



PLENARY II

Action by parliamentarians to uphold international law and advance Israeli-Palestinian peace

3.00 pm – 5.30 pm

Mr. Chair,

I thank you for convening this very important event.

It is a timely event as the UN General Assembly proclaimed this year as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

I also hope an event like this can be sustained in the future, as we need to sharpen our efforts to strengthen the coalition of the friends of Palestine.

Delegates,

For many decades, we have tried to provide moral supports to the Palestinian in pursuit of their inalienable rights. And yet, I am saddened that their rights, their existence and their lives are still in fetters.

As we speak in this august forum, massive human rights violation continue to occur in Palestine as the people struggle to attain independence and sovereignty in their own land under the brutal and inhumane assault of Israel.

As we all know, Israel is deliberately and repeatedly violating international law through its unilateral actions. In addition, in the past few weeks, Israel has been controlling access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, imposing entry restrictions for males below 50 years of age.

What Israel has done is a violation of human rights, particularly the right to freedom of religion. Palestinians have the right to manifest their religion or beliefs in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Allow me to recall that Al-Aqsa is a principal holy site for Muslims worldwide. The aggressive and violent incursions of Israeli are considered to be a desecration of this site, and are perceived as serious acts of incitement and provocation throughout the Islamic Ummah. Such irresponsible actions, as stated by the Bureau of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable



Rights of the Palestinian People, threaten to spark religious conflict and plunge the wider region into further instability.

These kinds of situations can only hamper the pursuit of peace between Israel and Palestine. The question now is, what can we do to make peace a reality?

We need to send a stronger message to Israel to get back to the negotiation table and refrain from the provocative actions. The world community should seriously urge Israel to comply with the international law, as other nations do; and be prepared to act decisively against further breaches of international law.

Delegates,

As parliamentarians we have a pivotal role to bring such ideas into reality. We can act as public figures, shaping public opinion and raising awareness on developments concerning Palestine, not only nationally but also internationally as we do in this meeting.

In this respect, allow me to reiterate Indonesia's fundamental position on the issue of Palestine:

1. Indonesia shall not recognize the State of Israel until the independence of Palestine, according to the two-state solution;
2. East Jerusalem as the capital of independent State of Palestine, as envisaged in the Arab Peace Initiative;
3. Israel as the Occupying Power must act according to international law, including protecting Palestinian civilians and not changing the status of Jerusalem.

These firm positions come from our own Constitution, which opposes against colonization and mandates the Government to be involved in the strengthening of the world order.

Accordingly, Indonesia has been an ardent supporter of the inalienable rights of Palestinian People. This support comes from every level of society, from the government to the political parties, and from business communities to ordinary citizens.

As a matter of fact, the issue of Palestine was among the key issues during the recent Indonesian presidential debate, in which all the candidates declared



their firm commitment to helping the Palestinian people to achieve their dream of independence.

I am happy to see my Government is always on-board on the Palestinian issue. Along this line, I should not fail to recognize my good friend, Ambassador Desra Percaya, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia as well as Vice Chair of the Committee, for his works in furthering Palestinian cause in the UN forum.

As a Member of Parliament, I will certainly keep encouraging the Government of Indonesia to spare no efforts to help Palestinian people attaining their independence.

To name just one example, the Indonesian Parliament has long urged the Government to appoint an Indonesian representative in Palestine. But noting the challenges that we have to face to realize that plan, Indonesia is in the process of appointing an Honorary Consul to Palestine.

Delegates,

I would now like to discuss the possible initiatives that can be taken by us, as parliamentarians, to support the Palestinian cause.

Parliamentarians are in a good position to influence the policy of governments. They are also able to influence the views of their constituents.

In that regard, I encourage you to accomplish at least five important roles that can and should be played by parliamentarians, either individually or through their respective organizations:

1. **First role**, is to act as a persistent objector to Israel's various contraventions of international law. Needless to say, Israeli occupation is against the basic principles of international law, which opposes colonization and foreign occupation.

In this regard, we must speak louder in opposition to the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and to confront its provocative policies and actions in Jerusalem.



Maintaining the *status quo* is unacceptable. Palestine and Israel must return to the negotiating table. In this regard, we should also voice our strong support for re-energizing the Quartet, and for a more important role for the United Nations in determining a concrete action to end occupation within a clear time frame.

Speaking of negotiation, I would like to underline that in order for peace process to commence and move forward in the right direction, support and involvement of all segments in the world society is a must.

Including the involvement of women and youth.

I am of the view that women and youths can play an instrumental role in furthering the peace process between Palestine and Israel.

As a matter of fact, the involvement of women in any peace process is not only a matter of gender equality and human rights. But is also crucial in achieving sustainable peace, as well as economic and social recovery.

Meanwhile, youths have also been recognized as an 'agent for peace'. In almost every place, youths constitute the largest part of the population. This makes the support and involvement of youths in the peace process critical.

Youths are also the leaders of the future. It is therefore important to instil the value of peace and respect to them, since at the very beginning.

2. **The second role**, is to keep the Palestine Question alive. As long as occupation remains, the international community must pay attention to the plight of the Palestinian people.

One opportunity in this area is for parliamentarians to arrange a visit to Palestine, and to disseminate a report of our visit to the outside world.

On our part, Indonesian parliamentarians have visited Palestine several times to express our support and to deliver humanitarian aid.

On a slightly different issue, I am also of the view that a strong Palestinian engagement in the international community will certainly help increasing



the profile of Palestinian struggle. In this regard, I welcome Palestine accession to several core human rights treaties.

I would also like to encourage Palestine to apply membership in international organizations, to show to the world that the spirit of Palestinian people cannot be restrained by Israeli occupation.

3. **The third role**, is to keep insisting that Israel honour its international obligations as the Occupying Power. In this regard, I wish to underline Israel's continued violation of international human rights and humanitarian law, notably in settlement expansions; the building of the separation wall in the West Bank, without recognizing that the Berlin Wall have even been destroyed; and the prolonged blockade of Gaza Strip.

Those violations are clearly not tolerable.

I also want to draw your attention to the Israeli treatment of Palestinian civilians, including women and children. We recall the Israeli aggression in Gaza in the summer of this year, in which women and children were targeted under the guise of self-defence.

As parliamentarians, we must maintain our consistent voice and reject Israel's deliberate and indiscriminate attacks against civilian populations.

We must also prioritizing our attention to the plight of Palestinians in Israeli detention, that continue to be subjected under harsh and degrading treatment.

I take note that as many as 5,400 Palestinians, including parliamentarians and speakers, are currently held in Israeli prisons and detention centres. Many of them are being held without due process.

We cannot turn a blind eye towards this outright violations. Accountability therefore should become the order of the day when we discuss the issues of Israeli violations.

4. **The fourth role**, is to strengthen the international alliance against Israeli occupation, encompassing wide actors: State and non-State.



In this regard, I wish to highlight the important issue of recognition of the State of Palestine. As of now, Palestine has been recognized by 135 countries, Sweden being the last country to render its recognition. This is a bold move that deserves appreciation.

I also sincerely welcome the action of the UK House of Commons and the Spanish parliament for their call on the recognition of the State of Palestine. I also welcome the plan of the French Parliament to hold a non-binding vote, on the recognition of Palestine.

The aforementioned actions underline the role of parliamentarians in strengthening the international alliance of friends of Palestine.

But we cannot stop there. We must work harder to influence other parliamentarians to encourage their governments to recognize the State of Palestine, if they haven't done so.

In strengthening this international alliance, we should also support the existing framework designed to put pressure upon Israel. One obvious example is how we can support the boycotting of Israeli products that originate from the occupied territories.

We can encourage our respective governments to be mindful of Israeli products, and to encourage our people not to buy or use Israeli products.

5. **The fifth role**, is your personal role, how you can immerse yourselves in the Question of Palestine, and become an "agent" for Palestinian struggle. I strongly encourage you to take every opportunity and every avenue to raise the issue of Palestine. You can become a panelist, such as what I am doing now; or perhaps you can write articles to further disseminate the issue of Palestine; or bring the issue directly to your constituents. Educate them on the issue of Palestine, and encourage them to do something in their disposal to show solidarity towards Palestinian people.

To conclude, Mr. Chair, I wish to reiterate once again Indonesia's unwavering support for the Palestinian people and their legitimate struggle for self-determination.

I would also like to call again on my fellow parliamentarians to act immediately and decisively. The challenges are enormous but not insurmountable. We



United Nations
International Meeting of Parliamentarians
In Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace
The Role of parliamentarians in ensuring respect for international law
New York, 21 November 2014

must be creative and pro active. On the Question of Palestine, business as usual should no longer become the manner of our work.

It is over 60 years that Palestinian people have been denied their basic rights. It is our responsibility, as parliamentarians, to accord to the Palestinian people the natural right of every human being: freedom and dignity.

I thank you.