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**Statement by Ms. Nadya Rasheed, First Secretary, before the Third Committee, on Agenda item 71:
Human Rights Questions, 2 November 2005:**

My delegation attaches the highest importance to the issue of human rights. We firmly believe that the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms are essential in the development of any society. Therefore, it is with a heavy heart that I must, yet again, address this Committee regarding the multitude of human rights violations committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population it has held hostage in its 38-year-old occupation.

Before proceeding, I would like to convey my delegation's deep admiration and respect for the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Professor John Dugard. We would like to express our appreciation for his invaluable report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied by Israel since 1967 as well as for the comprehensive presentation he made before this committee last week. His tireless efforts to advance the human rights of the Palestinian people who suffer at the hands of the Israeli occupying forces should be commended and encouraged.

Mr. Chairman,

The report of the Special Rapporteur (A/60/271) presents an extremely disturbing account of the grave human rights violations being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people. These violations included, *inter alia*, the continued killing, injuring and maiming of Palestinian civilians, including children and women as well as the destruction of their homes and properties. Furthermore, Israel's continued imposition of restrictions of movement, with some 600 checkpoints, has resulted in the further deterioration of the already dire economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people. These restrictions continue to hamper, and often completely obstruct, access to jobs, schools, health care, holy places, sufficient food supply and clean water. Ambulances continue to be subject to long delays, with instances of expectant mothers, including newborns, dying due to the lack of emergency medical care.

Moreover, the occupying Power continued to detain and imprison thousands of people. Such illegal confinement has varied in duration and thousands of those detained and imprisoned have been subjected to severe harassment and punishment, physical abuse and even torture by the occupying forces. Today, there are more than 8,000 Palestinians, including more than 300 children and 120 women, who continue to be held in Israeli prisons or detention centers with extremely restricted access to the outside world, including families and legal representation, and in the most deplorable and unsanitary conditions.

It must be stated clearly that all of these violations continue to be committed by the Israeli occupying forces in the context of its belligerent military occupation, which is, in and of itself, a grave violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, including their inalienable right to self-determination and freedom. Despite repeated Israeli attempts to portray the situation as otherwise, this is the real context – there is an occupying Power and there is an occupied people, a civilian population, who under international humanitarian law, are considered protected persons and whose safety and well-being the occupying Power is under obligation to ensure.

Mr. Chairman,

During the period under review, the widespread destruction of hundreds of homes, shelters and properties by the occupying Power throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

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continued unabated. In occupied East Jerusalem, such destruction continued with the deplorable aim of changing the character of the city. The report states in this regard that "in essence, these changes are designed to reduce the number of Palestinians in the city and to increase the Jewish population of the city and thereby undermine Palestinian claims to East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent Palestinian state." Furthermore, the purpose of the construction of Israel's ongoing unlawful expansionist Wall in Jerusalem was even acknowledged by the Israeli Minister for Jerusalem Affairs, Haim Ramon, on 10 July 2005 to make Jerusalem "more Jewish." In the words of an Israeli historian quoted in the report affirmed, "what is happening today in Jerusalem goes beyond security needs and reflects the essence of the original Zionist dream, maximum territory, minimum Arabs."

Mr. Chairman,

Israel's Wall, which has had catastrophic implications for human rights, further restricts the freedom of movement of Palestinians and their access to health and education facilities. The building of the Wall must be seen in the context of Israel's illegal settlement campaign which has continued throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in violation of international law. Apart from the immediate and long-term humanitarian consequences, such illegal practices are seriously undermining the contiguity of the Palestinian territory and are making the vision of a two-state solution nearly impossible. As the Report stated, "this vision is unattainable without a viable Palestinian territory. The construction of the Wall, the expansion of settlements and the de-Palestinazation of Jerusalem are incompatible with the two-state solution." In this regard, Israel, the occupying Power should cease its construction of the Wall and reverse the already existing parts as called for in the Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004 of the International Court of Justice.

Further, as noted in the report, the violence perpetrated by illegal armed settlers is on the increase. Israeli settlers continue to torment Palestinians and destroy Palestinian land. In many cases, settlers have beaten and terrorized Palestinian children on their way to school and have poisoned wells, orchards, and livestock. It is evident, that these armed settlers, who are placed illegally throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are permitted to act with complete impunity, with protection by the occupying Power, and with total disregard for the human rights of the Palestinian people.

Mr. Chairman,

At this time, I would like to briefly touch on the issue of Gaza. To begin with the Palestinian side considers the dismantling of illegal Israeli settlements and the pull out of the Israeli occupying forces from within the Gaza Strip as an important step towards reversing the Israeli colonization of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and ultimately towards ending its occupation. However, since the Israeli disengagement was unilaterally planned and implemented, it failed to recognize any Palestinian concerns and left many critical issues unresolved. As the report stated the withdrawal of Jewish settlers from Gaza should be seen as the decolonization of Palestinian territory but does not change the legal status of Gaza as an occupied Territory. Therefore, Israel still remains an occupying Power in Gaza bound to the rules and provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

It is high time for the international community to exert maximum effort on the occupying Power to cease all of its illegal practices and policies against the Palestinian people and to abide by international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law. If we are to ensure peace and security for both people in the region, the occupation and the colonization of Palestinian land must be brought to an immediate end to make way for the establishment of an viable and contiguous Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The time has come to reverse the human suffering that has been caused by 38 years of occupation and continuous Israeli military assaults and grant the Palestinian people their right to live in freedom, dignity, and peace.