

Egypt

Mr. President,

Egypt fully aligns itself with the statements of the OIC, and the Arab Group.

We commend Mr. Dugard for his commitment and dedication, and appeal to him to continue his arduous efforts to promote and protect the human rights of the Palestinian people. We emphasize that his mandate, as contained in CHR resolution (1993/2 A), extends to the end of the Israeli occupation, and we expect that the Council will reaffirm this exceptional mandate pertaining to foreign occupation, through the adoption, by consensus, of the draft decision submitted, on behalf of the members of the OIC, on this issue.

We also welcome Mr. Dugard's last report (A/HRC/4/17) which clearly indicates the incessant deterioration in the humanitarian and economic situation in the OPT due to Israel's repeated military incursions into Gaza, the massacre of Beit Hanoun, and the continuation of the construction of settlements and of the Wall. We especially highlight his conclusion that the OPT is of special importance to the future of human rights in the world, that it has become a test by which the West's commitment to human rights is to be judged, and that the international community has failed to put pressure on Israel to accept Palestinian self-determination and to discontinue its violations of human rights.

Unfortunately, Israel continues to challenge the will of the international community by blatantly ignoring this Council's resolutions. It refused to receive the Fact Finding Mission led by the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Dugard, and established in accordance with resolution S-1/1, to assess the factual situation in Gaza after Israeli military incursions into the Strip. It also refused to receive the Fact Finding Mission led by Archbishop

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Dismund Tutu, and established in accordance with resolution S-3\1, to investigate the Israeli massacre in Beit Hanoun. Israel has also failed to adequately cooperate with the Fact Finding Mission on Lebanon.

We sincerely believe that if the raison d'etre of our Council is to promote and protect the human rights of all peoples without distinction whatsoever, then the Israeli defiance can only damage the credibility of the Council as an effective mechanism capable of ensuring compliance with its resolutions, thereby, proving to the victims of human rights violations everywhere that it can certainly make a difference in their lives.

The politicization of this issue, that was a constant feature of the Commission on Human Rights, continues to plague this Council. Unconvincing arguments are still presented concerning the necessity to adopt a balanced approach, thereby, equating the victim and the agressor, the occupied and the occupier, and those who have lost their human rights, and even their very lives, with those that have taken it. In this case, time and time again, this Council's duty is sacrificed for political expediency.

Mr. President,

We impress upon the Council the importance of fulfilling its mandate in addressing gross and systematic violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people. This can only begin by ensuring follow-up and implementation of the Council's resolutions. It is, therefore, our hope that the Council will adopt by consensus the draft decision submitted, on behalf of the members of the OIC, in this respect .

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