



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

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**STATEMENT BY
H.E. AMBASSADOR HUSSEIN HANIFF
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AT THE OPEN DEBATE ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST,
INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION,
AT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
NEW YORK, 23 JULY 2013**

Madam President,

At the outset, I wish to thank you for convening this open debate. My delegation also wishes to thank Mr. Robert Serry, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his statement. Malaysia associates itself with the statement to be made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by Djibouti on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Madam President,

2. Malaysians join other Muslims around the world in observing this Islamic holy month of Ramadan. At the same time, our thoughts are with our fellow *ummah* who are facing oppression and subjugation due to the ongoing illegal Israeli occupation. As a member of the UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices in the Occupied Territories, we participated in a fact-finding mission to Amman and Cairo last month, where we heard disturbing testimonies by witnesses. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territory continues to deteriorate, and as Israel continues to illegally build settlements, the window for peace is slowly closing.

3. The UN Special Committee was told that Israel had re-instated the three nautical mile limit on fishermen from Gaza and had conducted numerous arrests, as well as confiscated boats. This has led to a reduction of 60% in the total fish caught this year, which in turn has contributed to 80% poverty rate among Palestinian fishermen. We also received testimony that farmers from Gaza had to face the danger of farming on their own lands, which falls in the “deadly buffer zone”, where Israeli soldiers have indiscriminately fired at persons as far as 300 – 1000 metres away. By the end of last year, this heinous practice had claimed the lives of five Palestinians and resulted in another 92 injuries.

4. The economic component of the blockade on Gaza, including the near total restriction on exports, is producing chilling results. My delegation reiterates our condemnation of this illegal blockade, which is now in its 7th year, and calls for an end to such cynical and deliberate Israeli policies of collective punishment towards the Palestinian people.

5. My delegation also remains deeply concerned with the illegal detention of over 5,000 Palestinian prisoners. What is more alarming is the detention of approximately 200 Palestinian children. These children have been denied request to be accompanied by their parents, access to a lawyer and bail, and in some cases have even faced solitary detention. This situation and the appalling conditions the children have had to endure will do nothing but inflict long-term psychological damage on such young minds. It is due to this that we demand the release of all Palestinian children in Israeli detention centres.

Madam President,

6. It is no surprise to us that Israel also continues to contravene international law with impunity elsewhere in the Middle East. Early this year, Israel granted exclusive rights to a US-Israeli company to drill for oil in half of the occupied Syrian Golan. This is a blatant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Pillaging and profiteering from the illegal exploitation of occupied territories is unacceptable. Israel must withdraw fully from the occupied Syrian Golan, in line with UNSC resolution 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981). In this connection, my delegation also condemns the repeated intrusions by the Israeli air force into Lebanese airspace, in violation of UNSC resolution 1701 (2011).

Madam President,

7. With regard to the Middle East peace process, Malaysia is keenly observing the developments leading up to a potential resumption of direct negotiations. We recognize the progress made by the shuttle diplomacy of United States Secretary of State John Kerry, and we wish him well and offer our support to his tireless efforts in trying to bring the two sides together.

8. One could be cynical about missed opportunities to find peace in the Middle East. In our view, this cannot go on. We must grab every opportunity directed towards achieving the kind of progress needed before it becomes too late. It is, therefore, timely to reiterate our support towards a two-state solution, based on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.

9. My delegation also commends the European Union for its recently announced Commission Guidelines, which backs up its positions and political commitments with effective sanctions against Israeli settlement practices. It is not just enough to say that settlements are unlawful and illegitimate, as this has already been declared too many times by this Organization and its various subsidiary bodies. More must be done and, in

this regard, we look forward to the implementation of policies such as those announced by the EU to demonstrate to Israel the consequences of their illegitimate acts.

Madam President,

10. Turning to the situation in Syria, Malaysia welcomes the US-Russia initiative to organize an international conference, and we stress the need for the immediate cessation of violence as well as the importance of dialogue to reach a political solution. Malaysians empathize with the suffering of the Syrian people. Nevertheless, in our view, only the Syrian people can decide on their own destiny. As such, we continue to believe that a Syrian-led inclusive political process is the way forward, based on UNSC Resolutions 2042 (2012) and 2043 (2012), as well as the Joint Communique of the Action Group of Syria issued in Geneva on 30 June 2012.

11. Malaysia also reiterates its support for Lebanon in its efforts to complete the liberation of all its territories. On this, we urge Israel to fully implement UNSC Resolution 1701(2006), which calls for a permanent ceasefire and for the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, with full respect for the Blue Line.

Thank you, Madam President.