



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Namibia to the United Nations

135 East 36th Street, New York, NY 10016

Tel: (212) 685-2003 . Fax: (212) 685- 1561 . E-mail: namibia@un.int

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. NEVILLE GERTZE

AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

73RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**AT
THE SECURITY COUNCIL
ON**

**THE OPEN DEBATE IN CONNECTION WITH THE
AGENDA ITEM “THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE
EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN
QUESTION”**

**NEW YORK
22 JANUARY 2019**

Mr. President,

1. I congratulate you on the assumption of the Dominican Republic to the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of January 2019 and thank you for organizing the debate on the important topic of the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine.
2. I would also like to thank Special Coordinator Nikolay Mladenov for his comprehensive and detailed briefing.
3. My delegation aligns itself with the Statement to be delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. President,

4. As we enter the year 2019, I wish to remind us that we are now into the 71st year of this long drawn out process and the denial of the right to self-determination of the people of Palestine. While we appreciate the commitment of the Security Council, the United Nations and all interested parties in helping to resolve this matter, one is left to ponder the unthinkable question: is it conceivable that in another 29 years, it will have taken us 100 years not to do what is right and just? We must redouble our collective efforts to work more diligently and with more determination to bring this conflict to an end and to assist the two peoples of Israel and Palestine to come together and live side by side in peace, harmony, stability and dignity. The time has come for us to move with more urgency to deliver to the Palestinian people their legitimate right to independence and nationhood.
5. This month marks 10 years since Israel's first major military assault on the Gaza Strip. Since then, two further major conflicts have taken place and repeated outbreaks of violence have ensued. Most

recently, the end of last year saw one of the worst outbreaks of violence. We once again take this opportunity to thank the United Nations and Egypt for intervening to deescalate tensions and therefore preventing yet another conflict.

6. These recurrent conflicts and outbreaks of violence have had a devastating effect on Gaza and its 2 million inhabitants. The economic and humanitarian situation remains dire. Nevertheless, thanks to funding provided by the State of Qatar, a number of positive developments have materialized. The UN was able to import fuel to operate the Gaza Power Plant. As a result, daily electricity has increased to more than 11 hours, benefitting homes, schools, businesses and hospitals. I am sure this is very welcome by all residents after some two years of electricity being limited to four hours or less a day. Another positive outcome is the noted 40% increase in piped water supply, thus almost fully meeting water demand for household purposes. We hope to see further positive developments as 2019 progresses.
7. As we enter a new year, secured and stable funding for UNRWA should remain a concern and a priority. We call on the international community to continue availing required resources to sustain the important services, also described by Mr. Mladenov as essential and critical, provided by UNRWA for the year ahead of us.

Mr. President,

8. In his December report to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), Mr. Mladenov, yet again, informed us that no steps have been taken by Israel to implement the all-important resolution.
9. Settlement activity continued. During the reporting period (September-December 2018), plans for some 2,200 housing units in settlements in the West Bank were advanced or approved by the

Israeli authorities. Most of these were advanced in East Jerusalem. The demolition and seizure of Palestinian properties also continued unabated. These actions are illegal under international law and represent an impediment to peace and the two-state solution. Namibia reiterates its firm support for the General Assembly resolution on the status of Jerusalem of 2017 which states categorically that “Jerusalem is a final status issue to be resolved through negotiations in line with relevant United Nations resolution”.

Mr. President,

10. Global support for Palestine was reaffirmed in December 2018 in the General Assembly with the successful adoption of a resolution entitled “Comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East”. One week ago, in its handing over ceremony, the G77 and China firmly restated its support for Palestine as it became the Chair of the Group for the year 2019. We look forward to working closely with Palestine this year.
11. To conclude, Namibia reiterates its calls on the Israeli government to cease its settlement expansion, as well as the destruction of Palestinian homes and infrastructure. We further reiterate the call for Israel’s complete and unconditional withdrawal from the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem. We should harness reconciliation as a tool to overcome great societal barriers, and work on mechanisms to address and heal the wounds which were caused to the Palestinian people many decades ago.
12. Therefore, a return to the table of negotiations to ensure a two-State solution living side-by-side is the only solution. I remind Council Members here that this was the decision taken by the Council in 1947 with the adoption of resolution 181, which called for the creation of two states to exist side-by-side. The Council has yet to fulfil the commitment made in this landmark resolution. This two-

state solution must be based on the pre-1967 borders in accordance with international law and UN resolutions, and is the only way to ensure peaceful relations between Israel and Palestine.

I thank you.