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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 395th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 28 March 2019, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr Niang (Senegal)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Election of officers

Statement by the Observer for the State of Palestine

Update on developments since the previous meeting of the Committee

Updates from Member States on their activities related to the question of Palestine

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Election of officers

2. **The Chair** invited the Committee to consider the nomination of Ms. Raz (Afghanistan) for the post of Vice-Chair.
3. *Ms. Raz (Afghanistan) was elected by acclamation.*
4. **Ms. Raz** (Afghanistan) said that her country closely identified with the Palestinian people, given that it was undergoing similar difficulties. She hoped that Afghanistan and Palestine would soon achieve stability and peace.
5. **Mr. Rivero Rosario** (Cuba) welcomed the election of the representative of Afghanistan to the post of Vice-Chair.

Statement by the Observer for the State of Palestine

6. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that recent events, the report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, submitted to the Human Rights Council in early 2019 pursuant to its resolution [S-28/1](#), and the latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) all pointed to a sharp escalation in the illegal policies and practices of the Israeli authorities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and indicated that the prospects for a peaceful two-State solution were fading.
7. The inaction of the international community was reflected in the paralysis of the Security Council, brought about by the obstruction of one of its permanent members. The complicity of that permanent member had emboldened the Israeli occupation authorities and fostered a sense of total impunity. Violations committed by Israeli officials and settlers against Palestinians were intensifying and a growing threat of annexation hung over Palestinian land. Hope was fading that the nightmare of the occupation and blockade would end. On 30 March 2019, Palestinians would mark the first anniversary of the Great March of Return protests in Gaza. In the year since those protests had begun, the Israeli security forces had killed 269 Palestinians, including 50 children. More than 29,000 had been injured, many of them maimed for life.
8. The situation was increasingly explosive elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

including East Jerusalem, as illustrated by the death of a young Palestinian paramedic in Bethlehem the previous day and the recent arrest of two children, aged 9 and 10 years, by the Israeli security forces. Moreover, Israel was illegally withholding Palestinian tax revenues, which had led to the imposition of severe austerity measures in the West Bank. All that had been possible because Israel had the full backing of the United States of America, at a time when racist rhetoric was being ramped up in Israel ahead of the elections due to be held on 9 April 2019.

9. The State of Palestine condemned all violence directed against civilians, including rocket attacks on civilian areas, but also rejected attempts by Israel to use the latter to justify its assaults on civilians. The independent international commission of inquiry had found that the use of live ammunition by Israeli security forces in 2018 had been unlawful in all but two cases, violating civilians' right to life and the principle of distinction.

10. The State of Palestine appealed to all States to convey to the occupying Power and to those that had influence over it their concerns about the potential for further loss of life. The Committee should not allow the situation to continue without consequences. States should reject the unlawful activities of Israel, including the annexation of East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan, or of others that facilitated them.

11. Committee members should take part in the United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine, which would be held at United Nations Headquarters on 4 April 2019, and the next quarterly Security Council open debate on the Middle East, which would be held in late April 2019.

Update on developments since the previous meeting of the Committee

12. **The Chair** said that he had attended the forty-sixth session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which had been held in Abu Dhabi on 1 and 2 March 2019.
13. **Mr. Inguanez** (Rapporteur) said that a briefing session for delegates from permanent missions held by the Division for Palestinian Rights on 26 February 2019 had focused on the Committee's capacity-building programme, delegation visits and impact assessment of its activities. A delegation of the Committee had met Belgian and European Union officials in Brussels from 4 to 6 March and had appealed to the European Union to use its position in the Middle East Quartet to play a more active role on the question of Palestine, rather than waiting for a peace plan from the United States. The

delegation had also encouraged European Union member States to recognize the State of Palestine and provide ongoing additional support by for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and to ensure that the European Union implemented its policy of differentiation regarding products imported from illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as called for in Security Council resolution 2334 (2016).

14. On 7 March 2019, the Committee and the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine had organized a side event on the margins of the sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women to screen the documentary *Naila and the Uprising*, about the role of women in the first Intifada in 1987. The ensuing discussion had focused on what young Palestinians and civil society could do, in particular in the United States, to help to bring about an end to the occupation. On 20 March, he had chaired a briefing with members of the independent international commission of inquiry, during which shocking video footage of beatings and killings at the border fence between Israel and Gaza had been shown.

15. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine) asked whether members of the commission of inquiry could be invited to brief the whole Committee. It would be interesting to know about the readiness of the European Union to step up pressure through differentiation and to push for peace. Everyone appeared to be waiting for the United States peace plan, which might well not correspond to the international position regarding the status of Palestine.

16. **The Chair** said that members of the commission of inquiry had been unable to attend the current meeting. There would be no further opportunity, as the commission's mandate expired on 30 March. There was a sense that the European Union was waiting. Differentiation had been discussed and the Committee would need to follow up. Resolving the question of Palestine could not be left to the United States alone.

17. **Mr. Inguanez** (Rapporteur) said that the Committee delegation had urged the European Union not to wait for the United States "deal of the century". The air of wait-and-see was due in part to the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament. He suggested that the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine consider presenting some of the commission's video footage at the forthcoming quarterly Security Council open debate on the Middle East.

18. **Mr. Rivero Rosario** (Cuba), supported by **Mr. Koba** (Indonesia), said that the Committee would

have to keep lobbying the European Union and other countries. The video footage would have a far greater impact than written reports.

19. **The Chair** agreed that the video footage was powerful and said that the Committee must not allow the issue of the violation of Palestinians' basic rights to fade into the background. He had been invited, as Chair of the Committee, to attend the Palestine Day on the Hill event on 1 April 2019 in Ottawa. The theme of the forthcoming Forum on the Question of Palestine would be what future lay ahead for Palestine in the face of the threat of de facto annexation. It would be preceded by closed meetings with civil society groups on 3 April.

Updates from Member States on their activities related to the question of Palestine

20. **Mr. Koba** (Indonesia) said that a commitment of financial support of \$1 million to UNRWA had been signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia with the Commissioner-General of UNRWA in Amman in February 2019. The Minister had also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Palestine on aid and a desalination project in Gaza. Capacity-building training had been organized through the Embassy of Indonesia in Amman for 80 Palestinians in the fields of women's empowerment, macroeconomic and fiscal policy and government procurement. On 25 April 2019, construction of an Indonesian hospital in Hebron and expansion of the Indonesian hospital in Gaza were due to begin. Indonesia had also invited a tourism agency from Palestine to promote Palestine tourism at a travel fair in Jakarta, and more than 90,000 Indonesian tourists had visited Palestine in 2018.

21. **Mr. Alhakbani** (Observer for Saudi Arabia) said that reports submitted to the United Nations confirmed the continued violation by the Israeli authorities of international resolutions and of the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people. Saudi Arabia condemned the continued Israeli violations against the Palestinian people and categorically condemned all Israeli policies and practices, which challenged and flagrantly violated international law, charters, agreements and internationally recognized resolutions, all of which undermined any effort to arrive at a two-State solution. Saudi Arabia attached great importance to the Palestinian cause and supported the Palestinian people in achieving their legitimate rights to build their independent State, as reiterated by King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud at the European Union-League of Arab States summit, held in February 2019 in Egypt. The question of Palestine was the most important in the Arab countries and Saudi Arabia held a

firm position on the restoration of all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, foremost of which was the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on the basis of the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and internationally recognized resolutions. A solution to the Palestinian issue was important not only for the stability of the Middle East but for global stability. A final statement had been adopted by the representatives at the summit reaffirming condemnation of illegal settlements constructed by Israel.

22. **Mr. Naouali** (Tunisia) said that he hoped that the League of Arab States summit scheduled for 31 March 2019 would send a strong message to the international community that a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine offered the only possibility for lasting peace in the Middle East. The revitalization of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process on the basis of the internationally recognized parameters and a two-State solution was paramount and in the interests of all.

23. **Ms. Raz** (Afghanistan) said that Afghanistan, despite being a small country facing numerous challenges, had committed \$1 million to Palestinian refugees, and hoped to contribute more in the future.

24. **Mr. Camilleri** (Malta) said that Malta continued to see UNRWA as a stabilizing force in the region that offered important assistance to Palestinian refugees. Malta had also given €100,000 to UNRWA, over and above its contribution through the European Union.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.