



Statement by Mrs. Somaia Barghouti, First Counsellor, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, before the 6th Committee, "Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism", 10 October 2005:

At the outset, allow me to express, on behalf of my delegation, our congratulations upon your election to Chair this important committee, as well as to extend our congratulations to the bureau. We wish you all the success in your endeavors.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished delegate of Yemen on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference under item 108, entitled "Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism," and we support the position of the Group in this regard. We would like to, however, make a few remarks that we consider important to our deliberations.

Mr. Chairman,

The upsurge of terrorism that is being witnessed throughout the world poses one of the most major challenges before the international community as it constitutes a grave threat to the maintenance of international peace and security. Therefore, it deserves the utmost attention and should be urgently addressed at all levels and in all forums. Moreover, given the importance and urgency of the matter, we believe that the international debate on the "Comprehensive Convention to Combat Terrorism" in the General Assembly should continue its work in an expedited manner in order to reach a successful conclusion of the Convention on the basis of a real consensus in order to ensure common and effective fight against terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

Palestine joins all peace loving nations in their opposition and condemnation of all forms of terrorism and attacks on civilians by whomever, whenever and wherever. Such acts of terror are illegal and should not be tolerated. This unequivocal position should not in any manner undermine the legitimate right of peoples under foreign occupation to struggle for their right to self-determination as recognized by international law.

Furthermore, situations of armed conflict, including foreign occupation are governed by international humanitarian law including the Geneva Conventions, and in this regard, we believe that the comprehensive convention should in no way confuse such situations of armed conflict with other situations. Parties to an armed conflict, including state and non-state actors, should ensure respect for the Geneva Conventions in all circumstances and there should be no exemption, whatsoever, from these obligations under the pretext of the fight against terrorism.

Ensuring effective and universal cooperation in combating terrorism requires that our positions and actions be in conformity with international law, international human rights law, and international humanitarian law. Our fight against terrorism must also be conducted within the spirit of democratic values with due respect for fundamental freedoms enshrined in relevant international conventions.

Moreover, there is nothing more detrimental to combating terrorism than it being perceived as religiously or politically motivated or directed against a population, religion, or region. Such a perception can only undercut legitimacy and credibility and severely undermine efforts in the fight to combat terrorism. All efforts to combat terrorism must strictly adhere to the rule of law and the restoration of justice.

Mr. Chairman,

On procedural matters, my delegation believes that the Working Group should consider the report of the Ad Hoc Committee in document A/57/37 as a basis for our negotiations in order to achieve successful results. We also believe that the report of the Coordinator on the results of the informal consultations, which were held from July 25-29, can not be considered as a "consolidated text" since it did not reflect all the positions represented during the informal meetings. Indeed, omitting positions and proposals made by many delegations, mainly the OIC, are of great concern to my delegation.

It is imperative at this stage, given the paramount importance of this issue, that the forthcoming meetings and negotiations of the Working Group be conducted in a formal setting by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc committee. We also support the suggestion to convene a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations in order to collectively formulate an international response to widespread acts of terrorism and concrete measures to combat it.

Mr. Chairman,

Palestine stands ready to cooperate actively in the debate on all measures to eliminate international terrorism and we hope that our deliberations will lead a successful conclusion eventually leading up to the adoption of the Convention.

Thank You.