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STATEMENT

BY

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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

72ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FOURTH COMMITTEE

**AGENDA ITEM 54:
“REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES”**

**NEW YORK
7 NOVEMBER 2017**

Mr. Chairperson,

1. We thank you for organizing this important debate. Namibia would also like to express its appreciation to the Acting Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian Peoples and Other Arabs in the Occupied Territories, His Excellency Mr. Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, as well as the other Members of the Committee, for the succinct and comprehensive report before us.
2. My delegation aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairperson,

3. The Secretary-General's report for this year once again reflects ongoing and incessant human rights violations that are being committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Fifty years after the occupation began, these human rights violations continue to be committed unabated and with seeming impunity.
4. Namibia remains deeply concerned that since our last meeting one year ago, the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has further deteriorated. How do we know this? Israel continues to expand its settlement policy, with settlement activity increasing at a faster rate than last year. In July alone, plans for over 2,300 housing units were made. These are illegal under international law and in contravention of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) and call on Israel to return to the borders agreed in 1967.
5. The destruction of Palestinian homes and infrastructure also continues to take place, albeit at a slower rate than last year. This destruction forces Palestinians off their land and since January 2017, some 500 people have indeed been displaced because of the demolition of their homes. The combination of these activities are undermining the contiguity of the Palestinian land, the viability of a Palestinian state and thus the possibility of a two-state solution.

Mr. Chairperson,

6. We must recognize the realities outlined in the Secretary-General's report as untenable. Ten years of an illegal blockade and closure of Gaza is compounded by the ongoing electricity crisis, which limits people in Gaza to 2 to 4 hours of electricity a day. The report underscores the impact that this crisis has had and continues to have on the already strained health and sanitation infrastructure. Hospitals have been forced to reduce services and access to essential care is limited. Such a situation is abhorrent and unsustainable. The reconciliation agreement signed by the Palestinian Authority and Hamas in October is encouraging and we welcome the steps already taken with Hamas handing the control of the Gaza border crossing to the Palestinian Authority.
7. Namibia remains concerned about the situation of detainees in Israeli prisons. The mass hunger strike undertaken by some 1,500 Palestinian detainees, which began in April 2017 and lasted for 40 days, highlighted the grim conditions under which they live. We are also troubled by the number of Palestinians who are held without charge or trial, as well as the arrest and detention of children under 18.
8. Of particular concern to us also is the apparent apartheid policies which separate services offered to Israelis and Palestinians, even as far as forcing Palestinians to use different roads from Israelis.

Mr. Chairperson,

9. I would once again like to take this opportunity to reassure the members of the Special Committee of Namibia's unwavering support to their important work.
10. Namibia remains committed to the cause of the Palestinian people, to be able to exercise their inalienable right to an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Israel is urged to cease the construction of all settlements and the destruction of Palestinian homes and infrastructure. A return to the tables of negotiation to ensure a two-state solution is the only way forward to peace in Israel and Palestine, and the Middle East.

