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**UN Third Committee on Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and Right of peoples to self-determination**

Chair: I call to order the 41st Meeting of the Third Committee of the 71st Session of the General Assembly.

Distinguished Delegates, I invite a committee to continue and conclude its joint general discussion of Agenda item 66(a) Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and (b) Comprehensive implementation of and follow up to the Durban Declaration and Progamme of Action, and Agenda item 67, entitled Right of peoples to self-determination.

Before I give the floor to our first speaker this morning, I would like to remind delegations that the deadline for the submission of draft proposals under these items is at 1 p.m. tomorrow. I would also like to remind the remaining speakers to kindly adhere to the time limit of five minutes for national statements.

In order to assist the speakers in managing their time, a countdown clock will be projected on the screen. In addition, the light on the microphone will start blinking one minute before the expiration of the time limit.

Distinguished Delegates, having said that, I am pleased to give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Iraq. You have the floor, sir.

Iraq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to align the right, or support the right of the Palestinian people and all other Arab peoples under occupation and hail the resilience and solidarity of the Palestinian people. We also reiterate that it must have its legitimate rights to an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital, and enjoy its complete sovereignty and position of its natural resources. We denounce all the grave violations of human rights committed by the Israeli occupying forces: arbitrary detentions, confiscation of land and creation of settlements, as well as the use of violence and abuse against civilians, ignoring all international resolutions all this topic. This policy of discrimination of collective blockade, of systematic assassinations used by the occupying forces, all this goes against the simplest principles of human rights.

The Palestinian people, who are in solidarity and who are resilient in their occupied territories, they lack the most basic foundations of a dignified and free life. They are suffering horribly, and this is seen by the international community on a daily basis. The settlement and confiscation plans in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, all these are violations of international law, as well as international human rights law. Therefore, we wish to reiterate the need to respect international humanitarian law.

Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Iraq for his statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Jordan. You have the floor, Madam.

Jordan: Chair, the right to self-determination is a fundamental right. No one can enjoy their other rights without being able to choose their path to follow, or to be able to enjoy socioeconomic and political development in accordance with their aspirations.

The right to self-determination is a foundation for international law, which is stressed in the two Human Rights Conventions of 1966. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan wishes to stress that no pretext can deprive a people from their right to self-determination. This has been shown time after time in the consultative opinions, in the references and legal documents, including through the international court of Justice. All these documents have established the right of a people to self-determination.

Chair, the question of Palestine remains an open question and a pivotal one in the crisis in the Middle East. Therefore, we call on Israel to end its unilateral actions, so as to create – those that would create a status quo that would later be unable to be solved. This includes their crimes and their activities of settlements in occupied territories.

We call for a renewal of serious commitments to create a just and all-encompassing peace for all.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Jordan for her statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Islamic Republic of Iran. You have the floor, sir.

Islamic Republic of Iran: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I’m delivering this statement under Agenda item 66(a) and (b).

The Islamic Republic of Iran is deeply concerned over the rise in xenophobic attacks against refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants, and over the racist language increasingly being used over them by some political parties and politicians from across the political spectrum and in the social media. Extremist political parties, movements, and groups are threatening human rights values. To overcome these nemeses, the commitments made in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action as the comprehensive framework for action against racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, alongside with the CERD search should constitute the roadmap for combatting all forms of racism and intolerance.

In some Western countries the rising level of Islamophobia, the proliferation of political parties with overt anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, and often broader anti-minority agendas, and an overbearing security approach to migration control are becoming routine. Muslims and other minorities are facing more and more xenophobic and discriminatory treatments. The result of discrimination would be hatred, desire for vengence, and finally, extremism.

Although the war on extremism is a global one, but finding practical solutions requires a lot of soul-searching in the Western countries, as many of them seem heedless to the alarming growth of marginalization, social exclusion, disenfranchisement, cultural chauvanism, unabated xenophobic tendenices, racial hatred, and racism as the breeding grounds for atrocities and terrorities. It’s lamentable that 15 years after the adoption of Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in spite of near 50-year history of the CERD the world witnesses the upsurge of the scourges of intolerance, extremism, and new forms of racism.

Mr. Chairman, it is a matter of serious concern that Israel as the only apartheid regime of the 21st century unabatedly continues to violate all basic human rights of Palestinians while with the utmost regret enjoys full impunity. It is hardly arguable that the deafening silence of the self-proclaimed champions of human rights in the face of such abhorrent records of racism by Israel is accidental. The appalling racial prejudice can be found in every facet of Israeli life. Systemic discrimation and segregation between Jewish and non-Jewish communities is reminiscent of nothing but the dreadful apartheid system. No amount of slander, deception, or a smear campaign by the Israeli regimen can cloud the obvious fact that this regimen poses a real and urgent threat to the global fight against racism, xenophobia, and intolerance.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chair: I thank the Distiinguished Representative of Iran. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Ukraine. You have the floor, madam.

Ukraine: I thank you, Mr. Chair. The Delegation of Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of the European Union, and would to make a number of comments in its national capacity. Ukraine is a party to the International Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Ukraine legislation guarantees a full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and ensures equality in politial, economic, social, cultural and other spheres of public life for all citizens without distinction of their race, color, national, and ethnic origin.

During the latest session of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in August 2016, the Ukrainian Delegation presented two bureaucratic reports on the implemention by our state of the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Since the temporary occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and its armed aggression in certain areas of the [embass] region, the occupation authorities have been engaging in targeted activities against the indigineous Crimean target population and the Ukranian-speaking citizens living in the occupied territory in a manner that may be characterized as racial discrimination. This discriminatory actions have been well-documented and publicized in various reports prepared by, among others, United Nations, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Council of Europe, as well as by numerous NGOs.

And it’s important to note that the civil society organizations’ submissions to the CERD provided an ample evidence of the Russian Federation’s discriminatory actions in Crimea and the other regions of Ukraine.

Mr. Chair, Ukraine is deeply concerned with increased number of cases of racial [intimated] violence against ethnic minorities and immigrants in Russia, that in particular include cases of violence against people of Caucasus and Central Asia by the Russion far-right organizations.

According to one of the prominent Russian center of information analysis, the SOVA Center which conducts research and informational work on nationalism and racism, relations between the [Turgist] and secular society and political radicalism, and I quote: “During the first six months of 2016 racist violence led to four cases of murder, 43 assaults, and three cases of serious death threats.”

Meanwhile, Russian government has been endorsing the far-right movements and improving their participation in the ongoing aggression against my country as a part of a hybrid warfare strategy, and the state of media have been practising the head propaganda, which enforces ethnic hostility. We find these developments deeply alarming, particularly after serious violence in Marseille in this June. And in this regard, to the preparation of FIFA 2018 World Cup, therefore, we urge Russian Federation to cease the practice of stirring up the national hatred.

I thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Ukraine for her statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Azerbaijan. You have the floor.

Azerbaijan: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Secretary-General and Special Rapporteurs for their report on the Agenda item 66 and 67.

Azerbaijan is deeply concerned over the contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, in particular, negative stereotyping of religions, Islamophobia, prejudice, and discrimination against Muslims, and rejects any attempts to associate with violence and terrorism. Every effort should be invested to foster intercultural and interreligious dialogue to counter the increasing prejudice and hatred across the globe.

Furthermore, as the Special Rapporteur emphasized in his report, media can play a positive role in combatting the spread of extremist ideas and promoting a culture of tolerance. Azerbaijan reiterates its full commitment to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, as well as to implement the provisions of the international covenant on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

This May, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination considered the combined 79th periodic reports of Azerbaijan and welcomed a number of measures taken my government, ranging from regularity in this reporting to significantly improving the living conditions of IDPs and initiatives to promote multiculturalism such as hosting the seventh Forum of the United Nations on the Alliance of Civilizations.

Mr. Chairman, racism continues to be a major obstacle to friendly relations among peoples and nations. It's critical to pay greater attention inter alia to the cases of hate speech by public officials and the media and violent attacks on groups with a view to creating ethnically homogenous societies. We're deeply concerned with the continued state-sponsored hate and hate speech in Armenia against Azerbaijan with Armenian leadership taking the lead.

Racism has taken a new turn, as on 28th of May, this year, the government of Armenia unveiled a monument to an Armenian nationalist, Nzhdeh Garegin, thus officially glorifying Nazism and Neo-Nazism in Armenia. During the Second World War, the same Nzdeh cooperated with the Nazis and put the Armenian legion numbering 30,000 men at the disposal of Nazi command. He is a founder of discriminatory and chauvinistic Tseghakron concept, which is based on Nazism ideology. Tseghakron constitutes the fundamental basis of the ideology of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia.

Having referred to a specific example of concern, we deem it's necessary to strengthen efforts and political will to effectively address the human rights and democratic challenges and to insist at all levels that recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable right of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.

Mr. Chairman, the right of self-determination is recognized as applicable to the people of non-self-governing territories and people subjected to alien subjugation, domination, exploitation, including peoples under foreign and military occupation. Nevertheless, in some instances, we continue facing flagrant misinterpretation of the right to self-determination, especially when it's referred to justify the unlawful use of force, military occupation, and externally supported unilateral secession from independent states.

A notorious example is the continuing aggression by Armenia against Azerbaijan. Notwithstanding the concept of self-determination adopted into national law, Armenia spares no effort to impose the view that the principle can be applied in the form of unilateral secession for the Armenian ethnic minority living in Azerbaijan.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the realization of any right cannot be achieved by illegal means. The fact that an illegal situation continues because of political circumstances does not mean that they are, therefore, rendered legal. Law is more important than force. In situation of armed conflict, no peace can be reached which is inconsistent with international law, particularly where peremptory norms are concerned, such as the prohibition of aggression, genocide, and racial discrimination and the obligation to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states.

Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Azerbaijan for her statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Gambia. You have the floor, sir.

Gambia: Give – they have the ...

Chair: I now invite the Distinguished Representative of Morocco to deliver a statement. The floor is yours.

Female Speaker: Morocco is not in their seat.

Chair: Distinguished Delegates, now, I invite the Distinguished Representative of Senegal to deliver a statement. You have the floor, Senegal.

Senegal: Thank you, Mr. President. Merci, Monsieur le Président. Thank you, Chair. My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Botswana on behalf of the Africa Group as well as with the statement made by Thailand on behalf of G77 and China.

It should be underscored in order – we should underscore in order to decry the fact that we are living in a world where racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related forms of intolerance are growing exponentially, and the victims are chiefly those of African descent, indigenous peoples, linguistic, ethnic and religious minorities, as well as migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, whose number is growing. Moreover, a number of government policies can be sources of discrimination towards minorities and foreigners. These policies erode social cohesion and at a national level, undermine social stability, and in a number of cases, give rise to a violent acts perpetrated against women and children and increasingly, against migrants and refugees.

Chair, in Senegal, whose population is a melting pot of ethnic groups, languages, religions, and race. We have every faith in interfaith dialogue, which is open and ongoing between all components of our society. As our first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor, said, and I quote, "The world is in the hands of those who believe in cultural blending. All civilizations are mutually enriching and look to underpin the civilization of the universal." This definition of the civilization of a universe – of the universal, has given rise to the acknowledgement of all unique features and all forms of diversity. In a spirit of brotherhood, we have every faith, thanks to his definition of this civilization of the universal, in biological and cultural blending, interfaith dialogue and standing firm by our values.

In the views of our delegation, all of these are essential components of the fight against xenophobia in all its forms and manifestations. In all cases, it is crucial to wage this [tour] against racism in an unstinting and determined fashion in all scale – at all levels in order to ensure peace and stability in the world. Thus, it is crucial for the government – for governments to implement policies and measures which aim to foster inclusive and interfaith dialogue as well as the respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, and linguistic diversity, and tolerance.

In this connection, it is important to underscore the advantages of programs put in place to eliminate all forms of discriminations and intolerance in the spirit and letter of the International convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Declaration and Programme of Action of Durban. It is in this vein that my delegation wishes to invite Member States to ratify the International Convention on the protection of all rights – of the rights of all migrant workers and all their family members.

Chair, as it regards self-determination, my country, which is at the helm of the Committee for the Exercise of Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, wishes once again to draw the international community's attention to the situation of the occupied Palestinian territories. They have been occupied for almost half a century. It is our collective duty to eradicate the multiple violations of the rights of these peoples, fundamental rights. And these violations include imprisonments, arbitrary detention, collective punishments, the wall, the Gaza blockade, the destruction of houses and civil infrastructure, the establishment and expansion of settlements, discrimination towards Palestinian people on their own territory.

In addition to these violations, many people, many Palestinian people, are often deprived of a large number of other rights, such as the right to education, health and development. This is why it is necessary to assist these people in order to ensure that they are fully able to enjoy their inalienable rights, including the right to live in freedom, justice, dignity, and to create a sovereign, independent, democratic and viable state which is has territorial integrity. It is thus incumbent upon our organization to find a peaceful solution to this conflict in order to respond to the – Israel's aspirations for security as well to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to have a sovereign state based on pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Chair, in light of the above, it is clear that considerable efforts must still be deployed in order to fend off the risks linked to xenophobia and racial discrimination as well as related forms of intolerance and in order to ensure that the right to self-determination is collectively enjoyed.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Senegal for her statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Bolivia. You have the floor, madam.

Plurinational State of Bolivia: Thank you, Chair. For the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the eradication and elimination of racism and discrimination is a priority and is part of one of the pillars of our domestic policy. Article 14, paragraph 2 of the political constitution of the state prohibits and sanctions all forms of discrimination based on sex, color, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, origin, culture, nationality, citizenship status, language, creed, ideology, political or philosophical affiliation, marital status, economic or social status, type of employment, qualification level, disability, whether one is pregnant or not, or any other forms of discrimination whose aim or resort is to prohibit or undermine the acknowledgement, enjoyment, or exercise of equality and all rights of every human being.

Chair, during President Evo Morales' term of office, we've seen a number of forms of racism which have been expressed in the political and economic spheres. These forms of discrimination have culminated in violent acts being perpetrated against indigenous peoples or farmers as well as against intercultural communities. These acts of violence were perpetrated by those against the government, who did not accept the economic, political, and social transformations which were afoot in order to benefit the majority.

Discrimination is one of the phenomena which continues to afflict the poorest members of our society and society as a whole. The poorest people are those that have to bear the consequences most acutely of discrimination. This is discrimination which does not only give rise to conflict, but also worsens the poverty of the poorest people.

Against this backdrop, President Evo Morales, on the 8th of October, 2010, enacted the law against racism and all forms of discrimination. This law establishes mechanisms and procedures for the prevention and sanctioning of acts of racism and all forms of discrimination within the framework of the political constitution of the state and international human rights treaties. The law looks to eliminate racist behavior and all forms of discrimination and to consolidate.

Chair, we have implemented a partnership agreement between government institutions and civil society institutions to implement agreements which look to fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related forms of intolerance. In this agreement, it is stated that what we will do is consolidate dialogue and ongoing cooperation in order to fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and other related forms of intolerance on the basis of a broad agenda which includes the commitments made in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action as well as in the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference which was held in Geneva in April 2009.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia respects the ancestral memory of its peoples and respects the need to preserve cultural diversity and foster dialogue between civilizations, and, therefore, we stand by our decision to eradicate racial discrimination. Since the enactment of Law 045 in 2010 against racism and all forms of discrimination, our peoples have ceased to be scared about reporting all instances of discrimination provided – covered by law in force. And what has been seen is a process of social empowerment. People know that there are laws in place that they can use to respect their rights and to report acts of discrimination. This law was enacted in order to establish mechanisms and procedures to prevent and sanction acts of racism and all forms of discrimination within the framework of the political constitution of the state.

On the 14th of June 2011, there was the enactment of Law 139. This establishes the 24th of May as the day for the fight against divisive pro-segregation stances. Moreover, this law indicates that all public and private institutions within the Bolivian education system, as well as the public bodies within the Plurinational State of Bolivia, will undertake prevention and awareness raising programs as well as education programs to fight against racism and discrimination.

We hold and celebrate the National Day Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination as a result of the suffering suffered by peasants in – farmers, excuse me – in the [City Sur], in Sucre on the 24th of May, 2008. Until May, 2016, 54 reports of discrimination have been filed and 11 cases have been solved through the administrative courts. This demonstrates that people are feeling increasingly empowered and believe that they can report acts of discrimination.

Chair, in order to eradicate racial discrimination, racism, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, we must promote international commitments and implement public policies in the political and economic sphere, particularly in – at a national level. Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Bolivia for her statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Algeria. You have the floor, sir.

Algeria: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Thailand on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his reports, summated under Agenda item 66, and all the distinguished speakers for their comprehensive reports and presentations. We take note of the recommendations.

Mr. Chair, the issue of racial discrimination lies in the heart of the human rights because it touches the fundamental principles of the universality of the human rights and human dignity. Everyone was born free and equal in dignity and rights, and has the potential to contribute constructively to the development and well-being of his or her society, wherever he or she chooses to be.

Despite the progress made in combatting racist, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, this phenomena continues to spread out in all of the world. Migrants become more and more victims of exploitation, xenophobia, and discriminations. Some political parties in some countries do not hesitate to demand migrants to gain elections.

Associating Islam with tourism and violence is also another form of racism and intolerance. We need to focus more on correcting misunderstanding and fostering interfaith and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, and respect for cultural, ethnic, and religious diversities as well as rising global awareness about different cultures and religions.

To put an end to racism and discrimination, the international community is more than ever called to reiterate its commitment to the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action as well as to the 2009 Durban Review Conference, which remain the fundamental frameworks for the effective elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance.

In this regard, my delegation appreciates the continuing work of the existing mechanism mandated to follow up on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance.

Mr. Chair, the elimination of all forms of discrimination amongst citizens is well rooted in the Algerian Constitution, which grants equal treatment and enjoyment of related rights to foreigners on its territory. It grants also the freedom of belief and religion, and prohibits any direct or indirect designation of racist message, intolerance, and incitement of violence.

Algeria is among the countries that recognize the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of individuals within their jurisdiction claiming to be victims of violation of any of the rights set forth in the Convention.

Mr. Chair, allow me now to turn to the Agenda 67 on the right of people's to self-determination. The right of people to self-determination is the founding principle of the United Nations, which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and embodied in the international covenants of human rights as well as in the declaration of the General Assembly Resolution 1514 of 14 December, ‘60. The right of peoples to self-determination based on respect for principle of equal rights and fair equality of opportunity implies that all peoples have the right to self-determination, and that by virtue of that right they freely could determine their political statutes and freely pursue their economic, social, and culture development.

While deploring the attempt, I mean to narrow the interpretation of this right and the acts of military intervention and occupation that are threatening the right to self-determination. We are confident that justice will prevail, and peoples will exercise and – their rights to self-determination with the support of the international community.

My delegation encourages the Human Rights Council to continue to give special attention to the violation of human rights, especially the right to self-determination resulting from foreign military intervention, aggression, or occupation. My delegation regrets deeply that the right to self-determination, while threatened in some countries, remains inaccessible to the Palestinian people as well as all people of the Romanian non-self-governing territories, including the Sahrawi people.

Thank you for your attention.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Algeria for his statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Venezuela. You have the floor, madam.

Venezuela: Thank you, Chair. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to endorse the statement made by the Distinguished Delegation of the Dominican Republic on behalf of CELAC.

We are this year celebrating the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action of Durban. These were documents which laid the foundations for ushering in a new era in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, intolerance and all related forms of intolerance. Nevertheless, we are still far from adhering to and fulfilling the commitments made in these documents.

Today we are concerned by the rising tide of messages and manifestations which are racist, xenophobic, and discriminatory across the world. Means for this riding tide of racism is the misuse of ICTs as well as new and sophisticated forms of technology. These are used to incite to violence, intolerance, and racial discrimination. We are increasingly seeing in many developed countries the rising tide of xenophobic and racist discourse in the public and political sphere. This has led to an increase in tolerance and provided fertile ground for feelings of repudiation, exclusion, and the marginalization of specific social, ethnic, racial, or religious groups.

We also note with alarm the extreme cruelty, persecution, discriminatory treatment, and marginalization of migrant peoples in many countries in the north, where increasingly, and increasingly frequently, they are not allowed to enjoy their rights, they are the victims of abuse, and their fundamental rights and freedoms are restricted.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its unstinting commitment to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related forms of intolerance. These – which incite to racial, national, or religious hatred. Our country has worked with all in a coherent fashion in order to give life to the principles enshrined in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

We also reaffirm our commitment to and support for the mechanisms created within the United Nations system, and other SUR regional bodies, of which Venezuela is a member, mechanisms whose aim is to fight against these scourges of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and other related forms of intolerance.

Venezuela is a multi-ethnical, multi-racial, and multi-cultural nation. One of the main human rights underpinning our society is non-discrimination on the basis of birth, sex, race, or any element of personal or social status. We are legally bound to abide by the concept of, or precept of, the Constitution, which looked to fight against racial discrimination.

In 2011 we adopted a law whose aim was to prevent, deal with, eliminate, eradicate, and punish racial discrimination as it – and enshrine it in law as a punishable act. We also created the Institute for the Fight Against Racial Discrimination, whose achievements range from dealing with specific cases of discrimination to the consolidation of institutional architecture. This institute has given center stage to the voices of peoples of African descent, immigrants, and indigenous people.

In 2016, we have been working on the following initiatives. We have worked on preparing the Second Congress on Racism and Racial Discrimination. We have undertaken awareness-raising campaigns targeted at peoples of African descent and indigenous peoples. We are working arduously on planning a broad national consultation process on racial discrimination in order to gather information to ultimately develop a national plan whose aim is to eradicate and prevent racial discrimination.

We should underscore that our country rejects any attempt by any organization to promote racist philosophies and to exercise discrimination based on racial, ethnic, or religious superiority. We also reject any manifestation of racism or xenophobia which aims to promote hatred and racial discrimination, violating fundamental human rights and principles and freedoms enshrined in international law.

In this connection Venezuela condemns the resurgence of extremist movements, their ideals, and their actions. We believe that the emergence of these groups is a step backward for and in democratically constituted states, and a step backward for the rule of law. It's also a threat for future generations.

To conclude, we call upon the international community to continue to deploy efforts in order to repay the social debt to those who have historically been marginalized on the basis – as a result of racial discrimination. We also call upon the international community to decidedly fight against the scourge of racism. At the same time we advocate for full adherence to the International Convention against the – on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and unstinting efforts to implement the commitments in the declaration and action plan.

Thank you.

ChaiR: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Venezuela for her statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the State of Palestine. You have the floor, madam.

PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. … assembly on the right of peoples self-determination stresses that the right to self-determination is enshrined in Article 1 of both International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. And it states that all peoples have the right of self-determination, and that by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.

These two covenants, along with all provisions of international law, humanitarian law, and human rights law, are all applicable to the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. But for nearly half a century they have not only been – they have not been blatantly – not only been blatantly ignored but have been violated, trampled on, and violently withheld from the Palestinian people under Israel's ruthless occupation.

Mr. Chair, the most obvious manifestation in which the Palestinian peoples' basic and fundamental right to self-determination has continued to be denied is as a result of Israel's continuation of its illegal policies and measures of creating new facts on the ground with its building of settlements and related infrastructure. Since the start of the occupation in 1967, this illegal policy has continued to be pursued relentlessly by successive Israeli governments in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

As noted by the International Fact-Finding Mission on Israeli Settlements in its report to the Human Rights Council, it states, and I quote, "The existence of the settlements has had a heavy toll on the rights of the Palestinians. Their rights to freedom of self-determination, non-discrimination, freedom of movement, equality, due process, fair trial, not to be arbitrarily detained, liberty and security of person, freedom of expression, freedom to access places of worship, education, water, housing, adequate standard of living, property, access to natural resources and effective remedy are all being violated consistently and on a daily basis."

Over this past year this illegal policy has not changed. In fact, settlement building and all the human rights violations that emanate from them have intensified, reconfirming that Israel is more interested in its colonial expansionist agenda rather than just peace and security.

In this regard Israel continued illegal construction of settlements, a network of Israeli-only bypass roads linking the settlements, construction of the wall, expropriation of vast land areas, and transfer of Israeli settlers, flagrantly pushing ahead with its plans to colonize and de facto annex more Palestinian land.

Such plans have also involved the forcible transfer of Palestinian civilians, destruction of homes and infrastructure, denial of basic services and obstruction of humanitarian assistance, and imposition of checkpoints and other movement restrictions accompanied by a strict permit regime. Other measures have been intentionally designed to segregate the indigenous Palestinian population and the Israeli settler population, privileging the settlers and institutionalizing a discriminatory regime aimed at altering the demographic composition of the occupied Palestinian territory and facilitating the pillage of natural resources.

Moreover, in connection with Israel's illegal settlements, settler violence and terror against Palestinians and vandalism against their homes, orchards, and religious lives continued unabated under the protection and watch of the Israeli occupying forces. Human rights groups say that such negligence of not holding these Israeli settlers accountable constitutes yet another violation of Israel's legal obligation to protect the Palestinian population as an occupying power. The constant failure by the occupying power to hold illegal settlers accountable for their terrorist crimes has ultimately encouraged further attacks with complete impunity.

Mr. Chair, colonialism, expansionism, and annexation are entirely incompatible with ending occupation and making peace. Israel's speaking of peace while engaging in its destruction makes a mockery of international community support for the two-state solution, and diminishes the viability of two states and obstructs a real peace agreement from materializing. Therefore, we reiterate our appeal to the international community to take real efforts to bring an end to Israel's occupation and its violations and to advance the efforts for the realization of the Palestinian peoples' inalienable human rights, in particular their right to self-determination, so that they and future generations of Palestinians can live in security, freedom, and dignity in their own independent and sovereign State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Palestine for her statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the Eritrea. You have the floor, madam.

Eritrea: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the Distinguished Ambassador of Botswana on behalf of the African Group as well as the Ambassador of Thailand on behalf of the G77 and China.

Mr. Chairman, Eritrea strongly condemns all forms of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia, and other related intolerances. Eritrea acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination Of all Forms of Racial Discrimination in 2001 due to its unwavering conviction that racism, xenophobia, and discrimination of all kinds are grave violations of human rights that need to be tackled by every nation.

The Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration of Human Rights is based on the principles of dignity and equality inherent in all human beings and our duty as Member States remains to promote, encourage universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, and religion.

The international community came a long way and made great strides in its understanding of factors, forms, and dangers of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and other related intolerances. Legal foundations to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination were laid in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

In the Durban Declaration and the Programme of Action of the international community declared its full commitment to address racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and other related intolerances at the national, regional, and international level.

Mr. Chairman, despite the efforts of the international community to combat and eradicate all forms of discrimination, the intolerable trends of racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia continue to persist and cause unacceptable hardships and tragedy for many. My delegation would like to stress with great concern the situation of mounting racism, xenophobia, and hostility against migrants. Migrants endure many forms of racism, including threats, intimidation, physical attacks, and hindrance to freely practice their culture and religion as well as denial of basic social services.

Fundamental human rights of migrants should be respected by all states. And states are encouraged to provide migrants and their families the necessary legal, economic, and social frameworks of protection. In this regard, my delegation supports the Secretary-General's Global Campaign to Counter Xenophobia, and encourage Member States along to active role of Member States in planning and implementing in the campaign.

In this regard Eritrea would like to stress that education and mass media are key to changing behavior and to promote tolerance for diversity in societies. Education plays an essential role in the full development of human personality, including respect for human rights, regardless of their race, sex, language, class, and ethnicity. Similarly, the role of mass media in promoting understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial, and religious groups cannot be underestimated.

Mr. Chairman, a key to addressing the racism in many parts of the world is dealing with the relics of centuries of colonialism. The experience of colonialism and slavery based on racial prejudice is phenomenon – is a phenomenon with deeply rooted economic and socially negative impacts which continue to affect many people today.

Eritrea also supports the calls to readjust the historical imbalances created by racism, including slavery, that continues to affect millions. In this regard we continue – we welcome the UN General Assembly Proclamation 2015 to 2020 as the International Decade for the People of African Descent, citing the need to strengthen national, regional, international cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights by all people of African descent and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society.

Mr. Chairman, as a country that was denied its right to self-determination and one that endures decades of war to assert it, Eritrea unequivocally supports the right to people for self-determination. This is a sacrosanct principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

I thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Eritrea for her statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Morocco. You have the floor.

Morocco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman, universal equality and the interdependence of all human rights is the foundation for the international system. These principles are solemnly enshrined in international instruments, but they require constant and sincere commitment from the international community to defend and promote human rights without any selectivity or instrumentalization.

The principle of self-determination is one of these. First and foremost, this cannot be hierarchized or be a priority for human rights. It cannot be implemented in ways that are – run contrary to the human rights, including that of national unity and territorial integrity of states. And these instruments apply to all peoples, and it is deplorable that some try to defend them, in certain cases while they do not allow them for their own peoples or those living on their territory and under their own jurisdiction.

Thirdly, self-determination is applied to all rights. We cannot confine self-determination to simply a political status. It exists in other forms, which require equal attention, including the self-determination in cultural and linguistic terms.

The judicial application of self-determination cannot be confined to a single political and at times questionable define – definition. Attempts to force this definition are – go against international law as it is something that evolves and adapts to current situations.

Moreover, you must recall that Resolution 1514, which came in a particular context of freedom and independence in the 1950s, was upon its adoption complemented by Resolution 1521, which included the application of independence, association to a state, or the integration to a state. And the goal here was to put into place protections for – to prevent exclusive interpretations of self-determination. And 1514 was then completed by 2625 which reaffirmed that self-determination can be created by the creation of a sovereign and independent state, free association with an independent state, or any other political status that is freely chosen.

Self-determination has also seen significant advances. If the first goal of this practice was to show the independence from colonial empires in the '50s and '60s, this principle today is working to democratize through independence states so as to eliminate instability and to ensure international stability and security.

The general tendencies in international law promotes independence through local democracy, economic participation, and the preservation of cultural, tribal, and linguistic heritage. This allows you to go beyond the status quo by actively contributing to peace and to promote confidence and reconciliation. This is a concept of self-determination which is authentic, democratic, modern, and face – moving towards the future.

It is also greatly supported and approved of by the international community, which moves beyond the exclusive definition of self-determination; and we must move beyond it, and we must open to new understandings of the term to allow peoples to enjoy their full rights and to ensure that they are living well and in dignity.

Sir, despite this, it remains – the right to self-determination remains inaccessible to certain peoples. And unfortunately it has led to questionable interminations despite the letters of international law. The exercise of self-determination cannot be used in one term when there are many other UN documents that are also relevant here. Politicization of this must be – must include other types of definitions for self-determination, including that of autonomy.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Morocco for his statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the State of Palestine. You have the floor, madam.

PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will now speak on Agenda item 66.

As this committee discusses the important issue of the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, the Palestinian people living in the occupied Palestinian territory continue to suffer from an increased level of all of the above. For half a century, the occupying power has institutionalized racism and discrimination in its most vicious form, which is a prolonged foreign military occupation with elements of colonialism and apartheid.

These policies and practices employed against the indigenous Palestinian population constitute today's apartheid. It is an institutionalized system of discrimination that allows for the economic and social subjugation of Palestinians, whether they are citizens of Israel or those living under Israel's ironclad military occupation. They are treated as second and third class citizens at best. And through an intricate system of racial discrimination, Palestinians have been kept oppressed, stripped of their rights, and segregated into underprivileged population centers by willful design.

In my previous statement today, my delegation provided a glimpse of how Israel's settlement enterprise in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, cruelly violates the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Israel's settlement enterprise also provides the most glaring example of Israel's institutionalized system of discrimination and racism as it continues to do all it can to Judaize the occupied West Bank, in particular, in East Jerusalem, by transferring more than 600,000 Israeli settlers to illegal Israeli settlements built on confiscated Palestinian land in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which classifies settlement building as a war crime.

For the purpose of this debate, we would like to recall the words of Lara Friedman, the Director of Policy and Government Relations for NGO, Americans for Peace Now, the sister organization of Israeli NGO, Peace Now, before an Arria-formula meeting just a couple weeks back. During her impassioned presentation, she stated that, and I quote, "Settlement policy has created a dangerous and ugly political reality in the occupied territories, a reality in which two populations live on the same land under different legal systems, separate and entirely unequal, with the governing authority serving one population at the expense of the other. One population is comprised of privileged Israeli citizens enjoying the benefits of a prosperous, powerful state, while the other population is comprised of disenfranchised Palestinians living under foreign military occupation, explicitly designed to protect and promote the interests, not of Palestinian residents of the occupied territory, but of Israeli settlers."

Clearly, the discriminatory reality is so apparent, any reputable international organization or human rights organization, including the Israeli ones examining the events in the occupied Palestinian territory reaches the correct conclusion that racism and discrimination is at the heart of the reality Palestinians suffer under Israeli occupation. Mr. Chair, I would be remiss if I didn't express our grave concern that the Palestinian citizens of Israel, who constitute one-fifth of the Israeli population, continue to be targeted by a barrage of racist laws, making them second and third class citizens in their own land.

Currently, there are more than 50 Israeli laws that discriminate against Palestinian citizens of Israel in all areas of life, including their rights to political participation, access to land, education, state budget resources and criminal procedures. The mere fact that there are more than 50 Israeli laws that discriminate against the 20% of its population clearly makes it hard for one to understand how a state could rationally or logically continue to refer to itself as a democracy when that law only applies to certain groups.

Mr. Chair, as decade after decade has proven, this grave injustice facing the Palestinian people living under occupation will remain without remedy in the absence of accountability, prolonging this tragic conflict with further deterioration and destabilization of the situation and greater human suffering. The international community must do its part and finally take the necessary steps to bring an end to all Israeli violations and pursue accountability and justice for its crimes against the Palestinian civilian population. Israel, the occupying power, must fulfill its obligations under international law and in accordance with relevant UN resolutions in order for Palestinians to finally have the right to live a life of dignity and the right to determine their own future.

Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of the State of Palestine for her statement, and that was the last speaker on my list.

Distinguished Delegates, I have been informed that several representatives would like to make statements in exercise of their right of reply in accordance with Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. In that connection, I should like to remind delegations that the number of interventions in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item. The first intervention should be limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes.

Having said that, I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the Russian Federation. You have the floor.

Russian Federation: Mr. Chairman, we wish to use our right of reply to react to many statements by delegations on this Agenda item on racism. First and foremost, in the context of the statement made by the Delegation of Georgia, we call on our colleagues to finally accept their new political reality which is the existence of two independent states, Southern Ossetia and Abkhazia. Therefore, any issues dealing with the humanitarian or human rights situations should be spoken to [in Tsymbala or at Tsuhumu] respectively.

Regarding what the Ukrainian Delegation stated, we wish to recall that Crimea and Sevastopol became part of the Russian Federation after a referendum which took place in full accordance with the requirements of international law. The people of Sevastopol and Crimea enjoy their right to self-determination, which is guaranteed by the UN Charter, international covenants on human rights as well as the declaration of principles of international law regarding friendly relations and cooperation between states in relation to the UN Charter.

Moreover, we wish to confirm that in the territory of Crimea and Sevastopol, the Constitution of the Russian Federation is in force as are the international agreements signed by the Russian Federation, including those on human rights. The residents of Crimea, as well as all of those living under Russian jurisdiction, they have all their means for legal protection and all those guaranteed by the Russian Federation. If in any way their rights or freedoms are in any way violated, the bodies of the Russian Federation, within their authorities, react to any instances of possible violations of human rights, including investigations of, if necessary.

Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of the Russian Federation. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Armenia. You have the floor Armenia.

Armenia: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have requested the floor to exercise our right of reply.

We are well familiar with the significant problems Azerbaijan faces with history and its interpretation. It is, of course, very difficult for such a nation as Azerbaijan is to invent history from the scratch. We, therefore, forgive them their transgression with the basics of the study of history. But what we do not forgive is their barbarity.

As racism, xenophobia, intolerance hate speech, and particularly, hate crimes are concerned, let me remind that 12 years ago, in 2014 [sic], Azerbaijani officer, Ramil Safarov, beheaded an Armenian officer in his sleep. The perpetration of this crime has not been condemned and punished, but praised and glorified by the highest authorities of Azerbaijan. Now, 12 years later, in 2016, the glorification of that crime encouraged the armed forces of Azerbaijan during the aggression of Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh this April to inflict atrocities, both upon civilians and the military, and among them, elderly people, including 92-years-old woman.

Armed forces of Azerbaijan resorted to open and blatant violations of Geneva Convention by killing captive servicemen and mutilating their bodies. It should be mentioned that 22 forensic examinations have been conducted to determine the scale of those atrocities. It was found that two servicemen were beheaded after their murder. Another serviceman was beheaded and his wrists were cut off when he was still alive.

Photos and videos were circulated in Azerbaijani social networks in which Azerbaijani servicemen were posing with severed heads of Karabakh soldiers and demonstrating them to residents of Azerbaijani settlements. The bodies of many more soldiers of Nagorno-Karabakh defense army who were killed during the uphill aggression of Azerbaijan were subjected to various types of mutilation and desecration.

Mr. Chair, let me remind that Azerbaijan itself has recognized that the equal rights and self-determination of peoples should be among the principles of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution during the OIC Athens Ministerial Council. And thus here denying the rights of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh is contradictory in this regard. The aggression of Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh this April confirmed our concerns and proved once again that the Azerbaijani leadership nurtures final solution of conflict through complete extermination of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

There is no alternative to the peaceful settlement of the conflict mediated by the OIC Ministry Co-Chairs. To demonstrate its commitment to the peaceful settlement, Azerbaijan should adhere to the ceasefire regime established in – by 1994 and 1995 agreements, which do not have time limitation, and unconditionally engage in the implementation of the agreements reached in Vienna and St. Petersburg.

Thank you.

ChaiR: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Armenia. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Pakistan. You have the floor, sir.

Pakistan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My delegation is obliged to take the floor in exercise of its right to reply to the statement made by the Delegation of India.

We have said before, and let me reiterate again, that no amount of obfuscation can alter the reality of Indian occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. The territory of Jammu and Kashmir is disputed. Denial of this fact is self-defeating.

Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir is neither an integral – internal matter, nor an integral part of India. History, legal and political realities cannot be changed by false claims or occupied territories. The disputed status of Kashmir cannot be changed by attempting to mislead the international community. The popular aspirations of the Kashmiris to their right to self-determination cannot be conflated to terrorism. India's failure to subdue their legitimate struggle cannot be blamed on others.

We firmly believe that for durable peace in South Asia, the Kashmir dispute needs to be resolved in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Towards this end, we stand ready to engage in constructive and meaningful dialogue with India.

Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Pakistan. I now the give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the Ukraine. You have the floor, sir.

Ukraine: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will speak in Russian to respond to the Russian Federation. I understand the difficulties that the Russian Delegation has because unfortunately they need to repeat the same thing over and over again. It's difficult for them to come up with new arguments since they don't have any.

I just wanted to refresh their memory in the context of the situation around the Russian Federation as a whole and the various hotspots around the Russian Federation. We remember Pridnestrovie and their Russian base there, and then for some reason after this in Moldova, including in the territory of Pridnestrovie. We noticed events that became a conflict. Of course, remember what took place in Georgia and the Russian aggression in Georgia.

We are certainly also speaking about the Russian Federation's aggression against the Ukraine and their temporary occupation, because you're not there for long. I also want to remind the Russian Federation of a phrase by the head of their Sberbank bank. It's one of the largest banks in Russia, one of their largest financial institutions, which quite recently when asked why Russian banks aren't working in Crimea alongside with many other Russian companies, they said and I quote, "We can't get back to Crimea because as soon as we do there'll be sanctions on us. And this will be so difficult for the country as a whole and for Sberbank itself that to do so right now would not be reasonable."

So if even your bank doesn't believe that Crimea is part of your country, then what are we discussing here? Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Ukraine. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Georgia. You have the floor, madam.

Georgia: Mr. Chairperson, thank you very much for giving me the floor in exercising the right of reply with regards to the comments made by the Russian Federation. I regret that these comments serve the only purpose of misleading the international community while Russia maintains thousands of troops and military bases on the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali. These regions are depopulated as a result of ethnic – several waves of ethnic cleansing, and there are numerous reports of continued incidents of instigating racial discrimination against ethnic Georgians.

In terms of substance of the matter, I'd like to bring to your attention the decision of the Pre-Trial Chamber of International Criminal Court dated 27 January of 2016. I believe this decision will speak louder. This decision was issued to authorize proprio motu investigation into all crimes under the Rome Statute committed during the 2008 international armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Georgia.

The Chamber decision notes that the consistent pattern of deliberate killing, beating, and threatening civilians, detention, looting properties, and systematic destruction of Georgian houses and other acts were committed with a view to forcibly expel ethnic Georgians from the territory of South Ossetia in furtherance of the overall objective to change the ethnic composition of the territory and cut any remaining links with the other parts of Georgia.

The Chamber also noted that during the 2008 armed conflict, the crimes committed against ethnic Georgians, "resulted in a 75% decrease in the ethnic Georgian population in South Ossetia." Distinguished Delegates, this is a textbook example of ethnically targeted discrimination and demographic change, planned and implemented against ethnic Georgians. These heinous acts of aggression once again call on immediate and the need of immediate access of international monitoring mechanisms and international human rights mechanisms to their occupied territories.

I thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Georgia. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Azerbaijan. You have the floor, madam.

Azerbaijan: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I'm obliged to take the floor to exercise the right of reply with regard to the comment made by the Delegation of Armenia. Those self-serving comments full of distortion and misinterpretations, which we categorically reject, are illustrative of Armenia's purposeful efforts to mislead the international community and maintain the status quo.

Otherwise, the Delegation of Armenia would recall that the actions taken by the Armenian side with a view to achieving the unilateral secession of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan have never been legitimate or peaceful, nor have Armenian claims consisted with international or international legal norms applicable at appropriate time. The situation following the independence of Azerbaijan and actions of Armenia is also clear.

The documentary evidence, and there is a mountain of it, proves that Armenia unleashed the war, attacked Azerbaijan, and occupied its territories, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven adjacent districts, carried out ethnic cleansing on a massive scale, and established the ethnically constructed subordinate, separatist entity on the captured Azerbaijani territory.

In 1993, United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions condemning the use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories, demanding immediate full and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. In this resolution, inter-related counsel confirmed that Nagorno-Karabakh is a part of Azerbaijan and reaffirmed respect for sovereignty territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the viability of its international borders.

Unfortunately, the provisions of these resolutions, as the proposals of all the proposals of OIC Ministry of Co-Chairs remain un-implemented and rejected by Armenia up until now. In other words, what the Armenian side describes as an exercise of the right of self-determination by its ethnic Armenian group residing in Azerbaijan has been unequivocally qualified by the Security Council and other authoritative international organizations as illegal use of force by Armenia and the commitment by member state of other crimes of serious concern to the international community.

Mr. Chairman, it's regrettable yet predictable, that Armenia, an aggressive and occupying state, denies its responsibility for the crimes it continues to commit against the Republic of Azerbaijan and resorts to blame-shifting tactic. The country's past and current leadership is well known for the promotion of hate speech, incitement to violence, and the maintaining of status quo. There are many examples and if there is a need, I can certainly be helpful to refresh the memory of Armenian Delegate.

Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Azerbaijan. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Israel. You have the floor, madam.

Israel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In my right of reply, I wish first to stress that the State of Israel supports the two-state solution for the benefit of two people living side by side in peace and security. However, peace necessitates painful compromises and efforts. No doubt, it is much easier to speak at the UN than for the Palestinian leadership to speak in Arabic to its own people, to its own population and call them to stop the daily terrorism action against Israelis.

In order to be able to reach a two-state solution, the Palestinian cannot continue to constantly endanger Israeli lives. Since 13 September 2015, 42 people have been killed in terrorist attacks committed by Palestinian and 602 people wounded. Palestinian exploit their work permits in Israel to enter Israel and kill its civilians. They exploit the possibility to be treated in Israeli hospitals to act against Israeli population.

Holy sites are not spared either. On the 19th of November, 2015, Aharon Yesiab of 32 and father of five, and Reuven Aviram, 51 years old, were killed in an attack that occurred in a Tel Aviv synagogue during afternoon prayers. The incitement of the official Palestinian media and education system have little results. Dafna Meir, 38 years old, mother of six, was stabbed to death in her home in the presence of three of her children. The teenage murderer of 15 confessed that Palestinian TV, which encourages violence against Jews, had a big influence on him in his decision to carry out the attack.

Mr. Chair, I wish to thank the Palestinian representative for so often quoting Israeli NGOs. Israel indeed has a thriving civil society that does not hesitate to speak up and voice its opinion, as indeed is the situation and should be in democratic societies. As I did before, I again wish to express my sincere hope that I will be able to quote a Palestinian NGO, even one, that will speak against the Palestinian terrorism attacks on Israelis or against the horrible human rights violations committed by Palestinians against their own people.

But again, it's much easier to preach to a democratic country about democracy than to promote democratic procedures, such as election, in the Palestinian territories or the rule of law. Mr. Chair, let me stress again, Israel supports a two-state solution and has constantly demonstrated its willingness to make painful compromises in the name of peace. But the Palestinians have yet to recognize Israel most basic right to live in peace and security.

Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Delegate of Israel. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Algeria. You have the floor, sir.

Algeria: Thank you, Chair. The response to the statement made by Morocco regarding communities in Algeria, which wish to separate from Algeria is something which we reject, and unless Morocco believes that the issue of the Western Sahara is a domestic matter, unless it believes that, we want to talk about the rights of the **Sahrawi** people to self-determination. Algeria has always maintained that right. All Algerian people have maintained the right of those people to exercise the right of self-determination. Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Algeria. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Armenia. You have the floor.

Armenia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will not engage into a long polemic with the Delegation of Azerbaijan. As regards to the when it comes to the UN Security Council resolutions, it should be mentioned that they were adopted during the military phase of the conflict and did not lead to immediate cease of hostilities due to the position of Azerbaijan, which made continuous attempts to impose forceful solution of the issue.

Today, after more than 20 years of cease-fire, Azerbaijan refers a single element of resolutions by downplaying all others such as lift of blockade or neglecting parties of the conflict referred in these resolutions. All the UN security resolutions have clearly recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict. If Azerbaijan is willing to implement the UN Security Council resolutions, it should first and foremost reach authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh in achieving progress in conflict resolution.

And we also took note that Azerbaijani Delegation did not reject our allegations on concrete cases of atrocities, which I referred during my first reply, but instead tried to come up with protracted, overused, recycled accusations to which we have always responded on every occasion. And we understand why. Atrocities made by Azerbaijani servicemen are well documented by Azerbaijanis themselves, who distributed in social networks their pictures standing next to mutilated bodies. One of so-called heroes posing with chopped head of Nagorno-Karabakh serviceman, Karam Sloyan, even got awarded by Azerbaijani president himself and took another picture, this time with his commander in chief.

And we understand why Azerbaijan continues to violate the cease-fire regime. And recently one of the incidents resulted in death of [indiscernible], serviceman of Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army. And we are very much concerned that despite the calls of international community to adhere to the cease-fire regime established by the agreements and hold the hostilities and return to negotiation table, Azerbaijan continues to resort to the regularly military actions along the line of contact. I thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Armenia. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the State of Palestine. You have the floor, madam.

PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE: Mr. Chair, thank you for giving me my floor in exercise of the right of reply. I do so regrettably in response to the statement made by the Delegation of Israel. Mr. Chair, my delegation stands by its statements before this committee, statements

Mr. Chair, my delegation stands by its statements before this committee, statements reflecting the facts without distortion and without rhetoric about the real suffering, trauma and tragedies being endured every single day by the Palestinian people: children, women and men, under Israel's nearly half century occupation.

This is the same occupation that the Israeli representatives continue to ignore and refuse to address in any way, no less in the context of international law, which is clearly the context in which the situation is examined in the reports of the Secretary-General. These reports reflect facts amassed by credible UN agencies, committees, and bodies, and human rights organizations, including Israeli ones, that when they do speak the truth are targeted by even the Prime Minister of Israel himself.

These facts in these reports are based on the legal and human rights framework of occupation, the law. The law is not biased. But it does indeed stand on the side of justice. No matter how many distortions or perversions, the law cannot be twisted to justify the actions of the aggressor, in this case, Israel, the occupying power, at the expense of the victims, which is us, the Palestinian people.

We implore the Israeli delegation, instead of spreading false narratives to distort, to actually have a serious discussion on the substance, the real issues, the human rights violations that are being perpetrated against the Palestinian people under its foreign occupation, and its subjugation of the Palestinian people for 50 years. And to do so on the basis of international law and the human rights covenants. Such an examination of the situation would surely lead to a different narrative than the one constantly being told by Israel's representatives.

To aspire to live freely rather than under the yoke and misery of foreign occupation is a legitimate aspiration. To aspire for the same rights, peace, and security that all people aspire to are legitimate aspirations. Israel, as we heard today, talks so easily about peace. We heard it again; we want the two- state solution and so forth. However, the international community must measure Israel's commitment to peace through the government's words and its actions in the occupied Palestinian territory.

If we just take a look at the hundreds of thousands of illegal settlers that have been transferred to the occupied Palestinian territory, a war crime, a violation of its obligations as an occupying power, then that really makes you obviously think about Israel's real commitment to peace.

We remind this committee that the Palestinian leadership has taken numerous steps to achieve peace, including recognizing the right of the State of Israel to exist through the Oslo Accords. We continue to strive for the goal of two states, which is Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security, but we have yet to hear Israel to recognize us, the Palestinian people, that they occupy.

If I can just quote the words of the Special Rapporteur in his closing remarks to the committee last week when he stated: "I want to emphasize, if emphasis is needed, the occupation is not lessening. It is becoming more entrenched, more embedded, and more anchored. We are not on a path to Palestinian self-determination and independence, and this should be a grave concern to the international community." He continued by staying – stating: "It is impossible to separate the occupation from Israel's settlement project. If there were no settlements, then there would be no Israeli occupation."

Mr. Chair, it is time to have a serious debate on the issue, and we invite Israel to this serious debate instead of distorting the narrative and distorting the facts on the ground that all of us here in the international community and the UN know very well of. Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of the State of Palestine. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Azerbaijan. You have the floor, madam.

Azerbaijan: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm taking the floor to respond to the comment expressed by Armenian delegate. The entity which Armenia tries to present as independent, Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, is nothing more than occupation regime under the control of the government of Armenia.

All key figures of the puppet regime illegally established by Armenia in Azerbaijan are in fact the political – are in fact for actors of the political system of Armenia. The incumbent President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, started his career as the chairman of the Separatist Self-Defense Forces Committee from 1989 to 1993, a position which he left in 1993 in order to assume the mantle of Minister of Defense of Armenia.

As for the atrocities, according – this was atrocities in April and before [indiscernible]. I’m pleased do refresh the memory of Armenian Delegation of all the crimes that its leadership committed against the civilian population of Azerbaijan. And also a famous quote from the incumbent president whether he has any regrets about the crimes he committed, he said he has absolutely no regrets whatsoever. I think these words from the leadership of Armenia are very self-explanatory.

According to information provided by the Ministry of Defense of Armenia, during the April escalation 80% of the deceased Armenian soldiers were the servicemen of the Defense Army of Armenia. Azerbaijani soldiers are getting maimed, wounded, and killed within the international recognized territory of Azerbaijan defending Azerbaijan's sovereignty, state borders, and territorial integrity. By contrast Armenian soldiers are fighting to defend illegal occupation policy of their government.

And with that evasive terminology I have a few questions to pose to Armenian Delegation. What Armenian soldiers are doing in Agdam? What they are doing in Fuzuli? This, the District of Azerbaijan, this occupation, has been condemned by the UN Security Council. By the way, it was the Armenian side that rejected the time frame for the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territory of Azerbaijan, and this is the reason why the hostilities continue; the illegal presence of the Armenian armed forces on the territory of Azerbaijan is the only reason and obstacle to lasting peace and security in the region.

The next question, based on which law Armenia is conducting military exercises on the territory of Azerbaijan, on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan?

The next question, what Armenian officials are doing in Agdam? What they're doing in Fuzuli. What they're doing in Nagorno and Karabakh? I invite Armenian Delegation to answer these questions instead of going to diplomatics and misleading the committee. Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Azerbaijan for her statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Morocco. You have the floor, sir.

Morocco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sir, the right of reply that we just heard from the Algerian Delegation is paradoxical and a bit schizophrenic. In fact, Algeria is giving the right to interfere in the affairs of its neighbor, Morocco, but at the same time it wishes to prohibit others from doing the same.

When Algeria is speaking of the Sahara, it is speaking of Morocco. When it is speaking of [Liune] it is as if it is speaking of Rabat. When it is speaking of Dakhla it is as if it is speaking of Tangiers. Sahara is Moroccan and will remain so.

Unfortunately for the Algerian Delegation, we are not those who will be restricted in our freedom of speaking, and they will not prevent us speaking of the right of self-determination of the peoples. The only positive that I found in this right of reply was proof once again that Algeria is the main participant in this conflict in the Sahara.

And I thank them once again for reaffirming this.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Morocco. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Algeria. You have the floor, sir.

Algeria: Thank you, Chair. It would seem that there's a bit of difficulty in understanding or perhaps an issue of concept in the United Nations. Some concepts are promoted that are against international norms and customs. Morocco is speaking of the Sahrawi Republic among the non-self-governing territories of the United Nations.

The United Nations have undertaken a mission to allow the Sahrawi people to exercise their right to self-determination. And this concept that is one that all – everyone can understand, that no one is questioning.

But regarding interfering in the affairs of sovereign states, I wish to reaffirm that Algeria will never accept interference into its affairs, and would never interfere into the domestic affairs of another country. For Morocco, Sahara is a domestic issue. Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Algeria. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Morocco. You have the floor, sir.

Morocco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be extremely brief. Two things. The Algerian colleague tries – continues to only give half of the information so as to justify what he's saying. He's forgotten perhaps to say that the Sahara was inscribed to the 4th Committee by Morocco in 1963, and that's something he does not want to say and he won't say because Morocco inscribed it because it is an integral part of Morocco. And that is why we did so, to regain our province. So I think the Algerian colleague is giving, well, should really offer all of the information so as not to confuse colleagues in the room.

Secondly and lastly, I say this once again, Morocco will not accept that anyone speak of the Moroccan Sahara. And every time that the Algerian Delegation does so, we will be there to respond. And for us as well to speak of what's taking place in Algeria because Algeria is giving itself the right to speak of what takes place in Morocco. Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Distinguished Delegate of Morocco.

Distinguished Delegates, we have heard the last speaker on my list. The Committee has thus concluded the General Discussion of Agenda items 66(a) and (b), and Agenda item 67.

Distinguished Delegates, this afternoon at 3:00 p.m. the Committee will begin its consideration of Agenda item 60, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Questions relating to refugees, returnees, and displaced persons and humanitarian questions by holding an interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner for Refugees. The meeting is adjourned.