

**Statement by the Bureau of the
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to mark
40 years of occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory,
including East Jerusalem**

This week marks the 40th anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Following the end of the June 1967 hostilities, the Security Council in resolution 242 emphasized, among other things, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and affirmed the need for a withdrawal of Israel from territories occupied in the conflict, and the right of every state in the area to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries. That resolution and many others adopted since June 1967 have not been implemented to date. The military occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, unprecedented in modern history, continues to this very day.

The Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People reiterates that the occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is the root cause of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The occupation has prevented the Palestinian people from exercising their inalienable rights, namely the right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and to return to their homes and property from which they had been displaced. A comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region will remain elusive until the national rights of the Palestinian people have been realized.

The four decades of occupation have brought misery and dispossession to the Palestinian people. The Palestinians are subjected to daily abuse and harassment, collective punishment, the use of excessive and indiscriminate force, extrajudicial killings, and destruction of property, civilian infrastructure and agricultural land. The occupation is marked by total disregard for international humanitarian and human rights law and relevant United Nations resolutions. For forty years, Israel, the occupying Power has continued to alter the Palestinian land by establishing and expanding settlements and, more recently, by constructing a wall in the West Bank, including around East Jerusalem. This situation has led to an ever escalating spiral of violence in the area, which the international community unequivocally deplores and condemns.

The Bureau of the Committee reminds Israel, the occupying Power, of the need to fulfil its obligations under international law and fully adhere to the Geneva Conventions, as well as to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the construction of the wall. Israel must cease and reverse all illegal actions in the Palestinian Territory it has occupied since 1967.

On this day, we are noting with great regret that the engagement of the international community has not brought about an end to the occupation. The situation on the ground continues to endanger international peace and security. It is incumbent on the Security Council to ensure a speedy and full implementation of its own resolutions. The Council should decide on effective steps to protect the civilian population, end hostilities and guide the parties, with the active involvement of the Quartet and regional actors, to a negotiated settlement that will end the occupation and result in an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. Until such a time and until the Palestinian people can exercise their inalienable rights, the Committee will continue to pursue the important mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

6 June 2007