



# MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY  
H.E. AMBASSADOR RAMLAN IBRAHIM  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**SECURITY COUNCIL QUARTERLY OPEN DEBATE  
ON THE MIDDLE EAST  
(INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION)**

**NEW YORK, 12 JULY 2016**

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Mr. President,

2. My delegation is grateful to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, for his presence and briefing at this important meeting.
3. Malaysia aligns itself with the statements to be delivered by Iran and Kuwait on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the OIC respectively.

Mr. President,

4. My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's recent visit to the region, including to Gaza, which highlighted the unsustainable situation on the ground.
5. Malaysia also welcomes the convening of an international ministerial conference on 3 June in Paris. We fully support the French initiative, which complements the efforts of the Middle East Quartet, and seeks to galvanise international support re-create the political horizon for a two-state solution.
6. We look forward to follow-up actions to advance the prospects for peace, including identifying meaningful incentives to the parties and the holding of another international conference later this year, involving the conflicting parties.

Mr. President,

7. My delegation acknowledges the efforts of the members of the Middle East Quartet in coming up with its first ever report earlier this month. The report was

- timely, given the deteriorating situation on the ground which if left unchecked may soon render a two-state solution unattainable.
8. As with everyone else, Malaysia had high expectations for the report. The least we expect of the report is for it to be based on the principles and values of the UN, the rule of law, and relevant Security Council resolutions. In this regard, we regret the fact that the report completely sidestepped the question of illegality of Israeli settlements, despite comprehensive elaboration on the issue of settlements in the report.
  9. The Quartet report only describes the “outposts” as illegal and not the settlements, which reflects the erroneous position of the Occupier on the matter. Subscribing to this position would undoubtedly tarnish the integrity and impartiality of the Quartet. It is indisputable that the settlements are illegal under international law and therefore not a matter of negotiations. This has been clearly laid down in the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Hague Convention, the Council’s own resolutions and the 2004 decision of the International Court of Justice.
  10. We must not stay silent on this crucial issue as the settlements constitute the main threat to the viability of a two-state solution, and the main source of frustration, anger and despair that feeds into the continuous cycle of violence.
  11. It is foolhardy to do so. Clearly, just days after the publication of the report, the Israeli authorities announced new settlement expansions in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and an additional financing of almost \$13 million for Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. Indeed, by being silent on the illegality of settlements in such an important document, we end up shielding and perpetuating illegal actions that erode the two-state solution.

Mr. President,

12. In trying to identify threats to the two-state solution, the Quartet report focused on the symptoms rather than the root causes of the conflict. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had said earlier this year, it is human nature for oppressed people to react to occupation, “which often serves as a potent incubator of hate and extremism.” However, conspicuously missing and glaringly absent from the report’s recommendations was ending the half a century of brutal, repressive, discriminatory and racist military occupation by Israel.
13. While we categorically do not condone any acts of violence and terrorism regardless of the perpetrators and victims, we need to address the factors that triggered the widespread anger, frustration and despair in the first place. Burying our heads in the sand and pretending that the violence exists in a vacuum, defies sound logic and common sense. Until these root causes are addressed, it would be stretching our imagination rather too far to expect the Palestinians to stop resisting the Occupier.

14. There are those who expect the Palestinians to only engage in peaceful resistance to the repressive occupation. But in order to successfully engage in peaceful resistance, there need to be legal and legitimate avenues and platforms to channel their resistance away from violence.
15. Such a platform could take the form of an impartial judicial system, which the Palestinians could turn to when their homes were illegally demolished, their lands seized or when their family members were extra-judicially killed. It may also consist of a political platform for meaningful negotiations to resolve the final status issues, or for the exercise of their democratic rights. Or a multilateral platform to provide protection from gross violations of human rights. Sadly, they have no recourse to justice.
16. The stark reality is, when the Palestinians go to Israeli courts to seek legal redress such as on violence perpetrated by Israeli forces or settlers against them and their property, 94% of the cases were simply closed without prosecuting. And when the civil society and the media tried to highlight gross violations of human rights perpetrated against the Palestinians, they have been arrested, intimidated, defamed or shut down. When the Palestinians engaged in peaceful demonstrations against the illegal policies of the Occupier, they were shot at and killed by the Israeli forces, even children.
17. At the international level, when the Palestinians tried to seek accountability and justice on possible war crimes and crimes against humanity by going to the ICC, many tried to block them and criticised the attempt as “unilateral measure”. Similar rebuff occurred when the Palestinians turned to the UN to seek protection, even if the effort is completely in line with international law. Needless to say, any attempts to bring their legitimate grievances to the Security Council would be vetoed.
18. Furthermore, when the Palestinians seek peace based on the comprehensive Arab Peace Initiative, they found no genuine partner on the other side to bring about a two-state solution, and no honest broker with a moral standing to take an objective position and pressure both sides to reach an agreement. Even the diplomatic initiative by France has been rejected outright by the Occupier.
19. These are the contextual realities for the occupied Palestinians that have been fermenting anger and despair. Unfortunately, they found no one who could make a difference to bear witness to their sufferings and lift them from the dehumanising acts they are being forced to endure. Yet ironically, we demand the Palestinians to cease violence, while at the same time, we keep closing all doors to legal and legitimate avenues to enable them to achieve their legitimate aspirations through peaceful means.

Mr. President,

20. The tragic circumstances of the Palestinians people are nothing new. This Chamber had laboriously debated on it for decades. It's time for change. The conflicting parties need to take affirmative steps to reverse the threats to the two-state solution identified in the report. The role of the Security Council is crucial in overseeing the implementation of the affirmative measures and in creating the conditions for the resumption of meaningful negotiations.
21. Under the UN Charter, the Security Council is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. Thus, while the Council has endorsed the Middle East Quartet to mediate on the peace process, this does not mean that the Council has abrogated its responsibility on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Instead, the Council should use the various tools at its disposal to strongly support the Quartet's efforts, to vigorously influence the parties' behaviours and to salvage the two-state solution.
22. Malaysia stands ready to engage constructively with other Council members in responding to the Secretary-General's calls that "surely they deserve a horizon of hope".

I thank you, Mr. President.