to this crisis is still achievable, but that it should be based on the Security Council Resolutions 2042 and 2043, as well as the Joint Communique of the Action Group for Syria in Geneva of 30 June 2012. My delegation underlines the need for a Syrian-led inclusive political process which must be acceptable to the Syrian people and which meets the collective aspirations and legitimate rights of the people.

Thank you Mr. President.