



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

H.E. AMBASSADOR MUNIR AKRAM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AS CHAIR OF THE OIC GROUP
IN NEW YORK

TO MARK 40 YEARS OF OCCUPATION BY ISRAEL
OF THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING
EAST JERUSALEM

New York,
07 June 2007

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of
Pakistan to the United Nations, as Chair of the OIC Group in New York, to mark
40 years of occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including East
Jerusalem (7th June 2007)**

Excellencies,

It is indeed a very unfortunate occasion that we mark today, and our gloom is intensified by the fact that 40 years after the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, our quest for peace in the holy land remains an elusive one. Not only does this signal a gross failure of the Security Council to fulfill its primary Charter responsibility to maintain peace and security, but is also a collective failure of the Member States of the United Nations to bring to a just conclusion, the most serious political dispute in modern times.

2. While the tragedy of Palestine is at the heart of Middle East dispute; the fate of East Jerusalem transforms this into a powerful political and emotional issue for millions of people across the world, specially the Islamic world. Without a just settlement of East Jerusalem – which must be the capital of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State – there can be no durable peace in the Middle East.

Excellencies,

3. Jerusalem is a holy place and a precious treasure for the three monotheistic religions – Islam, Christianity and Judaism. It is home to the First and Second Temples and the Ark of the Covenant, the city where Jesus Christ lived, preached and was resurrected, the first Qibla of Islam and the site of the ascension of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It was the criminal arson perpetrated on 21 August 1969 against the day Al-Aqsa which led to creation of the OIC.

4. Since the UN took up the question of Palestine in 1947, it designated Jerusalem as 'corpus separatum'. Since its occupation in 1967, the Security Council has adopted 16 resolutions, in particular resolution 465 (1980), which categorically declared that measures and arrangements taken by Israel which aim at changing the legal status, demographic composition and character of the Holy City of Jerusalem – Al-Quds Al-Sharif – are null and void and without any legal validity whatsoever. It is unfortunate that all these General Assembly and Security Council resolutions continue to be flouted, as evident from the illegal excavation underway adjacent to the Al-Aqsa Mosque. We are distressed that, already the historic road connecting the Bab-al-Maghariba with the Al-Aqsa Compound has been demolished, in addition to two rooms adjacent to the Al Buraq Wall. The excavation work undermines the foundations of Al-Aqsa and could threaten it with collapse.

5. We urge the Israeli Government to put an end to the illegal settlement activity and work on the separation barrier and halt all work near the Al-Asqa Mosque.

Excellencies,

6. The pain and anguish of the Palestinians living in East Jerusalem is symptomatic of the larger problem of occupation of the Palestinian Territories and Arab Lands.

7. What ever one's political perspective, it is clear that peace in the Middle East can only be attained by an Israeli withdrawal from all Arab Lands, including the Palestinian Territories and East Jerusalem as well as the Syrian Golan Heights, and the realization of the 'two state solution'. Unfortunately, today we see again an upsurge of violence in the Middle East. Efforts to evolve a just, fair and comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict an the related disputes in the Middle East, have become more difficult in the atmosphere of revived tensions in the region.

8. The most urgent task is to halt the repression and violence in Gaza and the West Bank. While efforts to secure the release of the Israeli soldier are still ongoing, Israel must also release the hundreds of Palestinians it holds, including the Palestinian ministers and parliamentarians. We call on Israel to halt and reverse its settlements in the West Bank, to stop the erection of the separation wall, to release the Customs duties and VAT due to the Palestinians and to end the economic and humanitarian blockade against them. We urge the early resumption of peace talks.

9. The structure of a durable peace in the Holy Land is already well known, the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders. To realize this vision, the international community must ensure the full implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003) and General Assembly resolution 194. The revived Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet's Roadmap provide a solid basis for the promotion of a just and lasting settlement.

10. To this end, the Islamabad Declaration and final Communiqué adopted at the 34th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), which was held in Islamabad, on May 15-17, 2007 welcomed the renewal of the Arab Peace Initiative and the efforts of the President of Pakistan and solemnly resolved to continue relentless efforts for the cause of peace in the Middle East.

Excellencies,

11. As we mark the 40th anniversary of the illegal occupation of East Jerusalem, with its continuing tragic consequences, let me express, on behalf of the OIC Group in New York, our solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and our strong support for their endeavors to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting solution that would end their tragedy and despair and realize their legitimate aspiration for peace and a sovereign State of Palestine.

I thank you