



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMB. HUSSEIN HANIFF, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON AGENDA ITEM 53: “REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES” AT THE FOURTH COMMITTEE OF THE 66TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, 4 NOVEMBER 2011

Madam Chair,

I would like to thank the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories for his statement and for presenting the Report of the Special Committee. My delegation also aligned itself with the statement made by Egypt speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Madam Chair,

2. The Report of the Special Committee illustrates the flagrant violations of the inalienable human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs by Israel in the territories it has illegally occupied for so long.

3. As a member of this Special Committee, I wish to reiterate the Special Committee’s appreciation to the Government of Egypt and Jordan for their kind cooperation extended to the Special Committee’s field mission to investigate Israeli practices. I also wish to commend the Government of Egypt for facilitating the Special Committee’s first ever visit to Gaza since its establishment in 1968. The Special Committee had a substantive programme, which enabled the Committee to witness first-hand the situation on the ground as well as to meet and conduct interviews with Palestinians living in this coastal strip.

4. Notwithstanding the above, it was regrettable that the visit to the West Bank could not be undertaken due to the non-cooperative attitude of the Israeli government. In order to carry out its mandate, the Special Committee had to obtain the necessary details from Palestinians residing in the West Bank at meetings held in Amman, Jordan or by video conferencing. The Committee’s request to hold consultations with relevant Israeli authorities regarding the human rights situation in occupied territories received no response. I sincerely hope that Israel could cooperate with the Special Committee in the future, to enable the Committee to prepare a comprehensive report taking into account of the views of all parties.

5. As highlighted in the report, the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory continue to worsen due to the violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed by Israel through the implementations of its illegal policies and practices, which are tantamount to acts of provocation, that are detrimental in the search of a just and lasting peace in the region.

6. The field mission to the Gaza Strip was indeed a heartrending experience for me as a fellow human being. My personal observations during this visit are as follows:

- 6.1 Israel blockade of Gaza, which is a form of collective punishment prohibited by international law, virtually imprisons this coastal strip of 1.5 million inhabitants;
- 6.2 Buildings and houses continue to lay in ruins due to the unavailability of construction materials as a result of the action of the Occupying Power;
- 6.3 Lack of sufficient electricity and disruption of power supply due to deficiencies in power facilities negatively affects the very fabric of Gaza society, particularly the elderly and the sick;
- 6.4 The sea blockade that allows fishermen to fish only within 3 nautical miles of the waters off Gaza, has badly affected these fishermen's catch, thus resulting in 92 per cent of them living in poverty;
- 6.5 The ambiguous "buffer zone" that encroaches into Palestinian land covers around 35 per cent of Gaza, and its enforcement through the use of live fire, which is against international humanitarian law, has led to the killing and injury of numerous Palestinian civilians, including children and elderly persons;
- 6.6 Farmers in Gaza are unable to visit and work on their farms within the security buffer zone and neither can they export their crops;
- 6.7 Due to the lack of schools, children in Gaza are cramped into containers that served as temporary schools;
- 6.8 Against such background, it is a tragedy that approximately 70 per cent or 1.1 million Palestinians in Gaza are now totally dependent on the UN for humanitarian assistance.

7. In this connection, the recommendations of the Committee are indeed pertinent with regard to the situation of human rights of the Palestinians, and Malaysia fully support the recommendations. Malaysia is of the view that focus should be given to the followings and that Israel, as the Occupying Power, should redress these illegalities and injustices against the people of Palestine by:

- 7.1 Lifting the blockade of Gaza completely. While undertaking efforts towards this goal, Israel should adhere to relevant provisions of international law with regard to the enforcement of restriction on the freedom of movement,

and undertaking actions that will improve the poor health of children in Gaza;

- 7.2 Stopping all settlement related activities including settlement expansion, confiscation of Palestinian land, demolition of Palestinian homes, and address the issue of settlers' violence;
- 7.3 Abrogating illegal and repressive policies and practices against Palestinians living in East Jerusalem;
- 7.4 Undertaking steps that ensure the Palestinian children's right to education; and
- 7.5 Adhering to international law and standards with regard to the actions or treatments of Palestinian prisoners, including children and women.

Madam Chair,

8. The human rights situation in occupied Syrian Golan continues to be a matter of international concern caused by deplorable Israeli policies and practices there. Systemic discrimination increases competition for scarce resources, particularly water. The construction of a separation wall of two-kilometre long by Israel will not only inhibit Syrian families from visiting their relatives outside the occupied Syrian Golan but it will also consolidate Israel's illegal annexation of Syrian territory. Furthermore, the border area around the occupied Golan remained heavily embedded with landmines.

9. In light of the unfortunate events of Nakba Day and Naksa Day 2011, we call on Israel to carry out a full and transparent investigation with a view to explaining the many deaths and injuries of unarmed Syrian civilians.

Madam Chair,

10. The dehumanisation of the Palestinian people and other Arabs in the occupied territories is counterproductive to the aim of achieving a just and lasting peace. As in the case of the occupied Palestinian territory, Israel's actions in Syrian Golan demonstrates all too clearly that Israel habitually violates international human rights and humanitarian law. And the tragedy is that, it does so with impunity. This must be stopped.

11. In the interest of justice and peace in the Middle East, we urge that the recommendations contained in the report be fully implemented. We will spare no effort on our part in pursuing this.

Thank you, Madam Chair.