

Statement by Ms Tehmina Janjua, Acting Permanent Representative of Pakistan, on behalf of the OIC, on the Report of the High-level fact-finding mission to Beit Hanoun, under agenda item 7, during the 9th session of the Human Rights Council, 18 September 2008

I am making this statement on behalf of the member states of OIC.

The OIC thanks Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Professor Christine Chinkin, the members of the high-level fact-finding mission to Beit Hanoun for their report pursuant to Council resolution S-3/1. Their

The report highlights disregard of human rights standards or humanitarian norms in the occupied territories. According to international humanitarian law, the Palestinians are protected people. The occupying power has obligations towards the Palestinian people. These obligations have not been fulfilled.

Access was not allowed to the fact-finding Mission access for several months by Israel. The Mission traveled to Beit Hanoun in May 2008 through Egypt to express solidarity with the people who had suffered "very much like the friends of Prophet Job in his suffering".

Mr. President

The fact finding mission has reported a number findings. These include:

- The attack on Beit Hanoun was deliberate in the context of the long term occupation of Gaza;
- The attack raised legitimate concerns that war crimes were committed;
- Israel refused an impartial and independent investigation of the massacre. The conclusions of the Inquiry conducted by its military apparatus were not acceptable.
- Actions by the occupation forces after the attack particularly exacerbated the condition of surviving victims.

Mr. President,

The OIC agrees with the assessment of the Mission that the occupation is the root cause of the bleak situation in the occupied territories. The four decades of occupation has produced a culture of impunity and injustice. This culture cannot promote a durable and lasting peace in the region.

The OIC supports the recommendations of the Mission that the occupying power must fulfill its responsibilities. It should allow independent investigation into the Beit Hanoun tragedy. All restrictions on the movement of the survivors of shelling should be removed to enable them to seek health facilities outside Gaza.

Mr. President,

The report points out that the international community is failing to fulfil its role in respect of the suffering of the people of Gaza, in particular in its silence which begets complicity.

This is a candid assessment. We must make a sincere effort to implement the recommendations of the Fact Finding Mission. This is especially important in order to ensure that the decisions of the Council and its mechanisms are fully implemented.

I thank you, Mr. President.