



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR RAMLAN IBRAHIM
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SECURITY COUNCIL QUARTERLY OPEN DEBATE ON THE MIDDLE EAST

NEW YORK, 23 JULY 2015

His Excellency the Honourable Mr. Murray McCully,
Foreign Minister of New Zealand and President of the Security Council for July,

I join colleagues at the table in warmly welcoming you to the Council. On behalf of my delegation, I thank you Excellency, for convening and chairing today's meeting. Your presence here today clearly demonstrates the importance New Zealand attaches to the subject of today's open debate.

2. I also thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle-East Peace Process, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov for his briefing, which should strengthen our collective resolve to put an end to the saga of the tragic plight of the Palestinians.

Mr. President,

3. On Monday 20th July, Malaysia was honoured to co-host with Jordan an Arria Formula meeting of the Council to reflect on the situation in Gaza one year on after the Israeli military offensive. I wish to thank Ambassador Dina Kawar of Jordan for co-chairing the meeting and for the Council members' active participation. The last such meeting was held in 1997. The speakers of the meeting were from the academia and NGOs and they do not represent any political colours. The thrust of their presentation was on the dire humanitarian consequences – the story of the victims whose misfortune was to live on the wrong side of the border that strings the hearts of these presenters to tell the story of anguish and despair, of continuous misfortune and sufferings and of broken dreams and hopes.

4. I like to share my own reflections and impressions on the meeting and some of the pertinent points that were raised, which I hope would help us to provide a sharper focus on the consequences of the Palestine-Israeli conflict in the Council.

4.1. According to the World Bank in May 2015, the continuing Israeli blockade has reduced Gaza's GDP by 50%; meanwhile the unemployment rate in Gaza hovers at around 43% - the highest in the world;

- 4.2. According to the NGOs, basic construction materials such as gravel, steel bars, cement, wood of certain thickness, along with a wide range of spare parts, computer equipment and vehicles are classified as 'dual use' items and their importation into Gaza is severely restricted by Israel. As of June 2015, less than 1% of construction materials required for reconstruction have so far entered Gaza;
- 4.3. According to them, since the offensive, not a single destroyed house has been rebuilt. 12,580 housing units are awaiting construction with 17,817 families roughly around 100,000 persons remain displaced. At the current pace, it will take 19 years for Gaza to be rebuilt; and
- 4.4. There was recognition across the board from Council members that the humanitarian situation in Gaza is increasingly dire. Malaysia subscribes to the view that the situation of hopelessness only feeds strongly into ISIL narratives and Daesh in their recruitment drives and represents a time bomb for the region unless drastic and immediate action is taken to address it.

Mr. President,

5. The situation in Gaza cannot be looked at in isolation from the larger issue of the occupation and the attempts by the Occupying Power to cement its control over the OPT.
6. On 9 July 2015, 11 years have passed since the International Court of Justice rendered its unanimous Advisory Opinion on the illegality of the construction of the Israeli separation or Apartheid Wall.
7. We remained dismayed and outraged - in equal measure - that the ICJ's opinion continues to be flagrantly disregarded by Israel. Not to mention the fact that to date, no reparations have been made towards those affected by the continuing construction of the system of walls and fences. We condemn the Israeli Supreme Court's approval earlier this month, the construction of a new section of the Apartheid wall in south Jerusalem.
8. At the same time, expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the OPT continues in complete disregard of international law and the overwhelming disapproval of the international community. At a time when Muslims are rejoicing after Ramadhan, Israeli authorities decided to demolish more homes in a village in the south of Hebron.
9. Israeli security forces continue to use unnecessary force to arrest or detain Palestinian children, some as young as 11. According to a recently released report by Human Rights Watch, Israeli security forces have choked children, thrown stun

grenades at them and beaten them in custody. Furthermore, detained children are tried before a military court, in gross violation of international law and human rights law. 95% of children released from Israeli jails suffered from torture and ill treatment during interrogation and detention.

Mr. President,

10. It defies logic and common sense if these are actions of a sincere partner for peace.

11. The expansion of settlements, the continuing blockade against Gaza, continued construction of the Apartheid wall and the systematic and continuing denigration and subjugation of an entire people backed by overwhelming military superiority belies a concerted attempt by Israel to alter the situation on the ground leading to a one-state reality.

12. We call upon the international community and this Council to find the political will to halt this situation which drives Palestine and Israel further away from the two-state solution and ensures that the flames of enmity between the two shall never die out.

13. While we remain committed to existing initiatives aimed at solving the conflict, we believe that new initiatives such as the proposed French Council resolution to reinvigorate the Middle East Peace Process must be given serious consideration.

Mr. President,

14. At a time when the Middle East is rocked by raging conflict from Syria to Yemen, driven to a certain extent by extremist ideologies and ideologues, it is easy to forget that among the key narratives propagated by extremists and terrorists such as Al-Qaeda, Da'esh and their ilk is that they too fight against injustice and oppression in Occupied Palestine.

15. Ensuring a just, comprehensive and final solution to the Palestine-Israel conflict would contribute towards depriving those groups, their supporters and affiliates of such false narrative.

16. In concluding, Malaysia remains convinced that the United Nations must continue to occupy a central role in realising the two-state solution for Palestine and Israel.

17. Malaysia continues to believe that the time has come for the international community and for this Council in particular, to lead the way and end the *status quo* in the OPT.

18. This Council must find the collective will to shoulder its Charter's responsibility in resolving this long-standing conflict which is as old as the organisation itself.

19. My delegation associates itself with the statements to be delivered by Iran and Kuwait on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation respectively.

I thank you, Mr. President.