



**BANGLADESH**

---

*Please check against delivery*

Statement by

**Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen**

Permanent Representative

Of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations

at the Security Council Open Debate on the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question"

New York, April 23, 2012

Madam President,

Let me begin by thanking you for steering this very important open debate on the situation in the Middle East. I convey our appreciation to Under Secretary General, Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe for his insightful and comprehensive briefing this morning.

I also wish to state that the Bangladesh delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. In addition, I wish to briefly make certain points that Bangladesh believes to be of importance.

A sustainable resolution of the Arab- Israeli conflict, including the issue of Palestine, which is the core of the long-lasting crisis, must be our collective strategic objective. All Member States should pledge complete commitment to this objective and throw their full moral, diplomatic, political and economic support behind its early realization. Here, we continue to encourage the efforts of Jordan to ensure peace between Palestine and Israel.

Madam President,

May I highlight some of the recent developments following our last quarterly debate on the issue:

(i) The Quartet last met on 11 April. But there has been little progress towards meeting the timeline set out by the Quartet on 23 September 2011 for an agreement by the end of 2012. In particular, the deadline for parties to be in direct negotiations and to exchange proposals for border and security arrangements by 26 January was missed; only the Palestinian Authority submitted the requested proposals. Here, we stress on the need for the Quartet to adopt a clear position on the 1967 borders, including East Jerusalem, as one of the parameters for direct negotiations. Let me urge the Quartet, to also ease the financial burden of the Palestinian authority. There should be renewed commitments to increase financial assistance to Palestine.

(ii) It is encouraging to note that the US President Barack Obama phoned Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on 19 March, reaffirming the US commitment to the peace process and Quartet objectives.

(iii) On 27 March, Special Coordinator Robert Serry briefed the Council reporting that prospects for direct negotiations remain slim and that without a political horizon the state-building efforts of the Palestinian Authority are at risk.

(iv) On 22 March, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution establishing an independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of Israeli

settlements on the rights of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem. We hope that the fact-finding mission would be granted due access to the occupied territories.

Madam President,

One of the disturbing elements in the Israel-Palestine conflict is Israel's utterance that it would not negotiate with a Palestinian government that includes Hamas, although on 6 February, Hamas and Fatah agreed on an interim government led by President Abbas that would prepare for presidential and parliamentary elections. We are afraid, progress on implementing the agreement would be slow due to such declarations. Instead of, pick and choose mentality, respect to democratically elected representatives should be a norm across nations.

It is also disheartening to note the deem progress regarding Palestine's application for UN membership. The application was in effect "put on the shelf" after the Admission's Committee reported that it was unable to reach a unanimous recommendation.

The situation of the approximately 4,400 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention centres, 300 of whom are under administrative detention, also remains a cause of worry, for those who believe in human rights and fairness of justice, in particular as some detainees have continued to protest their situation through hunger strikes. Those detained must be charged and face trial with judicial guarantees, or released without delay. Human rights of these detainees should be honored.

Madam President,

We believe that the best guides for achieving a two-State solution are the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, i.e 242, 338, and 425, the principle of "land-for-peace", the Madrid Conference Terms of Reference, the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Achieving a lasting solution in the Middle East, we believe, will guarantee the state of Israel its national security and peace, however, achieving it requires Israel's complete and unconditional withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. Finally, let me reiterate Bangladesh's full support for a lasting peace for all inhabitants of the region both Arabs and Israelis and our strong commitment for the realization of an independent, sovereign and viable State of Palestine with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, living side-by-side and in peace and harmony with all its neighbors.

I thank you, Madam President.