



PERMANENT
OBSERVER MISSION OF
PALESTINE
TO THE
UNITED NATIONS

115 EAST 65TH ST.
NEW YORK NY 10021

TEL 212 288 8500
FAX 212 517 2377



**Statement by Mr. Yousef N. Zeidan, Adviser, before the Third Committee, Agenda item 66:
Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, 65th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly, New York, 1 November 2010** (Check Against Delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

We have convened today to discuss the darkest side of humanity and its ugliest moments; the side of humanity which has caused the greatest suffering throughout history. Racism has left many bleak chapters in our collective history, it has been used by regimes to perpetuate death and suffering against millions of people denying them their most basic human rights. This is surely an area where our collective will must be redoubled to combat racism in all its forms, wherever and whenever it may occur. Regrettably Mr. Chairman, since 1948 the Palestinian people have continued to suffer from the scourge of racism at the hand of an occupying Power, Israel. The Palestinian people's collective and individual rights have been desecrated simply because they are not Jewish.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel, the occupying Power, has institutionalized discrimination against the Palestinian people targeting their rights, history, and memory. The longest policy of discrimination by the occupying Power is that against the Palestine refugees who have been denied recognition of the tragedy that befell them and their right to return to their homes since Al Nakba in 1948. Since then, Palestine refugees have been living in camps while Israel has been engaged in a racist campaign to bring any Jew and only Jews from around the world to Historical Palestine and the illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Palestinian citizens of Israel, who constitute one-fifth of the Israeli population, have also been targeted by a barrage of racist laws making them second and third class citizens in their own land. Recently, this discrimination has taken a turn that even high-level Israeli leaders and members of the government have described as fascist. With the adoption of the so-called "loyalty oath", Israel has legalized racism obliging non-Jews applying for citizenship to swear loyalty to the so-called "democratic and Jewish character" of the state. The purpose of this law, passed by the Israeli government, is solely an attempt to annul the right of return of the Palestine refugees and the rights of the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Mr. Chairman,

How could a State rationally enact a law demanding that it be identified as democratic when that law only applies to certain groups? Recent human history abounds with evidence of what it means for a State to seek ethnic or religious purity. It is clear; Israel is seeking a democracy for Jews and fascism for non-Jews. This latest law caps years of discriminatory policies aimed at non-Jews in Israel. Allow me to remind you that for the past seven years, Palestinian citizens of Israel have been denied

the right to marry non-citizens. In the past few years, we have all witnessed in shock as Israeli authorities uprooted Palestinian non-citizens who are married to Israeli citizens from their families and homes.

The laundry list of discriminatory laws also include the "anti-Nakba bill", which was presented by the Yisrael Beiteinu party which is currently headed by Israel's foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, himself a settler living illegally in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Lieberman has on numerous occasions called for the expulsion of the Palestinian citizens of Israel. In fact just over a month ago the General Assembly was not spared from Lieberman's racist rhetoric when he proposed a population exchange to once again dispossess the Palestinian people from their homes.

Mr. Chairman,

Another racist law was just introduced last week in the Israeli Knesset. The "Admissions Committee Bill" will make it legal in Israel for a community to reject forthcoming tenants on grounds of their "unfitness with the community's social fabric", the purpose of this piece of legislation is clear: to provide a legal basis for the establishment of exclusively Jewish communal villages from which Arabs would be excluded; while Palestinian communities inside Israel have been denied the right to plan and develop their own communities since 1948.

Bedouin Arabs in the village of Al-Araqib in the Negev and in East Jerusalem have been victims of constant demolition of their tents and huts by Israeli occupying forces and police in total disregard for their way of life and traditions, while thousands of settlers constantly build structures illegally throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem in violation of international law, with the full support of the Israeli government. The settlers receive funding and subsidies from the Israeli government while Palestinian neighborhoods in Israel and the Bedouin population suffers from underfunding and lack of services.

Mr. Chairman,

Sadly, Israel's racist policies and practices don't end there. Since 1967, the occupying Power has institutionalized racism and discrimination in its most barbaric form, a prolonged foreign military occupation with elements of colonialism and apartheid. For 43 years, Israel, the occupying Power has been engaged in grave breaches of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem illegally attempting to Judaize Jerusalem and its surrounding neighborhoods. Over 500,000 Israeli settlers have been illegally transferred by the occupying Power to nearly 225 Israeli settlements built on confiscated Palestinian land throughout the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The occupying Power has demolished over 25,000 Palestinian homes; hundreds of Palestinians have been evicted and/or deported to make way for the illegal Israeli settlers. A web of Jewish-only roads connects the settlements to each other and to Israel. The *de facto* annexation by Israel of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem can be clearly and evidently understood by the continued construction of the Wall, contravening the 9 July 2004 Advisory Opinion of the ICJ, which along with the settlements and closed military zones have *de facto* annexed over 50% of the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem confirming the occupying Powers colonial intentions.

Mr. Chairman,

To date, Israel, the occupying Power, is the single most violator of international humanitarian law and resolutions of this august organization denying Palestinians access to food, water, electricity, roads, homes, land, as it imposes military laws on the Palestinian civilian population while the illegal settlers benefit from Israeli civilian laws in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It is imperative to recall the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1966 as well as the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid of 1973, which criminalizes actions taken by one group "for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them". Israel's persistent violation of the relevant conventions provides ample proof of its apartheid policies.

This belligerency and impunity has also translated into violence. The past two years have seen an unprecedented rise in settler attacks against Palestinian civilians, property, and crops. Most worrying are the increasingly cowardly hate crimes committed against Palestinian mosques, churches, and schools – in which Israeli settlers, under the cover of night and protection of Israeli occupying forces burn these houses of God leaving behind racist slurs and slogans.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion I reiterate my delegation's call for the international community to redouble its efforts to combat racism in all its forms. There is a great need for resolve and political will to rid the world of its gravest shortcomings: racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and all related intolerance. Our future as a family of nations, which we all agree must be one of tolerance and cultural understanding, depends on translating our efforts into effective action.

The question now is when will the time come for the international community to 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? Mr. Chairman, the time is now, and Israel, the occupying Power, must fulfill its obligations under international law, including refugee law and relevant United Nations resolutions and must also end its occupation which began in 1967 to allow the Palestinian people to realize their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination, so that their children can grow and live in freedom and peace in their independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.