



**Statement**

**by**

**Mr. Hassan Abbas  
Counsellor**

**at the  
Fourth Committee**

**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”**

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Mr. Chairman,

Half a century into Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, and almost 70 years since the Israeli caused Nakba, the Palestinian people continue to live in a state of perpetual asylum outside their homeland in neighboring countries and beyond, under siege in the Gaza Strip, or under a non-ending Israeli military occupation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

This dreadful situation is aggravated on a daily basis as a result of illegal and repressive practices by the Israeli occupying power ranging, according to numerous UN Secretary General reports, from violence and the use of force, to detention and ill treatment, to destruction and confiscation of property and infrastructure, to population displacement, to settlement activity and settler violence, to movement and access restrictions, and not ending by the exploitation and depletion of Palestinian natural resources in the occupied territories and in the Mediterranean.

Mr. Chairman,

- Israel continues to use force as means of suppressing the Palestinian population, including the use of unlawful killings and extrajudicial executions by its security and military forces, and terrorism, violence and harassment by its illegal settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In 2017 alone, more than 55 Palestinians have been killed in one way or another by Israel or its settler armed gangs.

- Israel continues to detain more than 6500 Palestinian prisoners, including 300 children, who are subjected to different forms of torture and ill treatment according to the UN Committee against Torture. In the past 50 years of occupation, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were imprisoned at some point during their lives in Israeli jails, including thousands of women and children.

- Illegal settlement activity continues unabated in complete disregard to international law and UN resolutions, particularly UNSC resolution 2334. Since the beginning of this year, the Israeli authorities have granted thousands of settlement building permits in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. More than 650,000 illegal settlers have been implanted in occupied Palestinian land since 1967. The Israeli Government fully subscribes to this illegal policy splashing all sorts of financial, economic and social incentives on the settlers, making the possibility of establishing an independent and viable Palestinian state dimmer by the day.

- In the past 12 months Israel has demolished hundreds of Palestinian-owned homes and businesses, citing the ridiculous excuse of the lack of building permits which are impossible to get anyway. This illegal and cruel practice, combined with that of land seizures and confiscation, has left hundreds of Palestinian families displaced this year. Since 1967, Israel has destroyed more than 48000 Palestinian homes, agricultural buildings and other business structures, and has expropriated more than 200,000 acres of Palestinian land in the occupied territories.

- Israel's successive aggressions against Gaza since 2005 have resulted in the loss and injury of thousands of Palestinian lives and the destruction of homes, businesses, hospitals, schools and other civilian infrastructure. Compounded by its decade-long illegal siege imposed on the Strip, this has led to a chronic humanitarian and economic crisis that continues to afflict Gaza.

Gaza's economy has also suffered enormously. GDP is 23% less than it was in 1994, two million inhabitants, among whom 80% rely on humanitarian aid to survive, and 47% suffer from food insecurity. Unemployment is at a record 40%, electricity supply stands at 2-3 hours per day, fuel shortages are the norm and the reconstruction of homes and infrastructure damaged during Israel's previous aggressions is hampered by Israeli restrictions on the access of construction materials. The international community should compel Israel to lift this illegal blockade which is in clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

- Israel continues to illegally exploit Palestinian natural resources in the occupied territories, causing significant damage to the economic and social conditions of the civilian population under occupation, preventing Palestinians in the West Bank from access to water resources, imposing restrictions on farmers wishing to access their agricultural land, particularly in the vicinity of Israeli settlements, and turning Palestinian lands in the West Bank into dumping sites for its hazardous and industrial waste causing lasting harm to the Palestinian agricultural sector and to biodiversity. The fishing sector in Gaza is also near collapse due to Israeli restrictions that prevent Palestinian fishermen from operating in the Palestinian maritime economic zone off the Strip.

- In the occupied Syrian Golan, Israeli illegal practices have persisted. Israeli authorities continue to grant building permits inside illegal settlements, and to award contracts for the illegal exploitation of natural resources, including water, gas and oil resources and continues to suppress the local Syrian population with imprisonment and intimidation.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman,

Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories are a direct result of Israel's decades-long occupation and the failure of the international community to compel Israel to abide by international law and UN resolutions. Only by ending Israeli occupation, and achieving Palestinian independence in a viable sovereign state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and allowing for the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland based on UN resolutions and the Madrid principles, can the Palestinian people enjoy their full human rights and achieve long-term economic and social prosperity.

I thank you.