



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS



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**STATEMENT BY
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SECURITY COUNCIL QUARTERLY OPEN DEBATE ON THE MIDDLE EAST

NEW YORK, 18 APRIL 2016

I thank you Mr. President, for presiding over this Open Debate.

2. My delegation warmly welcomes the presence of His Excellency Mr. Murray McCully, Foreign Minister of New Zealand, and His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, at this meeting.

3. We thank the Secretary-General for his briefing, which we listened to very carefully. And we completely agree with the message conveyed by the Secretary-General and the New Zealand Foreign Minister that the current situation in Occupied Palestinian Territory is not sustainable, requiring urgent action by the Council.

Mr. President,

4. Malaysia aligns itself with the statements to be delivered by Iran and Kuwait on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation respectively.

5. For the purpose of today's Open Debate, my delegation wishes to focus solely on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for two main reasons. Firstly, among other Middle East issues, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the most long-standing issue in the UN agenda, as old as the UN itself. And whether we like to admit it or not, the protracted Palestinian question provides the nucleus that triggered various other threats to international peace and security.

6. Secondly, unlike all other Middle East conflicts, there is no recent Council action on the question of Palestine. The last time a Council resolution was adopted was more than seven years ago, which belies the worsening situation on the ground and the rising threats to the two-state solution.

7. Worst of all, there is simply no political will by the Council to act and bring an end to Israel's illegal occupation and salvage the two-state solution according to international law, the values and principles of the UN Charter, and the international standard of human rights. There is also a clear lack of appetite by the Council to use tools that are available at its disposal on the issue of Palestine, unlike on Syria, Lebanon and Yemen.

8. Thus, Malaysia is of the view that this issue deserves our undivided attention for this session.

Mr. President,

9. Malaysia strongly condemns the extra-judicial killings perpetrated by Israeli forces against Palestinians, including children and women. The cold-blooded murder of a Palestinian youth by an Israeli army in Hebron, shot in the head as the youth was lying injured on the ground, is a clear instance of Israel's policy of shoot-to-kill.

10. Tragically, if not for the fact that the incident was captured on video, it would have been treated as another act of self-defence by the Israeli army, and the perpetrator would have gotten away with murder. Even if the incident is investigated by the Israeli authorities, we remain sceptical whether justice will be served, as only 3% of criminal investigations on violence committed by Israeli forces and settlers has resulted in indictments.

11. The facts on the ground surrounding the murder proved that it was not an isolated incident. If it was an isolated incident, the Israeli forces would not have reacted by storming the family home of the person who had filmed the incident to harass and intimidate him; Israeli settlers would not have reacted by gathering outside the same house to threaten him; Israeli medical staff present at the scene would not have remained indifferent to the injured Palestinian, even when he was shot in the head right in front of them; and the Israeli soldier who pulled the trigger would not have received the support of over half of Israelis as recorded by an opinion poll.

12. This incident reflects a culmination of a long-standing systematic policy which dehumanises the Palestinians, perpetuated by unconstrained culture of impunity. It is an ideology of violent extremism, sanctioned by the Occupying Power and institutionalised in Israeli society and its political, military, and judicial institutions. In other words, this is what we sow by our inaction and in which the Palestinians reap in a tragically horrifying manner.

Mr. President,

13. Another unfortunate consequence of our inaction and the prevailing impunity is the rapid expansion of illegal Israeli settlements. This year, Israel continued with its settlement constructions, land confiscations, and forced evictions, depriving Palestinians of their property and shelter, rendering hundreds of Palestinians, including children, homeless.

14. As reported by the Israeli NGO Peace Now, the building of illegal Israeli settlements has increased by 250% in the first quarter of this year, compared to the same period last year. Over the years, Israeli authorities had taken over more than 85% of the total area of historical land of Palestine.

15. The construction of the Apartheid Wall also continued unabated, against the decision of the International Court of Justice in 2004. The latest construction in Bethlehem's Cremisan Valley will severely restrict access of nearly 60 Palestinian families to their agricultural land and devastate their livelihood.

16. Slowly but surely, the illegal settlement activities and the Apartheid Wall are undermining and fragmenting the contiguity and territorial integrity of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and physically threatens the viability and prospects for the two-State solution.

Mr. President,

17. On the situation in Gaza, as mentioned by the Secretary-General, we are deeply concerned on the latest ban on building materials by Israel to reconstruct thousands of damaged and destroyed homes and infrastructure. Two years after Israel's military offensive in Gaza, as many as 75,000 Palestinians remained homeless.

18. The international community must act to end the illegal and inhumane blockade of Gaza, as it constitutes the main obstacle to reconstruction and a form of collective punishment that grossly violated international standard of human rights.

Mr. President,

19. Malaysia reiterates the need for the Council to use all tools available at its disposal on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, just as in the case of Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. We must end the impunity in which Israel acts by increasing the price to retain the status quo in Occupied Palestine. The end of Apartheid in South Africa did not come about through the international community merely standing by and doing nothing.

Instead, the international community chose to take effective action by increasing the political, economic and social costs to oppose discriminatory and unjust policies that violated the international standard of human rights. The situation in Occupied Palestine is much worse.

20. The most burning issues that require our urgent action are the illegal settlements, the blockade of Gaza, and the need for international protection for the occupied Palestinian people, in line with international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. As mentioned in the latest Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Palestine, a protective presence for Palestinians is needed against the effects of Israeli policies and practices related to the Occupation.

21. For seven years, this Council debated and produced nothing. For seven years, it bore witness to the many atrocities. For seven years, this Council procrastinated with disastrous consequences. Meanwhile, during the seven years, more blood are being shed, more wall of hatred are being constructed, more hopes are being dashed and society dehumanised.

22. We speak today to clear our conscience that doing nothing is not right. We have no quarrel with Israel and the Jewish state and its right to exist. Our prayer is for Israel to live up to the commandment of “love thy neighbour” and stop the atrocities.

23. However, we are left with no choice but to urge that this Council should begin to bear witness of good tidings, to use the tools at its disposal, salvage the two state solution and bring justice and peace to this troubled lands.

I thank you, Mr. President.