



PERMANENT  
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**Statement by Ms. Nadya Rasheed, First Secretary, before the Third Committee, Agenda Item 67:  
Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Children, 17 October 2005.**

My delegation attaches great importance to the agenda item under consideration concerning the rights of children. In every region of the world, in almost every aspect of their lives, children, who constitute the most vulnerable segment of society, are subject to unconscionable violence and abuse. For this reason, the international community must take all necessary measures to fulfill their promises to the children of the world and transform the universal ideal of creating a "world fit for children" into a universal reality.

Mr. Chairman,

Each year, millions of children suffer the negative and debilitating consequences of armed conflict. The Palestinian children know all too well the grave effects that situations of armed conflict, in particular foreign occupation, pose as they have lived their entire lives under Israeli occupation. Israel's 38-year-old occupation has robbed them of their most basic human rights- rights all children in the world are entitled to, including their right to life and personal security. It has not only impacted the immediate physical integrity and mental health of Palestinian children, but has also had a profound impact on their future well-being, safety and development.

The intensification of the military aggression by the occupying Power over the past five years has resulted in a dramatic deterioration of the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, causing even more harm and suffering on the lives of Palestinian children. In the past five years alone, over 800 children were killed by the Israeli occupying forces, and thousands injured, many of whom will live the rest of their lives with permanent disabilities

Moreover, the prevalence of violent incidents in close proximity to children has encroached upon the last remaining symbols of safety: the home, school, and family. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of Palestinian children were killed while there were no confrontations occurring. They were killed while sleeping in their homes, playing in the street with friends and sitting in their desks of the classrooms of their schools. Others have been killed while protesting against the Israeli occupation or engaging in symbolic acts of resistance, such as throwing stones - an act which has become punishable by death.

To make matters worse, Palestinian children have also been victims of crimes and abuses by armed illegal Israeli settlers. On innumerable occasions, Palestinian children have been brutally beaten, terrorized, and even killed by gun-toting Israeli settlers. These crimes, however, continue to go unpunished due to the occupying Power's undeclared policy of leniency and compromise towards the criminal acts by illegal settlers. The constant failure by the occupying Power to prevent attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and to investigate and bring them to justice for their crimes has created an atmosphere of impunity, which has ultimately encouraged further attacks.

The killing and injury of these innocent children, however, is not the only human rights scandal. For those children whose life was spared, the spirit of their childhood was not. They continue to be denied an

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adequate standard of living, basic health care and, at times, even denied access to sufficient food and education. They have been irreparably traumatized and scarred, forced to live their young lives in constant fear, insecurity and turmoil.

Mr. Chairman,

While immediate direct physical harm is the most obvious form of violence, indirect violence has also had devastating social and psychological traumatic effects among Palestinian children, resulting in anxiety, fear, nightmares, anger and depression. This stems from the fact that these children bear witness to the constant sounds of bullets and tank fire, the demolition and destruction of their homes and the deaths of their loved ones. Indeed, the life of Palestinian children is far from normal and has been markedly different from the ideals enshrined in "A World Fit for Children." Such ideals cannot exist under a military occupation that infringes on every aspect of their lives, a life where their right to grow, play and learn in freedom, peace, and security are distant dreams.

Mr. Chairman,

At this time, it is imperative to recall relevant provisions of international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law. The Fourth Geneva Convention relating to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which governs military occupation, is applicable to all of the territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem. This is a fact that has been affirmed in 27 Security Council resolutions, countless General Assembly resolutions, and by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004. At the same time, as concluded by the Court and previously by the U.N. Commission for Human Rights and other organs, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child are applicable in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Mr. Chairman,

It is with great sadness that I draw this Committee's attention to the ongoing difficulties of the situation of the Palestinian children living under foreign occupation. The lives and future of the Palestinian children are being gravely impaired and endangered, contaminating not only the current situation for Palestinians and Israelis alike, but the hope of a better tomorrow. Serious and urgent efforts must be undertaken to bring an end to this dire situation and to bring hope to the lives of the innocent and defenseless Palestinian children under Israel's occupation. Palestinian children deserve a better a life.

Before concluding, my delegation would like to note that after studying the Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed conflict, we would like to, once again, express our concern that the report continues to ignore the suffering and the hardships faced by Palestinian children under Israeli occupation. We call upon the Office of the Special Representative to exert all possible efforts to finally grant the situation of Palestinian children the attention it warrants.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is resubmitting the draft resolution adopted last year entitled "The Situation of and Assistance to Palestinian Children." We hoped to be at a juncture where the lives of Palestinian children had improved, but the reality on the ground requires that we send a clear, strong message of hope to these children by adopting this resolution by consensus. We trust that we will receive your overwhelming support.