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**STATEMENT
BY
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DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

**BEFORE
THE SPECIAL POLITICAL AND
DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE**

**66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

ON AGENDA ITEM 53

**“REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE
TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING
THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND
OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES”**

**NEW YORK
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Madam Chair,

Let me once again thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me the opportunity to address the Committee on this important agenda item. My delegation wishes also thank the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories for the comprehensive report tabled before this Committee.

While my delegation aligns itself with the statement made by H.E. Mr. Maged Abdel Aziz, the distinguished Permanent Representative of Egypt, on behalf of the NAM, allow me also to make additional comments on behalf of my country, Namibia.

Madam Chair,

The report of the Special Committee highlights a number of practices by Israel, the occupying Power, such as the confiscation of land, demolition of houses, illegal expansion of settlements, construction of the wall, exploitation of natural resources and restrictions on freedom of movement, including the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip, just to mention, but a few.

The preamble to the United Nations Charter pledges to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women. However, the practices of Israel in Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories, contradict these noble pledges. Israel's continuation with the construction of more settlement units and the demolition of Palestinian homes and property erodes the very rights the UN believes to be fundamental. These practices can be equated to a moral hazard and are signs of Israel to prolong its occupation of Palestinian territories.

Time and again, speaking out against these practices has been framed as inflammatory statements. However, such description has become permanent scare crows that have outlived their useful purposes. We cannot bury our heads in the sand and wish these practices to simply vanish. We will continue to speak out as long as the Israeli practices continue to present a mortal danger to the well-being of the people of Palestine.

Madam Chair,

Namibia believes that the expansion and construction of illegal settlements and erection of walls of annexation are impediment to peace. The recent decision by the Israeli government to perpetuate settlement activities, including the construction of about 2000 new settlement units, is a clear and present danger and contempt for international law.

We, therefore, call on Israel as the occupying Power, to stop these provocative activities which are illegal in terms of international law. The illegal expansion and construction of Israeli settlements in and around East Jerusalem are nothing but an attempt to alter the legal status of the city and its physical, demographic and cultural character.

We underline our rejection of these illegal actions and remind the occupying power of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, a fundamental principle that Israel is in grave breach. We call on the international community to demonstrate its resolve and compel Israel to end its occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and abide by its legal obligations including those under the 4th Geneva Convention.

Israel's deplorable blockade of Gaza Strip is a clear collective punishment of the entire Palestinian civilian population. Israel must be obliged to cease immediately this gross collective punishment of the Palestinian people. The hardship and misery being imposed on Gaza is morally unjustifiable and unacceptable by any human standard. The international community has a moral responsibility to compel Israel to comply with its international obligations, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Madam Chair,

Israel, like any other country on earth, is duly entitled to adequate security. However, in the pursuit of security, Israel should not violate the human rights and extinguish the rays of hope for the people of Palestine and other Arabs in the occupied territories.

Once hope is extinguished, the dark shadow of despair creeps in. Despair in turn creates resentment, resistance and violence. It is our firmly held conviction that the only way that Israel can guarantee its security is through the creation of a Palestinian State, which would exist side by side with Israel, inside internationally recognized borders.

Namibia reaffirms, therefore, its solidarity and support, for the right of the people of Palestine to self-determination and the independence of their State of Palestine, which should take its rightful place among the family of sovereign nations.

Namibia welcomes Palestine's admission to UNESCO as a positive step taken by the international community and hopes that this action sends a clear and loud message to the UN Security Council, which is currently considering Palestine's application for admission as full member of the United Nations. Equally, Namibia believes that the right to self-determination is a fundamental human right, which for too long has been denied to the people of Palestine.

I thank you.