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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, 29 APRIL 2014**

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Madam President,

1. I thank you 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 Robert Serry, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his earlier briefing. Malaysia associates itself with the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and with the statement made by Guinea on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

Madam President,

2. I wish to thank Ambassador Riyad Mansour, the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, for his statement earlier this morning. Malaysia reaffirms our principled support for a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, which recognises the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people for an independent State living side by side in peace and security with Israel, based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

3. Malaysia has remained committed towards the implementation of internationally recognised initiatives such as the Arab Peace Initiative, the Oslo Accords, the Quartet Road Map, the Madrid Terms of Reference, and relevant Security Council resolutions. We are now seeing a significant juncture in the Middle East peace process. The Palestinian people are joining hands in unity, and their leadership is intensifying their efforts towards independence. Israel on the other hand is sending dangerous signs that it is not ready for peace, and is escalating illegal and provocative actions on the ground. Despite the efforts by United States Secretary of State John Kerry to facilitate direct negotiations, what we have observed thus far only demonstrates the asymmetry between the occupied and the occupier.

4. Malaysia remains steadfast in assisting the Palestinian people on their course towards establishing the framework to administer a sovereign Palestinian State. In this connection, my delegation welcomes the decision by the Palestinian leadership to accede to 15 international conventions, and we reaffirm our long standing commitment in supporting Palestine's continuous efforts to obtain diplomatic and legal recognition in the UN and other international organizations.

5. Malaysia has always supported a consolidated national unity between Fatah and Hamas, and we commend both sides on the reconciliation agreement which was achieved last week. However, my delegation regrets that this was met by the Israeli side with the suspension of negotiations, as well as further economic sanctions in addition to those imposed when Palestine signed the international conventions.

6. We continue to be gravely concerned on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Malaysia strongly condemns the brazen desecration and illegal invasions of the Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli security forces and extremist settlers, which had intensified in recent days following the debate by the Israeli parliament on sovereignty over the holy site. The Security Council had pronounced itself on the status of Jerusalem through numerous resolutions from 1968 to 1980, and specifically on Israeli violations of Al-Aqsa Mosque through resolutions 672 and 673 in 1990. This Council should not remain silent while the occupying Power flagrantly violates the aforementioned resolutions and ignores its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention. These violations also include the deliberate extension of illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

7. The situation in the Gaza Strip remains critical. My delegation is shocked that an Israeli airstrike injured innocent civilians in Gaza, shortly after the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation deal took place. This was just one example of Israel's escalation of military activities in recent weeks, as well as a manifestation of collective punishment. Civilians continued to be shot at and killed near border fences and in fishing boats, while trying to earn their livelihoods in a shattered economy. We remain deeply alarmed that the food and energy security needs of the population of Gaza are at severe levels. In this regard, Malaysia reiterates our demand for an immediate end to the illegal blockade in the Gaza Strip.

Madam President,

8. Malaysia reiterates our grave concern on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria. All parties should comply with the provisions of resolution 2139 (2014), and to allow for humanitarian need to be provided to all those in need. This also applies to the situation faced by Palestinian refugees in UNRWA camps in Yarmouk. We welcome UNRWA's tireless efforts in providing food distributions, particularly on the resumption of delivery of much-needed supplies after more than two weeks being denied entry into the camp.

9. My delegation continues to support international efforts to call upon all parties in Syria to immediately end the crisis in a peaceful and meaningful manner through dialogue and negotiation, for the sake of the Syrian people and the region as a whole. In this regard, we support the efforts of Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi, and urge all parties to work together towards a political solution which is Syrian-led and inclusive. It is our hope that the concerned parties will be able to put aside their differences, in order to ensure an outcome which will benefit the people of Syria.

10. Malaysia also reiterates our objections on Israel's actions in the occupied Syrian Golan, including the construction and expansion of illegal settlements, which are a violation of international law and the UN Charter. In this regard, Malaysia calls for the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Syrian Golan, in line with Security Council resolutions 242(1967), 338(1973) and 497(1981).

Madam President,

11. My delegation welcomes the progress made by the new government of Lebanon, and we recognise the high priority they have placed in ensuring security and stability, as well as protecting the national sovereignty of the country. At a time where the spill-over effects of the Syrian conflict to Lebanon continue to escalate, Malaysia urges all parties involved in this conflict to cease cross-border fire and other violence. In this regard, we reiterate that Israel must cease its violations of Lebanese sovereignty whether through air, sea or land, and withdraw its troops from Lebanon, with full respect for the Blue Line, as decided in Security Council resolution 1701(2006).

I thank you Madam President.