

*30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, United Nations, New York, 10 November 2005*

Secretary-General, Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor, on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the *United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People*, to deliver to this august meeting a statement by H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian National Authority. I quote:

“Mr. Secretary-General, Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The commemoration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of the *United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People* is an occasion in which we recall with deep gratitude and pride the principled positions and the constant support and commitment of the United Nations and its Member States vis-à-vis the question of Palestine over the decades. Yet it is also an occasion marked with regret and sadness in which we reflect upon the reality that the tragedy of the Palestinian people - a people who were dispossessed, displaced and dispersed from their homeland more than a half century ago and who until this day have not yet realized their inalienable human rights – still remains unresolved.

Long ago the United Nations determined the urgency of seriously addressing the plight of the Palestinian people and, through its resolutions, its organs and its bodies, such as this important Committee, has been unwavering in its efforts to contribute to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. The United Nations has actively strived to keep the international community focused on the question of Palestine and has consistently called for action to bring an end to the grave human rights violations being endured by the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to ultimately bring an end to the Israeli occupation and achieve the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and to national independence and sovereignty.

Indeed, it has been widely recognized by the international community and affirmed in numerous General Assembly resolutions that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is satisfactorily resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law. This responsibility was unequivocally reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations system, in its historic Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004. It is a duty and responsibility that remains valid and that should be upheld by all Member States, organs, committees, bodies and the Secretariat of the United Nations, and all those seeking the achievement of a genuine peace and justice.

In this regard, it is imperative to recall that when the General Assembly adopted on 10 November 1975 its resolution 3376 (XXX), by which it established the Committee, it specifically mandated the Committee to recommend to the General Assembly a program

designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, recognized in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, taking into account all the powers conferred by the Charter upon the principal organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council. In its very first report in June 1976, the Committee affirmed that the question of Palestine is at the core of the Middle East problem and that no solution could be envisaged which did not fully take into account the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and it urged the Security Council to promote action for a just solution.

Moreover, it is significant that in that report - and as early as 1976 - the Committee, *inter alia*, urged an end to the establishment of the illegal settlements that have been - and continue to be - established by Israel, the occupying Power, in its fervent campaign to colonize and to illegitimately *de facto* annex the Palestinian land it occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem. It also urged Israel to accept the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, a principle repeatedly and consistently reaffirmed by the United Nations.

Most regrettably, however, as we gather to commemorate 30 years of work by the Committee, the same issues and problems that were initially highlighted by the Committee have not only persisted but have been compounded and intensified with the passage of time as Israel, the occupying Power, has continued to commit grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to disregard and violate the resolutions of the United Nations. The Palestinian people continue to suffer from the denial of their human rights, including the right of the Palestine refugees to return, and the settlements, the Wall, the siege and isolation of East Jerusalem, the imprisonment and detention of thousands of civilians, the confiscation and destruction of land and properties and the severe restrictions on movement imposed on the entire population are among the many violations that continue to be committed by Israel. Serious efforts must be made by the international community, including the United Nations, to uphold international law and to bring an end to these breaches in order to promote an environment genuinely conducive for the realization of a just and peaceful resolution.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tomorrow marks the one-year anniversary of the passing of President Yasser Arafat, who for decades courageously led our people in the struggle to exercise their inalienable human rights. It was he who first came before the General Assembly in 1974, as the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization, affirming the commitment of his people to peace and their steadfastness, in accordance with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, in their quest to achieve their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination, and urged the international community to support the Palestinian people and to shoulder their historic responsibilities in this regard.

Today, we renew our call upon the international community to exert all efforts for the just and peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine and the plight of the Palestinian people. We urge Member States to renew their commitments and to intensify their efforts, collectively and individually, to uphold international law towards the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. In this regard, it is clear the mandate of the Committee remains valid, in line

with the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine, and we encourage all Member States to continue to lend their support and cooperation to the Committee and to promote the implementation of its important program of work.

On this occasion, the Palestinian people and their leadership pay tribute to the *Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People*, as well as the Division for Palestinian Rights, which has provided invaluable support and assistance to the Committee, for their highly commendable efforts in carrying out the Committee's mandate over the past three decades. We convey our appreciation as well to the Secretary-General for his consistent support of the Committee and the Division, as annually requested by the General Assembly.

Our deep gratitude and appreciation goes to all of the Members of the Committee as well as to its Observers for their commitment and efforts. The Committee has carried out a tremendous amount of work over the years in keeping the international community informed about the question of Palestine, including, *inter alia*, by means of the numerous meetings, seminars and conferences it has organized that have brought together officials, experts and members of civil society from around the globe aimed at addressing the many serious and relevant issues related to the question of Palestine and at constructively contributing to the achievement of a just and peaceful settlement, based on the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security on the basis of the 1967 borders.

Today, I wish to convey our special thanks in specific to the members of the Bureau of the Committee – to Senegal, which has since the inception of the Committee graciously and capably chaired the Committee; to Afghanistan and Cuba, which have served as the Vice-Chairs of the Committee, and to Malta, which has served as its Rapporteur – for their untiring efforts and dedication. Indeed, the Bureau and the Members of the Committee have upheld the mandate of the Committee with the utmost seriousness, for which we express our deepest appreciation.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We look forward to the day when the *Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People* will have fulfilled its mandate – a day when the Palestinian people will have achieved the exercise of their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination, in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We thank the international community for their continuing support and solidarity, and we express our hope that we will soon overcome the difficulties and obstacles before us and begin instead to commemorate the long-awaited anniversary of the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.” End quote.

Secretary-General, Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to conclude by taking this opportunity, on behalf of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, and on my own behalf to reiterate our thanks and appreciation to the Committee and to the Division for Palestinian Rights, and to affirm our commitment to continuing cooperation with them for the promotion and implementation of the Committee's important program. Thank you.