

STATEMENT BY
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RAPPORTEUR
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE
INTRODUCING THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Agenda item 36: Question of Palestine
68th session of the General Assembly

25 November 2013

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for me, in my capacity as Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to present to the General Assembly the Annual Report of the Committee, contained in document A/68/35. Allow me to summarize each section of the report.

After the introduction of the report, **Chapters II and III** outline the mandate entrusted to the Committee by the General Assembly and the organization of the Committee's work during the year.

Under **Chapter IV**, the report reviews the situation relating to the question of Palestine as monitored by the Committee and contains a detailed factual account of developments that have taken place in the reviewed period, which ended on 6 October 2013. The most recent events will be reflected in the next report.

Chapter V contains the action taken by the Committee, including the Chairman's participation in General Assembly and Security Council debates, statements issued by the Committee and its Bureau, and the continued dialogue between the Committee and members of intergovernmental organizations. This Chapter also informs about the various international meetings and conferences organized by the Committee, as well as other mandated activities carried out by the Division for Palestinian Rights.

Chapter VI provides an overview of the work done over the year by the Department of Public Information in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 67/22 of 30 November 2012.

The last chapter of the report contains the **Conclusions and Recommendations of the Committee**, in which the Committee reiterates its view that the admission of Palestine as a non-Member Observer State by the General Assembly constituted an important step towards the realization of the two-State solution. It gave a new urgency to the resumption of the peace process, and vested the State of Palestine with important additional rights to join international legal frameworks and to contribute to the work of the United Nations system as a whole. The Committee calls on all Member States to extend full diplomatic recognition to the State of Palestine and also calls on the Security Council to re-visit the issue of Palestine's full membership.

Welcoming the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian direct negotiations, the Committee calls for sustained engagement and support by the international community, including a revitalized Quartet, which is vital to make sure the parties negotiate in good faith, live up to their commitments and refrain from steps which jeopardise negotiations. The current diplomatic initiative may represent the final window of opportunity to achieve a negotiated two-State solution. In this regard, the Committee expresses its concern about Israel's settlement activity which threatens to derail negotiations. The Committee welcomes the recently-adopted EU guidelines that prohibit funding by EU institutions for Israeli entities connected with the settlements, as a first step towards fulfilling obligations under international law, and calls for further international action against settlements.

The Committee condemns all attacks against civilians and calls on the parties to adhere to the terms of the Gaza ceasefire agreement. It calls upon the Security Council and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to act urgently to uphold international humanitarian law and guarantee the protection of civilians.

The Committee also stresses the importance of Palestinian unity under the legitimate leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas to secure a comprehensive peace. It expresses its concern that the accomplishments made towards Palestinian State-building and reform are now endangered owing to the chronic financial crisis, and calls upon donors to meet their prior commitments and to provide additional aid to avert further deterioration.

The Committee suggests that its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2014 be focused on widening international support for the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as well as the creation of a favourable atmosphere for the success of the resumed permanent status negotiations. The Committee will mobilize increased international scrutiny of the developments on the ground, in particular settlement activities, and emphasize responsibility and promote action by the international community to put an end to all illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Committee will also examine the legal ramifications stemming from the new international status of the State of Palestine and continue to call attention to the plight of the Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails and urge a resolution of their plight.

The Committee will continue to encourage civil society partners to work with their national Governments, parliamentarians and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations on the question of Palestine. It expresses hope that the reactivated Working Group will help build stronger partnerships with civil society. It also encourages its Members and Observers to mobilize their respective civil societies at the national level, particularly the youth, and to establish solidarity committees with Palestine.

The Committee will reach out to all regional groups at the United Nations with a view to expanding its membership. It will actively work to organize more thematic debates on the Palestine issue in various United Nations fora. The Committee calls upon the General Assembly to proclaim an International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Committee requests the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat to continue its substantive and secretariat support, the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities, in support of the Committee's communication strategy. The Committee encourages voluntary contributions from Members and Observers in line with their capacity to put the programme on a solid financial footing.

Finally, the Committee reiterates its view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public of the relevant issues, and requests the continuation of the programme.

In closing, I would like to express the hope that the Report that I have just presented will be of assistance to this General Assembly in its deliberations on the Question of Palestine.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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