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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
EIGHT HUNDRED AND FORTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 13 February 1989, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. RANA

(Nepal)

Members: Algeria
Brazil
Canada
China
Colombia
Ethiopia
Finland
France
Malaysia
Senegal
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Yugoslavia

Mr. DJOUDI
Mr. FACHINI GOMES
Mr. KIRSCH
Mr. LI Luye
Mr. PEÑALOSA
Mr. TADESSE
Mr. TORNUDD
Mr. GAUSSOT
Mr. RAZALI
Mr. BA
Mr. BELONOGOV

Sir Crispin TICKELL
Mr. OKUN
Mr. PEJIC

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The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

LETTER DATED 8 FEBRUARY 1989 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TUNISIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/20454)

LETTER DATED 9 FEBRUARY 1989 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/20455)

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decisions taken at the 2845th meeting, I invite the representatives of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber. I invite the representative of Palestine to take a place at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Badawi (Egypt), Mr. Bein (Israel), Mr. Salah (Jordan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Al-Masri (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Ghezal (Tunisia) and Mr. Sallam (Yemen) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber; Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a place at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Bahrain, Lebanon, Pakistan and the Sudan in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

(The President)

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Shakar (Bahrain), Mr. Fakhoury (Lebanon), Mr. Shah Nawaz (Pakistan) and Mr. Adam (Sudan) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The first speaker is the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): At the outset, Sir, I should like on the behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf to congratulate you sincerely on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are confident that your experience and wisdom will guarantee the success of the Council's deliberations, to which all the peoples of the world are looking.

It is my pleasure also to express to His Excellency Ambassador Ismail Razali of Malaysia our deep appreciation for his successful presidency of the Security Council during the month of January.

Today, all the peace-loving peoples of the world are looking to this Council with the great hope and expectation that it will at last be able to shoulder its responsibility and take immediate effective measures to put an end to Israel's massacre of the population of the occupied Arab territories. Those territories have been transformed into a huge concentration camp where the Fascist Israeli occupying forces carry out the most brutal repressive measures against the Arab population, imposing curfews, restricting their movement, depriving them of their most basic human rights, demolishing their houses, deliberately killing their children, and using poison gas, which in most cases causes asphyxiation and miscarriages.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

Since December 1987, when the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories revolted against the Israeli occupation, the Security Council has held several meetings to consider the situation in the territory. It adopted resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988), in which it reaffirmed once again that the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is applicable to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel, including Jerusalem; and strongly requested Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by its obligation arising from the Convention and to desist forthwith from deporting any Palestinian civilians from the occupied territories. Furthermore, the Council took into account the need to consider measures for the impartial protection of the Palestinian civilians under the Israeli occupation, and considered that the current policies and practices of Israel in the occupied territories were bound to have grave consequences for the endeavours to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Council strongly deplored these policies and practices of Israel, which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories; in particular, it deplored the opening of fire by the Israeli occupying forces, resulting in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians.

Fourteen months have elapsed since the Security Council adopted those resolutions, and now the Council meets once again to consider the same situation in the occupied Arab territories as a result of the continuation and, indeed, escalation of Israeli repressive and oppressive practices and measures, and the use by the Israeli occupying forces of new brutal methods of killing and torture against the defenceless Arab population. Among these methods are: the use of plastic bullets, which are fired mainly at the heads of persons, causing brain

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

shock and damage resulting in death or disability; the use of explosive devices that look like candy - booby traps - to kill children; the use of poison gas and live ammunition; and recourse to harsh beatings. The increasing number of children between 6 and 13 years of age who are among the victims of these fascist repressive measures has shocked the world's human conscience.

At this juncture we should recall the report of the Secretary-General (S/19443) requested by the Security Council in its resolution 605 (1987). In that report the Secretary-General described the tragic situation and the incredible conditions in which the Palestinian people are living under Israeli occupation. The report demonstrates clearly that the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip completely reject the Israeli occupation. They emphasize that measures to alleviate their suffering should not be allowed to become a substitute for an urgent solution to the underlying political problem. They complain bitterly about the Israeli practices, the Israeli settlements and the obstruction of their economic development. They express a great deal of criticism of the failure of the States Members of the United Nations to secure implementation of the scores of resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The report also contains a legal analysis of the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 12 August 1949, relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, including the responsibility of Israel, the occupying Power, underlined in article 29 of the Convention. The report indicates as well the Israeli violations of the provisions of the Convention, as alluded to in the annual reports of the International Committee of the Red Cross. These have also been the subject of numerous resolutions of the Security Council - for example, resolutions 452 (1979), 465 (1980), 468 (1980), 471 (1980) and 478 (1980). The

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

report contains examples of these violations - together with the articles of the Fourth Geneva Convention which they offend. They are as follows: attempts to alter the status of Jerusalem - article 47; the establishment of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories - article 49, paragraph 6; deportations of Palestinian civilians from the occupied territories - article 49, paragraph 1; collective punishments - for instance, curfews applied to whole districts - article 33; and destruction of houses - article 53.

The Security Council, as the highest international authority for the maintenance of peace and security in the world, has a special responsibility to ensure the application of this Convention in the occupied Arab territories. This is in addition to the responsibility of the contracting parties to secure the implementation of their obligations, in accordance with article 1 of this Convention, which states that

"The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances".

The developments that have taken place from the very outset of the intifadah in the occupied Arab territories and since the submission of the Secretary-General's report have proved facts which the Security Council should take into consideration. Among those facts are the following:

First, the intifadah of the Palestinian people is by its very nature a national revolution against the Israeli occupation and its expansionist and settler objectives.

Secondly, this intifadah-revolution, along with the heroic resistance in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, will continue in spite of all the Israeli brutal practices.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

Thirdly, the struggle against Israeli occupation and its brutality will not in any way or under any circumstances be halted, no matter how big the sacrifices. Nothing will stop it until it achieves its objectives of liberating the occupied Arab territories from the Israeli occupation, restoring their national rights to the Palestinian people, and establishing their independent and sovereign State on their national soil.

Fourthly, all attempts which have been made to counter the intifadah and to eliminate it by the use of various pretexts or by brandishing hopes and promises have failed.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

Fifthly, concessions to to the Israeli conquerors-occupiers will never achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and will never liberate the territories under occupation or restore to the Arab people their usurped rights.

Sixthly, the Israeli repressive measures, which constitute a crime of genocide punishable internationally, aim at emptying the occupied territories of their Arab population and achieving further Israeli expansion in the region.

The tragic situation in the occupied Arab territories places on the Security Council a special responsibility to take urgent measures, including the imposition of sanctions against Israel to compel it to stop committing massacres and to desist from its brutal practices affecting the human rights of the Arab population in the occupied territories and to ensure the earliest and urgent withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Palestinian territory and other Arab territories.

The eyes of the terrorized children, youth and elderly persons victims of the Zionist Nazism are looking impatiently to the members of the Council with great expectations that the Council may at last be able effectively to discharge its responsibility in accordance with the provisions of the Charter.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

Before calling on the next speaker I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Democratic Yemen and Qatar in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the

(The President)

discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Alfi (Democratic Yemen) and Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Yemen. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. SALLAM (Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): Since this is the first time I have addressed the Council this month, Sir, I should like on behalf of the Yemen Arab Republic to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I am sure your personal qualities and sagacity will be very valuable in ensuring the success of the Council's work this month.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my country's gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Ismail Razali, Permanent Representative of fraternal Malaysia, for the exemplary manner in which he conducted the Council's proceedings last month.

The Council is meeting once again to examine the deteriorating situation in the occupied territories - the West Bank and Gaza - as a result of the barbarous actions of Israel against the defenceless inhabitants of the occupied territories. For 22 years now, the Palestinian people has been suffering from Zionist occupation and the resultant humiliation and violation of their human dignity. The Almighty has endowed man with the ability to distinguish good from evil.

For our part, nationally and internationally we have been endowed with a legislative arsenal that governs our mutual conduct. In this regard we have many laws, including the United Nations Charter and the Declaration of Human Rights, and

(Mr. Sallam, Yemen)

it is their goal to avoid the repetition of bloody tragedies that have had many millions of victims and to ensure that all men can be imbued with fraternal feelings towards their neighbours and enjoy greater prosperity and tranquillity.

It is ironic to note that certain individuals and groups that have suffered in the course of their existence are the very ones who want to swim against the current of the times and the tide of history. They suffered the atrocities of Nazism, yet today they are the butchers of their Palestinian brothers, who welcomed and sheltered and fed them when the gates of immigration were closed to them. Palestine alone opened its arms to them when they were trying to escape Nazism. Unfortunately, with the passage of time the situation changed totally, attesting to what an Arab poet says, "If you do a good deed for a man of heart, he will be your devoted servant; but if you do a good deed for a crafty man, you will make him a rebel".

For a long time the international community remained silent, refraining from calling for the restoration of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, which encouraged the Zionist occupiers to confiscate their land, demolish their homes, detain them, torture them and expel them from the very land where they were born and grew up.

The tragedy continued and grew more intense until the beginning of the Palestinian uprising in December 1987. Children, women and the elderly assumed the task of liberating their beloved homeland and ending the hateful occupation.

The weapon of choice was stones picked up from Palestine's soil, and the Israeli occupation forces, armed to the teeth with American weapons, found themselves confronted with successive waves of children throwing stones, who offered up their young, pure souls for the liberation of their homeland.

(Mr. Sallam, Yemen)

The tragedy broadened in scope, and States that until then had supported the forces of Zionist racism began to feel embarrassed in the face of the murder of women and children. They began to become aware of the injustices that had with impunity been committed against those people. And finally the giant that had protected the occupiers and hidden its misdeeds broke its silence. Yes, the United States finally spoke up to denounce those misdeeds, and a report published by the Secretary of State shed light on violations of human rights in Palestine.

(Mr. Sallam, Yemen)

At last, a denunciation has come from the ranks of Israel's staunchest supporter; the United States has taken a stand. The United States State Department declared in his report that human rights and the dignity of man are being violated in Palestine. At last, testimony from one of Israel's supporters. Indeed, that report attests to the fact that the human rights of Palestinian Arabs are constantly being violated and that Israeli actions in the occupied territories are becoming increasingly violent. Stones are being met with rubber bullets or the use of poison gas in order to disperse demonstrators. For the first time the United States has recognized that the Palestinian people was, like other peoples on our planet, a people entitled to the same rights without discrimination.

To use rubber bullets and clubs, to bury people alive, to cause miscarriages, to beat people to death, to starve people in detention camps and to torture detainees - all this is done to counter a few children who can only throw stones in response to their long suffering under the yoke of Zionist occupation; all these actions demonstrate the intensity of the hatred borne by the racist and Zionest occupiers, the cowardice of the occupying soldiers and the weakness of their cause. The least one can say is that they are not human.

Zionists have exploited the fact - and they have long experience in this - stoning and breaking bones are some of the most atrocious and painful methods of torture. Those people who experienced this torture preferred death by poison gas to a life of ruthless tortures.

The Jewish people, which has suffered the atrocities of Nazi torture, is not guilty of the crimes committed in the name of the peaceful Jewish people by today's neo-nazis against the Palestinian people.

Last Thursday I heard the statement made by the President of the United States, Mr. George Bush, which once again gave me some hope of a prosperous future

(Mr. Sallam, Yemen)

for this country. He showed his political acumen in what he said and convinced me that the United States leadership, which I have known since the 1950s, will once again give standing to this country and bring back to it the humanitarian and religious values that were ignored by the previous administration.

Yemen, its people and its President wish every success to the United States and its people. I am sure that the new United States Administration will watch over the interests of this country and will spare no effort to bring about a peace based on justice in Palestine, so that American history, which formerly was based on moral, humanitarian and religious values, can regain its former glory. I would convey my best wishes to the new President of the United States upon taking office.

The Palestinian people want to live in tranquillity and peace on the soil of Palestine, a land of peace. This Council has had entrusted to it the task of ensuring international peace and security and it has the power - and is duty bound to use it - to stop the shedding of innocent blood and to end the barbaric practices of zionism.

The Palestinian State, represented by the PLO, has accepted Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and also the settlement of the conflict between it and Israel by peaceful means. The PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, has also accepted the principle of direct negotiations with Israel under international aegis.

Israel must finally understand that this conflict is between it and the Palestinian people represented by the PLO. A peace concluded with the PLO will be warmly welcomed by the majority of Arab States, if not indeed all of them. That is why I can find no convincing pretext - be it from Israel or the Security Council - to prevent the convening of the International Peace Conference in Geneva or in New York as soon as possible in order to avoid further bloodshed and to grasp a new

(Mr. Sallam, Yemen)

chance for peace, because many opportunities have been missed in the past and we have not yet been able to bring about the just and lasting peace that would benefit all the peoples of the Middle East.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Yemen for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. RAZALI (Malaysia): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for February. Your years of experience and known skills are attributes which ensure confidence that the deliberations of the Council for the month will be successfully carried out. My delegation pledges its full support and co-operation to you in the discharge of your heavy duties.

The situation in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, occupied by Israel since 1967, has deteriorated alarmingly in recent months. The new repressive measures by Israel violating basic aspects of human rights have caused a mounting toll of deaths, injuries and dispossession. Governments, even those closest to Israel, and institutions are outraged by these actions. Israel's policy is one of blind force, hitting out like a bludgeon. The Security Council, as the supreme organ of the United Nations, must pronounce unequivocally its rejection of Israeli actions.

The Security Council is the repository body to implement yet unfulfilled General Assembly resolution 181 (II), which partitioned Palestine into a Jewish State and a Palestine State. Recent developments, such as the Declaration by the Palestine National Council of a State of Palestine and its acceptance of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), have enhanced the prospects for real progress on this question. The courageous decisions of the Palestinian people to

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

turn a new chapter in their struggle for self-determination and a national homeland, despite the bitterness and anguish of the past, have been hailed by the international community. They are of historic significance. They propel forward tangible prospects for peace and lasting settlement in the Middle East.

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

The international community now waits for a matching Israeli response. Killing and maiming children with rubber bullets and razing houses with bulldozers have so far been Israel's matching response. Since December 1988 we have yet to see any evidence that the Israeli leadership has grasped the true significance of these historic events and the singular opportunities they hold for the prospects of peace in the area. Must Israel continue to be a prisoner of the past, harping on "Judea and Samaria" and unwilling to open their hearts and minds to peace and reconciliation? Israel's insistence on direct talks rings hollow when it does not even recognize the entity, the State, Palestine, to which it should speak.

Israel deludes itself into believing, through its sterile policies of spawning local leaders and creating quasi-institutions in the occupied Palestine territory, that it is engaged in an exercise of responding to the Palestinian people. For nearly 22 years those policies have been rejected by the Palestinian people, who see in them nothing but attempts to disguise the perpetuation of the occupation of their land. What clearly emerges now is the leadership of the State of Palestine representing all Palestinians. What is equally clear is that the intifadah is the Palestinian people's movement rejecting Israeli occupation. The intifadah will take its place in history as a unique struggle of people. At various times in history unique actions have critically influenced the course of events. Intifadah is just such a phenomenon that has elicited international moral outrage against Israeli actions. Public opinion, even in countries traditionally sympathetic to Israel, now understands the Palestinians better. Public opinion, even in Israel, is increasingly alarmed over Israeli violations of human rights and the blind denial of Palestinian aspirations for statehood.

The historic opportunity must not be missed. The Palestinian leadership has taken decisions for peace to which there must be a response. To a certain extent,

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

there are already results. The United States has begun discussions with Palestine. Certain Western countries are engaged in efforts that will build on the prospects for a settlement. All efforts should converge in an international peace conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices. The Security Council cannot be removed from all these developments. The debate here today must in one way or another complement other efforts. General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 20 December 1988 makes clear the responsibilities and the role of the Security Council. This Council has to consider measures to convene an international conference, including the establishment of a preparatory committee. Malaysia calls on the Security Council urgently to effect steps to meet the above, including the establishment of a preparatory committee for the conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Kuwait. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): Sir, it gives me great pleasure at the outset of my statement to convey to you my warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am confident that your wisdom and experience will guarantee the success of the work of the Council, which we are all seeking. As the representative of Nepal and a close friend we wish you every success, progress and prosperity.

I wish also to take this opportunity to express the thanks and appreciation of my delegation to your predecessor, our friend, Ambassador Ismail Razali, Permanent Representative of Malaysia, for the constructive and excellent manner in which he conducted the business of the Council last month.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

I should also like to congratulate all the new members of the Council upon their election to membership of the Security Council, in its task of maintaining international peace and security.

Last Friday the Security Council began consideration of the question of the continued inhuman repressive Israeli practices against the Palestinian people in its occupied territories. Since the time of Israel's occupation of those territories, those practices have run counter to the most basic principles of human rights, including the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the responsibilities of an occupying Power. They also run counter to numerous resolutions adopted by the Council and by the General Assembly. Instead of complying with international laws and conventions and the overwhelming opinion and will of the international community as represented by the Security Council, Israel has persisted in its indiscriminate use of brute force and its resort to the most repressive and violent measures against children, the elderly, men and women, whether it be people or property, whether desert or cultivated land. Everything has been violated, including the people's honour.

Israel has harboured, and continues to harbour, the illusion that those practices will extinguish the flame of the struggle of the Palestinian people and force that people to capitulate and accept a fait accompli. But we have seen that the result has been and continues to be the exact opposite. The more oppressive Israel becomes, the stronger is the resistance; the more varied the means of repression employed by the enemy, the more innovative the Palestinian people becomes in its struggle and resistance. Perhaps the most glorious chapter of the struggle of the Palestinian people is the one about which the world has been reading daily for the last 14 months, that is, the heroic stories and sacrifices of the chapter that is called the intifadah.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

The Palestinian uprising - the intifadah - is a far-reaching, long-term phenomenon. It unites, connects and breathes new life into the Arab nation. It proves that the Zionist settler occupation has not taken root in the soil of Palestine, geographically or historically. It has not affected the essence of the Palestinian struggle. It can therefore be eliminated, sooner or later.

The most important aspect of the intifadah - an aspect that has astounded and bewildered the Israelis - is that its driving force is the youth and children who, despite having been born under the occupation, learned from an early age the need to struggle for the restoration of their natural right to the establishment of their independent State on their national soil.

Another factor that impels this youth to continue to struggle is its sense of humiliation and its determination to regain its dignity. The intifadah is clear evidence that the Palestinian people is an immortal people.

The heroic intifadah is at the source of the new international strategy of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It is thanks to the intifadah that the PLO has taken its recent steps on the international level. Those steps constitute a real initiative for peace based on justice.

Now that the most recent Palestinian initiative has exposed the true nature of Israel's intentions and ambitions, Israel has resorted to increasingly repressive and inhuman practices against the defenceless Palestinian people. Israel has also objected to the United States and some European States having started a dialogue with the PLO - a mere dialogue. Israel continues to reject the idea of the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. It continues to reject recognition of the PLO. Moreover, it refuses to recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to the establishment of its independent State. Israel is thus trying to stem the tide of political settlement prevailing in the world.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

But how much longer can Israel endure the consequences of its own intransigence? Needless to say, all of Israel's flimsy pretexts, and in particular the pretext of security, have fallen completely flat, especially after the PLO's declaration of its new strategy, which calls for a peaceful, political settlement under the auspices of the international peace conference on the Middle East. Every day the world sees renewed evidence of Israel's duplicity and of its inability to convince peoples and States that it is being threatened or that it truly seeks the establishment of peace.

The only path left open to Israel is compliance with international legitimacy and acceptance of the convening of the international peace conference on the Middle East. Israel must commit itself to ending its occupation of all the Arab territories and to removing its settlements from those territories. It must comply fully with the United Nations decisions and resolutions concerning the question of Palestine.

We call upon the Security Council, and its permanent members in particular, to discharge the responsibility that it bears by reason of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the members of the international community is firmly convinced that the international peace conference is the sole international forum capable of establishing the peace that has been so long awaited by the peoples of the Middle East. It is the sole conference capable of ensuring the rights of those peoples to national sovereignty, security and development.

The question of Palestinian representation must be strongly reaffirmed here. The fact that the question of Palestine constitutes the core and the crux of the Middle East conflict requires that it be examined with the participation on an equal footing of the PLO - the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Any decision pertaining to the question of Palestine that does not take the PLO's opinion into account is destined to fail.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

It is time to act to achieve the goal of peace. The events currently taking place in the occupied territories are a warning that any further delay will destroy more human lives and intensify the suffering of the Palestinian people.

On another level, pending the convening of the international peace conference the Security Council is duty-bound to protect the Palestinian people languishing under the yoke of Israeli occupation by compelling Israel to respect the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. That can be achieved only by compelling Israel to recognize the applicability of that Convention to the occupied Arab territories.

While we support the idea of placing the occupied Arab territories under the protection of the United Nations, we remain convinced that the Security Council's responsibility is not confined to the mere replacement of Israeli forces by United Nations forces. Rather, the essence of the Security Council's responsibility is to act for the achievement of a comprehensive peace settlement that ensures the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people.

We say to Israel that it must learn the lessons of human history and of the history of the Arab liberation struggle in particular. Oppression and repression will not break the will of the Palestinian people, a people which believes in the justice of its cause and stands ready to make all the sacrifices necessary to that cause. The intifadah is clear evidence of the futility of Israel's dependence on brute force to achieve its objectives. The huge daily sacrifices notwithstanding, Israeli oppression has not been able to break the will of the Palestinian people. However long its struggle or great its sacrifices, this heroic people will emerge victorious.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Kuwait for his kind words addressed to me and my country.

The next speaker is the representative of Bahrain. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. AL-SHAKAR (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): I should first like first to convey to you, Sir, my heartfelt congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month, especially since you represent a friendly, non-aligned country, Nepal, with which my country, Bahrain, has excellent relations based on trust, co-operation and mutual respect. I am quite confident that the Security Council, under your wise leadership and given your well-known diplomatic skills, will be successful in discharging the tasks entrusted to it, in particular the maintenance of international peace and security. At the same time I wish to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Razali of Malaysia, for his dedicated efforts and the effective manner in which he conducted the deliberations of the Security Council in the month of January.

The Security Council is meeting today to consider the deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, given the escalation of arbitrary measures of repression of the Israeli occupation forces against Palestinians living in the occupied lands, which is known to the entire world. This repression has taken the form of murder, humiliation and systematic intimidation in a desperate attempt to put an end to the heroic Palestinian uprising, which has entered its fifteenth month. The occupation forces are defying resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly. They continue with ruthless arrogance a policy which results in bloodshed, a policy whose victims include children and defenceless civilians. The soldiers of occupation are allowed to raze houses - a hitherto unknown punishment for stone-throwers.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

Israel pursues its barbaric policy in total disregard of common sense and law. The murder of defenceless civilians has become a daily occurrence in the occupied territories. Since the beginning of the popular uprising each day has brought a heavy toll of Palestinian martyrs that has added to the toll of their brothers that have fallen on the field of honour, victims of the bullets of the Israeli occupiers.

Today, the leaders of Israel, as in the past, obstinately refuse to see the new reality born of the intifadah. They continue to harbour the illusion that it is within their power to quell that glorious uprising by intensifying the inhuman repression by using real and plastic bullets against the stone-throwers, or even against those who simply threaten to throw stones, or through arbitrary arrest, deportation, exile, the confinement of Palestinian civilians, the closing of Palestinian schools, governmental and otherwise, and even the schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

In the last 14 months the world has witnessed Israeli obstinacy in continuing its policy of death and intimidation. Nevertheless, the Palestinian popular intifadah continues and the Palestinians are more resolute than ever to pursue the struggle against the forces of occupation, which have available to them a large repressive arsenal. Notwithstanding, the failure of such methods is assured because the Palestinians are resolved to pursue their struggle to recover their legitimate rights over their national soil and to put an end to occupation and aggression. The whole host of repressive measures recently adopted by the forces of occupation against Palestinian civilians are witness to the moral failure of Israeli leaders who allow soldiers to use firearms, to demolish homes, to use toxic gases, to break bones, to deport civilians and to invoke any sanctions that may appear useful even if they are prohibited under international law.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

It is now clear that the escalation of repression against the civilians of the West Bank and Gaza has been in response to the peace initiative adopted by the Palestine National Council and the Palestine Liberation Organization which has been supported by international public opinion. In the light of the ever-increasing support for the Palestinian people, the Israeli leaders are now obsessed with elaborating methods to quell the uprising, which is a constantly growing concern of theirs because of the new political realities in the Middle East, in particular the Palestinian peace initiative.

The Palestinian peace initiative has unmasked Israel's claims because that initiative sincerely seeks a just peace in the Middle East that would guarantee the inalienable and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. It seems the Israeli leaders refuse to see those positive developments and even to heed appeals for peace.

The Palestinians - who have stated that they will not accept the policy of fait accompli and the iron fist practised by the occupying Israeli forces to perpetuate the occupation of the Palestinian territories and to foster the creation of new settlements - will put an end to the intifadah only after they have fully recovered their national rights, first and foremost the freeing of their land and the exercise of self-determination on their national soil. The Palestinians, who for 14 months have been making their voices heard loud and clear and have rejected Zionist occupation, cannot stop at that. No one will be able to prevent them from continuing their march of liberation however barbaric the methods used against them.

We are profoundly disturbed at what is happening in the occupied Palestinian territories and by the violations of the rights of the Palestinian people. Those violations outrage the human conscience.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

We hail the martyrs and the heroes of the intifadah who, with their blood and daily suffering are writing the pages of their country's history, and on behalf of all these martyrs, we call upon the Security Council immediately to adopt the measures needed to put an end to this terrible massacre taking place every day before the eyes of the world in the occupied territories and to put an end to this cycle of death and defilement of Palestinian rights.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

That naturally will require the adoption of compulsory measures, which are the only means that can bring Israel to renounce its policy of oppression and arbitrary action and to abide by the provisions of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 1949, and that can ensure international protection under United Nations auspices for Palestinians who for more than 20 years have been living under the yoke of occupation.

Bahrain calls upon the Security Council to spare no efforts to put a halt to the bloodshed and murders being committed in the occupied Palestinian territories. We appeal to all States and peace-loving peoples throughout the world to bring pressure to bear upon Israel to renounce its policy of oppression and terrorism, for the continuation of that policy could have unpredictable consequences for international peace and security.

The harmonious climate prevailing today in the international arena is propitious to the search for solutions to regional and local conflicts throughout the world. We have already seen a start to the solution of several such conflicts within the United Nations framework. It is our fervent hope that that climate will extend to the Middle East and enable us to lay the foundations for a just and comprehensive peace in that region. That is why my delegation believes that in the light of the peace initiatives taken by Palestine, which were warmly welcomed by the entire world, the Security Council, which bears the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should increase its efforts to bring Israel to renounce its intransigent position and to take advantage of the current prospects for peace. The path to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East is now clear and well-defined.

If Israel truly wishes to reopen the peace process in the Middle East, it must recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and it must withdraw from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories. Israel must also accept the

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

principle of holding an international peace conference under the aegis of the United Nations, since that is the only means by which a just and equitable peace in that region can be achieved.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Bahrain for his kind words addressed to me and to my country.

The next speaker is the representative of Lebanon. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. FAKHOURY (Lebanon) (interpretation from Arabic): I thank you, Mr. President, and the members of the Security Council for giving us this opportunity to speak.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. Your ability, wisdom and experience are guarantees of the efficient conduct of the Council's business this month.

I should also like to extend our thanks to Ambassador Ismail Razali, the Permanent Representative of Malaysia, for the ideal manner in which he guided the Council's business during the month of January.

The intifadah in the occupied Arab territories is not an ordinary occurrence, nor is it a coincidence. It is, rather, is the embodiment of the hopes and ambitions of a people that refuses and rejects occupation, and that in resisting it in the intifadah is paying dearly with the lives of its women, its children, its youth and its elderly. The people began their uprising some 15 months ago, and the intifadah is still as fresh and vigorous as it was on its first day.

The Palestinian people deserves the support of the international community. It deserves a life of dignity. It deserves to be rid of the nightmare of occupation. It deserves its freedom and enjoyment of its independence.

(Mr Fakhoury, Lebanon)

The practices of the Israeli occupation authorities, practices that have been described in detail by the Permanent Observer of Palestine, are in no way ordinary, for they are steeped in the blood of martyrs and the tears of mothers and orphans. Nor are they isolated events, for they are continuing and increasing in cruelty and barbarity.

It is our duty to condemn them, and it is urgently necessary that an end be put to them. The international community, as represented in the United Nations and its bodies, and particularly in the Security Council, has a huge responsibility in this regard. Israel must respect the Charter of the United Nations. The legitimacy of human rights must be recognized. The Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949, must be implemented and respected. United Nations resolutions on the peace process must be implemented.

Occupied peoples have a right to rise and resist occupation. That legitimate right has been practised by all peoples who have suffered from different forms of occupation, and it is clearly spelt out in various United Nations resolutions. Occupation forces have duties incumbent upon them, and if they do not comply with them and no one speaks up to demand that they do, they will continue to develop their techniques of oppression and repression and to trample upon human rights.

The Israeli practices are not confined to the land of Palestine. They have also been extended to Lebanon, particularly in the southern part of the country and the occupied zones: the policy of expulsion and deportation has crossed the boundaries of Palestine and been extended to that precious part of Lebanese territory. In the course of a single year Israel expelled 45 Palestinians, illegally deporting them to Lebanon across international borders. Since the beginning of this year, Israel has begun to implement a policy of expulsion from the occupied parts of southern Lebanon as well. It has expelled more than

(Mr Fakhoury, Lebanon)

80 Lebanese citizens for no reason other than their refusal to deal with the Israeli authorities and to implement their demands. Expulsions and deportations are crimes against humanity. Those who have been expelled and deported have a right to demand that the international community and the Security Council see to it that they are returned to their homes. And it is incumbent upon Israel to ensure that that happens.

International peace and security cannot be complete unless all peoples everywhere enjoy peace and security. The Council is called upon to adopt an appropriate resolution calling to halt the Israeli practices and to speed up the peace process.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Lebanon for his kind words addressed to me and my country.

Mr. TADESSE (Ethiopia): We are extremely pleased, Sir, to see you in the Chair, presiding over the work of the Security Council for this month. We are confident that during this very busy month the Council will greatly benefit from your rich experience as a skilful diplomat. I wish to assure you of my delegation's continued support and co-operation in the important efforts you are undertaking.

Allow me also to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Ismail Razali of Malaysia, for the able manner in which he conducted the work of the Council in January. In the very month his country assumed its seat in the Security Council Ambassador Razali made immense contributions, for which we all are very grateful.

The deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories continues to be a matter of great concern to my country. The increased use of force and repression - whose main features include the shooting and killing of young Palestinians, mass arrests and beatings, the destruction of homes, and deportations - has worsened the human tragedy in occupied Palestine.

These deplorable acts not only involve the violation of fundamental international humanitarian principles, but they have also engendered the taking of the lives of unarmed youngsters who were demanding nothing more than the exercise of the inalienable right to freedom and self-determination. Indeed, a source of equally great concern to my Government is the fact of Israeli reluctance to address the root causes of the problem.

By its actions, Israel is continuing to ignore the important lesson of history that a popular yearning for freedom cannot be muffled by brute force. According to the public pronouncements of the Israeli authorities, the intifadah, even a year after its onset, continues to be perceived as a mere protest by stone-throwing kids, which can be suppressed through harsh measures so the present status quo of occupation may continue unchallenged.

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

Our perception of the situation is at variance with the Israeli appreciation of the problem. The reality presents us with a picture showing that the intifadah is markedly different from what Israel would like itself and the international community to believe. Contrary to Israel's assumptions, the intifadah has proved to be a determined uprising by the Palestinians against years of occupation and what it has brought along with it. Christian and Muslim Palestinians, the young and the old alike, nurtured in the school of bitterness and resentment engendered through years of occupation, all share its sentiments. The use of repressive measures, as is the case, and the killing of those who demand respect for their rights and genuine aspirations will only continue to make Israel a part of this grave problem. It is to that reality that the Israeli authorities must reconcile themselves.

Of course, the admission by an Israeli general last week in Jerusalem of the army's inability to achieve its objective - that is, the suppression of the protests - is nothing but the beginning of the inevitable realization of the reality. With the longer view in mind, and despite the immense sacrifices, it is encouraging to note that hope is not yet dashed. New developments relating to Palestine once again present us with fresh opportunities to think in terms of a political settlement of the Palestinian question. In that regard, the unequivocal acceptance by the Palestine National Council of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) was a historic decision inviting Israel to take appropriate steps in the right direction towards a political settlement of the problem.

We believe the time has now come for those who happen to have been making requests to show that they also know how to reciprocate them, through a conscious decision that honourably serves a mutually beneficial cause. In our view, the proposed international conference on the Middle East, where all the relevant

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, are to be represented, is a more timely undertaking about which Israel must re-examine its long-held attitudes and beliefs.

As the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia made clear in a statement issued on 4 February 1989 in connection with the recognition of the State of Palestine,

"the current situation in the region affords a historic opportunity for all parties to show good will and flexibility".

Conflict and confrontation must give way to dialogue. Old obstinacy must yield to new reality. Israel must not allow peace to remain an ever-elusive prospect.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Ethiopia for the kind words he addressed to me.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Zimbabwe in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mudenge (Zimbabwe) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Zimbabwe. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MUDENGE (Zimbabwe): Allow me at the outset to extend to you, Sir, the congratulations of the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries upon your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. We are confident that with your proven diplomatic skills and renowned wisdom you will guide the Council successfully as it deliberates the important and delicate issues facing it this month. Our felicitations go also to Ambassador Razali of Malaysia for the very able and effective manner in which he presided over the complex tasks that came before the Council last month.

The Security Council has had to come back countless times, every year, to the subject before it today. This is simply because the situation in the occupied territories has continued to deteriorate and because Israel has persistently and arrogantly disregarded the decisions and resolutions of the Council calling upon it to end its illegal and brutal occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

Since the advent of the intifadah, about 14 months ago, the international community has intensified its efforts to influence Israel to bring an end to its harsh and inhumane practices against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. But Israel's response has been to intensify its iron-fist policy intended to crush the intifadah.

As a recent United States Department of State annual report on human rights practices around the world reveals, the gruesome and brutal Israeli practices against the Palestinian civilian population in the occupied territories escalated during 1988. That politically significant document speaks of Israeli forces frequently using gunfire in situations that did not present mortal danger to troops, resulting in many avoidable deaths and injuries; detained Palestinians dying under questionable circumstances and some clearly killed by the detaining officials; many cases of unjustified killings; blowing up of houses of those merely suspected of involvement in violent activities; widespread beating of unarmed Palestinians in incidents connected with the uprising; beatings of persons not participating in violent activities; inflicting of collective punishment even against innocent persons; and deliberate use of clubs to break limbs. A number of Palestinians are reported to have died from beatings during the last year. Destruction of homes, arbitrary arrests, detentions and deportations in contravention of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention have continued.

It is not so much what is in the aforementioned report that is significant; many here have been saying similar things for a long time. It is the author of the report that has attracted world attention. When such a close ally and friend is compelled to go public in this manner, it is time to review one's position. The United States has acted as a true friend should in such circumstances. The report

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

should make Israel realize that not everyone who criticizes its policies in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories is necessarily its avowed enemy seeking its destruction.

Responding to the revelations in the State Department report earlier this week, the Prime Minister of Israel himself declared that the Israeli army would not change its behaviour in the occupied territories. On this occasion Mr. Shamir is betraying the same stubborn wrong-headedness he showed last year when, in the early days of the intifadah, he vowed to crush Palestinians "like grasshoppers". Sadly, on the latter occasion he turned out to have been as good as his word. Nearly 400 Palestinian men, women and children have been slaughtered by the occupying force since the beginning of the intifadah.

Israel cannot go on evading the real problem in Palestine. We all know that the Israeli authorities are fully aware that the problem in Palestine is not merely a question of maintaining law and order or quelling a simple riot. The intifadah is a popular uprising against more than 20 years of occupation, and part of the larger struggle for self-determination. Israel cannot continue pretending that riot-control methods or the brutalities of its occupying force are the panacea. The Palestinian question is a reality which cannot be wished away. And the Palestinians are not just a colony of grasshoppers to be crushed into oblivion. The non-aligned countries have consistently maintained that no comprehensive, just and durable solution to this problem can be achieved without the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, and the regaining and exercise in Palestine of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return to their homes and the right to national independence as well as the right to establish a sovereign, independent State in Palestine. That is why Zimbabwe

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

and the great majority of the international community welcomed the recent proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council, and extended their recognition to that State.

Recent constructive developments have provided the right conditions for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. At the part of the last session of the General Assembly held in Geneva, the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Mr. Yasser Arafat, called for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East and invited Israel to commence dialogue with the PLO. Chairman Arafat's initiative has paved the way for meaningful negotiations. We welcome the constructive response made by the United States and other friends of Israel, especially in the European Community, to this initiative by opening dialogue with the PLO.

Up to now Israel has refused to reciprocate that positive gesture. It continues to reject any dialogue with the PLO. Last week more pledges came from the Israeli authorities to fight to stop the world-wide recognition of the PLO and to break the dialogue that is going on with some key members of the Security Council. It is our responsibility to impress upon the Israeli leadership that the intifadah and the recent decision of the Palestine National Council have brought about a new reality, which Israel can no longer ignore. The clock cannot be turned back. The PLO has had the courage and wisdom to face certain unpleasant realities. It is now the turn of the Israelis to do the same.

The international community is often left to wonder exactly what it is that Israel wants. Israel has rejected the international peace conference on the Middle East; it has refused to talk to the PLO; and it brutalizes the Palestinians in the occupied territories who seek solutions through peaceful demonstrations. It has elected to continue deluding itself and hanging on to the dangerous belief that the

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

breaking of limbs and deportations will solve the question of Palestine. The international community must make it very clear to Israel that there is no alternative to dialogue with the PLO. Israel must not be afraid to talk to the PLO. It should take a lesson from the current developments in other regions where dialogue is replacing confrontation.

We call upon Israel to be courageous and face reality. Israel clearly knows that the PLO alone represents the Palestinians in the occupied territory and that any endeavours or activities aimed at ensuring respect for and attainment of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people cannot succeed without PLO participation. We all have an obligation and must have the political courage to tell Israel not to fear peace but to do what it knows to be fair and just. The Security Council has a duty to start the process, even through such modest beginnings as regular consultations with the Secretary-General and all the members of the Council. Such consultations could be structured later as necessary. But a serious and sustained beginning has to be made.

In the meantime, we wish to call upon the Council to fulfil its obligations by taking the necessary measures to protect the lives and property of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Let Israel be told that enough is enough. The suffering of the Palestinians under occupation must come to an end now. The situation brooks no further delay.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Zimbabwe for his kind words addressed to me.

The last speaker is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. SHAH NAWAZ (Pakistan): Mr. President, your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February is a source of deep satisfaction to me personally and to the Pakistan delegation. You represent a country with which Pakistan enjoys a relationship of warm friendship and close co-operation both bilaterally and in the context of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation. I have had the privilege of working with you on many important issues that have been debated in the Security Council and the General Assembly in the past, and am full of admiration for your diplomatic skills and experience and your outstanding personal qualities. The Security Council will no doubt greatly benefit from your wise counsel in its deliberations on important issues such as the one before us today.

Allow me to avail myself of this opportunity to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Ismail Razali of Malaysia, for the excellent manner in which he conducted the business of the Council during the month of January.

The last occasion on which the Security Council considered the situation in the occupied Arab territory was in April 1988, following heavy-handed treatment of the hapless Palestinian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, which caused much misery and suffering. The great uprising of the Palestinian people was more than four months old at that time. That uprising, better known as the intifadah, has become a way of life in the occupied Palestinian territory. Given the determination and spirit of sacrifice of the Palestinian people, it is likely to continue, regardless of the size or nature of the occupying Power's repression, until the Palestinian people have regained their legitimate right to self-determination and statehood.

The long-suffering and undaunted Palestinians in the occupied territory, who defend their dignity and honour with stones and slingshots, look to the

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

international community for support to vindicate their rightful struggle for freedom.

When the Security Council met in April 1988 to consider the situation in the West Bank, the debate concluded with the vetoing of a draft resolution which called upon Israel to abide scrupulously by the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. The draft resolution also reaffirmed the urgent need to achieve, under the auspices of the United Nations, a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict. The draft resolution was vetoed and therefore the message contained in it could not be formally conveyed to Israel for necessary impact on its policy of repression in the occupied lands.

Nevertheless that debate was necessary. In the statements made before the Council, the representatives of a large number of countries were able to express their indignation at the Israeli practices. Those statements added up to a powerful message to Israel that the international community would not for ever tolerate its flagrant disregard for the fundamental principles of self-determination and the impermissibility of aggression and occupation of the homeland of a free people by the use of force and repression. The warning was implicit in that message that the march of civilization had rendered those methods obsolete and unacceptable in modern times.

The time has come for this message to be formally conveyed to Israel by the Security Council. Israel has continued to deal mercilessly with the Palestinian men, women and children who continue to oppose its aim of consolidating its overlordship over their homeland and who have willingly made the sacrifices their struggle for freedom has demanded of them.

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

According to the monthly report of the Data Base Project on Palestine Human Rights for the month of January, more than 400 Palestinians died in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and nearly 46,000 Palestinians suffered injuries in one year since the beginning of the intifadah in December 1987. The number of Palestinians in detention without trial was nearly 5,000 at the end of the year. In the same period 560 houses were demolished and sealed. Educational, research, charitable and social institutions, press offices and trade union offices were also closed.

These facts and figures have been brought up to date in the letter, dated 7 February, circulated by the Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine as a United Nations document. Fifty-five persons have been killed and at least 500 injured since last December. This increase in the casualties is the direct result of the measures announced by the Israeli Defence Minister on 17 January 1989 allowing the Israeli soldiers to fire more freely on demonstrators.

The human rights situation in the Israeli occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip presents an equally dismal picture. According to the United States State Department's recent report there has been a substantial increase in human rights violations, with Israeli soldiers readily resorting to firing, which has caused many deaths and injuries to the Palestinians even when their demonstrations presented no mortal danger to them. The report notes that the Attorney General of Israel himself declared the harsh Israeli policy of indiscriminate beatings as illegal and that such beatings, which still continue, have caused the death of at least 13 Palestinians. The report further criticizes the use of administrative detention and torture by Israel as clearly contravening the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Israeli policy of demolishing houses and deportation of Palestinians from the occupied territory have also been denounced as contravening the Fourth Geneva Convention.

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

Many political developments have taken place during the past year, opening up new prospects for meaningful discussions on the resolution of the Palestinian problem. At its special meetings convened in Geneva last December, the General Assembly adopted a historic resolution acknowledging the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council on 15 November 1988. That declaration provided the basis for the Palestinian peace initiative announced by Chairman Yasser Arafat in Geneva.

The whole world, except Israel, has agreed that the intifadah represents the genuine national struggle of the Palestinian people to regain their freedom, independence and statehood. The entire international community, except Israel, has recognized that Chairman Yasser Arafat's peace initiative throws open the door for the resolution of the Palestinian problem through constructive dialogue. The United States Government also has recognized the new situation and has initiated talks with the Palestine leadership. Only two days ago United States Secretary of State Mr. James Baker reiterated the Administration's decision to continue the dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization. Sooner or later, confronted with the new emerging reality, Israel will have to do the same. The sooner it does, the nearer will be a peaceful settlement of the Middle East problem.

As Chairman Yasser Arafat said in Geneva,

"the intifadah will come to an end when practical and tangible steps have been taken towards the achievement of national aims and establishment of an independent Palestinian State".

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

Pakistan's commitment to the just struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination and statehood is as old as the country itself. This commitment was reiterated, most forcefully, by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, soon after assuming office, when she declared that the Palestinian cause is "our own cause". The Prime Minister repeated this commitment, in a statement in Beijing on 11 February, when she paid tribute to the heroic uprising of the Palestinian people and said that "they have demonstrated that the human quest for freedom and self-determination cannot be denied". The Prime Minister has also stated that Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied territories remains the only basis for a just solution of the conflict.

The Palestinian acceptance of United Nations resolutions relevant to the Palestine question provide an opportunity for Israel to work out a peaceful future relationship with an Arab State in Palestine. The time is ripe, therefore, for Israel to deal with the realities of Palestinian nationalism and to abandon its futile attempts to eradicate it by force. The time has also come for Israel to seize the opportunity, which is now available, to find a peaceful solution for the Palestinian question, and therefore, for the entire Middle East problem.

The most effective way of achieving a peaceful settlement of this problem is to convene an international conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations to be attended by the permanent members of the Security Council and the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his expressions of friendship about me and my country.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list for this meeting. In view of the fact that the forty-third session of the General Assembly is scheduled to

(The President)

resume tomorrow morning, and also to allow members some time for consultations on this issue and other issues before the Council, I propose that the next meeting of the Security Council take place tomorrow afternoon, Tuesday, 14 February 1989, at 3 o'clock.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.