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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATE OF CUBA, MR. ABEL LA ROSA DOMÍNGUEZ AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE, ON ITEM 31: "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, NOVEMBER 7 2005.

Mr. Chairman,

First and foremost, the Cuban delegation would like to acknowledge the work carried out by the members of the Special Committee during the current year, in view of the difficult conditions they have had to work under. My delegation would also like to acknowledge the work by the former Chairman, and commend Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam, holder of this position since 1 April 2005.

Established in 1968 by the General Assembly, through its resolution 2443 (XXIII), the Special Committee has provided, by means of its 37 reports, valuable information to the international community about the impact of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people's life.

In analyzing report A/60/380, it is painful having to accept impassively the statements and the information submitted. Let us see some of them:

- In 37 years, the Israeli authorities have never permitted the entrance of the Committee to the occupied territories.
- Over 7000 Palestinian prisoners remain in Israeli jails.
- The 670 kilometers which the illegal separation wall that Israel continues to build would have altogether, would cut 22 kilometers off the West Bank and would affect severely the freedom of movement and the right to residence of 230 000 Palestinian that hold residence permits in East Jerusalem. Moreover, it would separate from their families, their crop lands, their basic services and jobs, more than 500 000 Palestinians who live less than one kilometer from the barrier.
- Israel uses 85% of the area's water and leaves only 15% to the Palestinians.
- From January 1 to 19 August 2005(a mere 7 and a half month) 146 Palestinians died in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
- Since the beginning of the second intifadah, 3663 Palestinians have died at the hands of the Israeli forces.

It is obvious therefore, that a whole people is being massacred in a blatant, massive and systematic manner. Meanwhile, the international community observes with its hands tied, without being able to implement effective mechanisms. Thirty vetoes and the threat of using

it, has been the result of the Security Council's work, every time a draft resolution that tries to reach a balanced approach on the situation of the occupied Arab territories is presented to this body. The usual implementation of double standards and the aforementioned exercise or threat of veto by one of its permanent members, has lead to the stagnation of the Council on this matter.

Mr. Chairman,

In previous years, a delegation has delivered shameful statements in this Committee, in which it would declare as one of its objectives the elimination of this Special Committee. It got even to the point of publishing this objective on its webpage and other official documents, proving its disrespect for the life and rights of the Palestinian people.

This year, on the other hand, dangerous statements have been delivered in the heart of this Organization on the alleged necessity of eliminating some of the entities created to contribute to the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence. Mi delegation warns again about the possibility that these intentions spread to other spaces such as the Special Committee and reiterates its total opposition to such statements and intentions.

The Cuban delegation ratifies its full support to the works of this Committee, an important instrument through which the international community can know the abuses committed against the Palestinians in their own land.

Mr. Chairman,

As the report shows, the Israeli withdrawal form the Gaza Strip has brought about new expectations. However, the report also reflects that these expectations are starting to vanish with the continued military occupation of the West Bank; the lengthening of the separation wall; the grave violations to the freedom of movement by closing the roads and checkpoints; the incredibly high number of Palestinians that still remain in Israeli jails; the constant expansion of the Jewish settlements in some areas of the occupied Palestinian territory, and the silence and inaction by the international community on the implementation of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

As we have already warned in this forum, the recent unilateral withdrawal of the Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip and the evacuation of the Jewish settlements in this area should not confuse us. We should not think that this is the beginning of the end of the genocidal Israeli policy in the area, or the way towards a definitive solution to the Palestinian issue. Israel continues to control the aerial space, the borders and the sea. Israel continues to be the occupying power controlling that area.

Therefore, the international community should not rest in their efforts to reach a just and lasting peace for the Middle East region.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we reiterate our firm support to the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to establish and independent and sovereign State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Cuba demands also the unconditional devolution of all the Arab territories occupied by Israel,

and it reaffirms the illegal character of all the Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab territories since 1967.

Cuba hopes that a peace without conditions, just and lasting without exclusion for all the peoples of the Middle East be reached. The delegation of Cuba expresses once again that in this search for peace, the Arab peoples can count, as always, with the full solidarity of the Cuban people.

Thank you very much.