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ENGLISH

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

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 17 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. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA
Mr. KIRSCH
Mr. LI Luy
Mr. PEÑALOSA
Mr. TADESSE
Mr. TORNUDD
Mr. BLANC
Mr. RAZALI
Mr. SENE
Mr. BELONOGOV

Sir Crispin TICKELL
Mr. OKUN
Mr. PEJIC

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The meeting was called to order at 11.30 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 previous meetings on this item, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, the German Democratic Republic, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Qatar, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Yemen and Zimbabwe to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council table. I invite the representative of Palestine to take a place at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Dost (Afghanistan), Mr. Al-Shakar (Bahrain), Mr. Mohiuddin (Bangladesh), Mr. Zapotocky (Czechoslovakia), Mr. Al-Alfi (Democratic Yemen), Mr. Badawi (Egypt), Mr. Zachmann (German Democratic Republic), Mr. Tarmidzi (Indonesia), Mr. Mahallati (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Bein (Israel), Mr. Kagami (Japan), Mr. Salah (Jordan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Fakhoury (Lebanon), Mr. Treiki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Serrano Caldera (Nicaragua), Mr. Shah Nawaz (Pakistan), Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar), Mr. Adam (Sudan), Mr. Al-Masri (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Ghezal (Tunisia), Mr. Aksin (Turkey),

Mr. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. Sallam (Yemen) and Mr. Mudenge (Zimbabwe) 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 India, Cuba, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Morocco and Panama 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.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gharekhan (India), Mr. Oramas Oliva (Cuba), Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) and Mr. Kam (Panama) 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 India. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): Mr. President, it gives my delegation particular pleasure to see you presiding over the deliberations of the Council for this month. We are proud of the extremely close and friendly relationship that exists between your country and mine. For you personally, I have the highest esteem for your many fine personal qualities and rich skills as a distinguished diplomat. The adoption by the Security Council of resolution 632 (1989) on Namibia yesterday was

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

a tribute as much to the constructive co-operation by all the parties concerned as to your own personal statesmanship and extremely extraordinary qualities.

I also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador Ismail Razali of Malaysia for the outstanding manner in which he conducted the Council's business last month.

On Friday last, the Council listened to the deeply disturbing account of the consequences of Israeli policies in the occupied Palestinian territory: 50,000 injured, 30,000 arrested, 4,500 detainees, 49 deportations and, above all, nearly 500 dead.

There comes that unique moment in the history of a people when, resurgent and determined, they are prepared to pay any price to throw off their shackles and reach out for liberty and freedom. That moment is now for the Palestinians. Their dead are their martyrs, a tribute to their cause and an inspiration for posterity.

The intifadah will soon enter its fifteenth month. During this period, its voice has reverberated throughout the world. Its ramifications have been staggering. In West Asia, it has shattered many illusions, wrought changes unthinkable only a short while ago. For the people it represents, there is no going back. There is no place for the status quo.

At its Algiers session last November the Palestine National Council declared the independence of the State of Palestine, committed - in its words - to the "purposes and principles of the United Nations, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the policies and principles of non-alignment".

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

Until today, 94 countries have recognized the State of Palestine, and almost all the rest remain committed to the Palestinian cause. The near-unanimous decision of the General Assembly last November, in the background of the circumstances at the time, to consider the question of Palestine in Geneva, was an unequivocal political statement of this commitment. Chairman Arafat's statement to the General Assembly was one of courage and foresight, a singularly important contribution that saw a historic development in the Palestinian issue. The initiation of a dialogue between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the United States is a positive step. The international community recognizes that a unique opportunity now exists finally to move towards a negotiated settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and bring lasting and comprehensive peace to a strategic and troubled part of the world.

The Security Council has repeatedly called upon Israel to respect its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention in the occupied territory. The Council cannot ignore Israel's blatant disregard of its own resolutions.

The Council can and must do more. Only a comprehensive and just settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict can bring durable peace to the region. We expect the Council actively to pursue putting together a credible peace process that would address the fundamental issues involved: the realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable right to self-determination and the recognition that all States in the region, including the State of Palestine, Israel and other neighbours, have the right to live in peace and security within internationally recognized borders. An international peace conference on the Middle East with the full and equal participation of Palestine, offers the most practical framework for such a peace process. Given the nature of the conflict and the differing perceptions of States in the region, it is the international community at large

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

that can best provide the guarantees for sustainable peace for all the parties concerned.

The national movement of the Palestinian people began decades ago. They have struggled against immeasurable odds to attain their goal of an independent homeland. Today, their resistance is at its most intense, their spirit at its most indomitable and their will at its most determined.

They have been equally courageous in the search for a negotiated settlement. They have been flexible and far-sighted. In Geneva Chairman Arafat called for a spirit of tolerance. There is compelling need for statesmanship and courage at the highest levels for peace to be ushered in in the Middle East. We must grasp this historic opportunity.

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

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

Mr. BENNOUNA (Morocco) (interpretation from French): Sir, I am particularly pleased to congratulate you on behalf of the delegation of Morocco on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. Your personal qualities, your competence and outstanding kindness, which are known and valued by all your colleagues, are the best earnest of good progress in the work of the Council this month. I am proud of the excellent relations our two countries have always had throughout history.

Allow me also to pay a tribute to the Ambassador of Malaysia, Mr. Ismail Razali, for the efficiency and great skill with which he guided the work of the Council in January.

(Mr. Bennouna, Morocco)

The seriousness of the situation in the Palestinian territories under Israeli occupation needs no further explanation. Every single day the media report on the brutal actions of the Israeli authorities and army, not to mention the number of those killed and wounded and the number of houses destroyed. The representative of Palestine last week stressed before the Council the intolerable number of such brutal acts since the launching of the glorious intifadah in December 1987: nearly 500 dead, 50,000 wounded and 30,000 Palestinian prisoners.

An entire people - in particular the generation of children born under the occupation - is determined forcefully to proclaim its right to dignity and to the most elementary human rights, including the right to an independent motherland on its own soil. The Palestinian people has the inner strength of the legitimacy of its resistance to oppression. The Palestinian people is confronting the occupying Power with bare hands. Its sole weapon is that same soil of Palestine, which is its reason for existence and its only hope.

Is it conceivable that the inhuman Israeli practices are continuing now, at the end of the twentieth century, despite the repeated appeals of the international community and the demands addressed to Israel by the Security Council - in particular in its resolutions 607 (1988) and 608 (1988), adopted more than a year ago - that it fully abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and proceed to make a firm commitment to a comprehensive, lasting settlement of the question? Can it be acceptable that an entire people has been gagged and ignored for more than four decades - when we have just celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

Unfortunately, we are obliged to note that since the beginning of this year we have been witnessing a resurgence of acts of repression and increasing

(Mr. Bennouna, Morocco)

sophistication of the methods of the occupying Power, which have become ever more brutal and bloody. What are called rubber bullets are in fact covered steel balls, and they mow down children of a tender age; what is called tear gas in fact causes loss of consciousness and injuries that are often very serious.

This is an absurd escalation of measures that have no effect on the morale of youth dedicated to affirmation of its identity and the identity of its nation and culture. Reassuring rhetoric from the occupying authorities can no longer deceive international public opinion or even Israeli public opinion. The most recent report of the United States Department of State on the situation regarding human rights is extremely instructive in this regard.

(Mr. Bennouna, Morocco)

The tireless efforts of the Secretary-General, his successive reports on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, and the continuous action of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and its Chairman Mrs. Diallo of Senegal, have greatly contributed to bringing the truth to light and showing the way to peace. I should like to take this opportunity to pay them a sincere tribute.

On 15 November 1988 the Palestine National Council adopted historic decisions proclaiming the State of Palestine and accepting Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as a basis - along with respect for the national rights of the Palestinian people - for the convening of an international peace conference with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties concerned, including, of course, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on an equal footing. At that time we thought that the moderation, sense of responsibility and tolerance demonstrated by the Palestinian leaders and made clear in our brother Yasser Arafat's statement before the General Assembly in Geneva on 13 December 1988 would open the way to a new era of mutual respect in that battered region of the Middle East. But the other side had to take the hand extended to it by the Palestinians and demonstrate realism and a vision of the future by committing itself to building relations of peace and good-neighbourliness in the Middle East.

My delegation is not participating in this debate to pour oil on the fire or to inflame passions. We have come here, as is our custom, in a constructive spirit to make our modest contribution and to lend our full support to efforts to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East in the interest of all

(Mr. Bennouna, Morocco)

the concerned peoples. It was in that spirit that the Kingdom of Morocco welcomed the initiative of the Palestine National Council of 15 November 1988 and the new dynamic for peace it launched.

Similarly, we are gratified at the American-Palestinian dialogue that began on 13 December 1988, which marks an important and encouraging step in the bringing together of points of view in the context of convening an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

In these difficult times, when an entire people, the Palestinian people, stands defenceless against forces of repression, the Security Council must demonstrate determination to meet its responsibilities concerning the maintenance of international peace and security. That is the only way to compel the occupying Power to respect the fundamental rights of the human person in the occupied Palestinian territories. At the same time it is vitally necessary to explore all possibilities and to call for goodwill on all sides in the convening of the International Peace Conference, under the auspices of the United Nations.

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

Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA (Brazil): It gives me great satisfaction, personally and as Permanent Representative of Brazil, to see you, Sir, presiding over our deliberations in the Security Council. This has not been an easy month. You have already shown very remarkable skills in handling with success very difficult questions, making it possible for us to agree unanimously on a landmark resolution regarding the implementation of the independence of Namibia. I am persuaded that under your able guidance we stand a good chance of dealing effectively with another very important issue on our agenda for this month, the situation in the occupied Arab territories.

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

I also wish to congratulate your predecessor, the representative of Malaysia, for the way he fulfilled his responsibilities as our President during the month of January.

The situation in the occupied territories has always been a matter of serious concern for the international community. The world has been particularly shocked at reports of repressive measures adopted by Israel, the occupying Power, in its attempts to take control of events in Gaza and in the West Bank. We are seized now with indications of renewed and clearly excessive measures taken by Israel to quell the manifestations of revolt by the Palestinian people against more than 20 long years of unlawful occupation of their territories.

The disproportionate and morally condemnable repressive measures adopted by the Israeli forces since the beginning of the intifadah have undeniably been proved unable to stop the unrest. On the contrary they seem to have been fuelling the vicious cycle of violence in the area, giving rise to reports in which several instances of grave violations of human rights have been identified. As my delegation has stated previously, that seems to confirm once more that such a kind of popular rebellion, stemming from legitimate aspirations, may be temporarily weakened but never completely suppressed by resort to force. Ancient and modern history are rich in examples of such unsuccessful policies.

The Palestinian uprising certainly brought a renewed awareness of the need of a political settlement for the Palestinian question. More recently, in the past three months the world has witnessed important and positive developments in this regard which we hope will make it possible to accelerate the peace process in the Middle East, the core of which is the question of Palestine.

The Brazilian Government remains persuaded that a peaceful, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine should be sought on the basis of the

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

principles of the Charter and of relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), observing the following guidelines: the complete withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, the recognition of the right of all States in the region to exist in security within internationally recognized borders and the participation of the Palestinian people, through the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), their legitimate representative, in any negotiation regarding their future. We are convinced that, as foreseen in General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988, the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all the involved and interested parties, offers, to that end, the best prospects for success.

The most urgent and immediate task to which the Security Council should now address itself seems to us to be that of ensuring the co-operation of the Israeli authorities in refraining from acts of repression, which are widely acknowledged to be blatant violations of human rights in the occupied territories. In that regard we continue to believe that Israel must accept the de jure applicability of the 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and be made to act, in all circumstances, in accordance with its obligations as an occupying Power and a party to that Convention. The Council should, moreover, take a fresh look at the pertinent suggestions made by the Secretary-General in his report of January 1988 (S/19443), with a view to guaranteeing the protection of the civilian population in the territories.

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

It is to be expected that the Council will be able to take action on the matter before us, arriving at agreed recommendations which will, at a minimum, safeguard in the immediate future respect for the human rights of the Palestinian people and, by so doing, alleviate their terrible plight.

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

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I should like to seize this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the responsible post of President of the Security Council and to express my confidence that your extensive experience, diplomatic talents and other great personal qualities will enable you effectively to guide the work of the Council.

I should also like to express our gratitude to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, Ambassador Razali, for his outstanding professionalism and the skilled guidance with which he conducted the business of the Council last month.

The question of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories has been on the agenda of the Security Council for years. That has been inevitable since virtually every day there have been alarming reports of ever more repressive acts by Israel directed against the population of the West Bank and Gaza. As reported in the letter of the Alternate Permanent Observer Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, dated 7 February 1989, since December 1988 alone 55 Palestinians were killed and at least 500 persons injured. The representatives of Arab and non-aligned countries who have spoken here have cited a great number of statistical and other data comprehensively describing the policy of terror and repression of Israel in the

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

occupied territories and many examples of the inhuman treatment of the local population - the use against the population of such weapons as plastic and rubber bullets and tear gas, and mass beatings, deliberate mutilations, the destruction of houses, arbitrary arrests, deportations and other methods in order to put an end at any price to the uprising of the Palestinians on the West Bank and in Gaza.

This uprising, which is now in its second year, will doubtless go down in the history of the Middle East and in world history as an impressive demonstration of the strength of will and strength of the spirit of the Palestinian people and of its determination to put an end to more than 20 years of occupation. Who can deny the moral, political and legal justification for this uprising, the aspirations of the Palestinians finally to achieve their elementary human rights and their own State in accordance with the decisions of the United Nations? The heroism and selflessness shown by the Palestinian people during the intifadah cannot fail to arouse on the part of the world community a feeling of admiration, respect and solidarity. We are convinced that the just cause of the Palestinian people will triumph.

But the Soviet people, like the entire world community, is firmly opposed to having that victory paid for with the blood of the Palestinians and with an ever greater number of victims. The report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories characterizes the present stage in the development of the situation as "a level of violence and repressions never reached before in the course of the 21 years of occupation" (A/43/694, para. 610). Of particular concern is the fact that the present stage of escalation of that policy of violence and repression is occurring during a period when for the first time in many years real prospects have emerged for achieving a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. The decisions

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

adopted at the session of the Palestine National Council in Algiers made a serious contribution to establishing favourable conditions for the taking of real measures towards a settlement. The statement made by the representative of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Yasser Arafat, at the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly in Geneva emphasizes that real opportunities exist for beginning the peace process. Having clearly stated his readiness to enter into negotiations with Israel in the context of an international conference, the PLO has once again shown that it is a serious and authoritative partner in peaceful negotiations.

The Soviet Union looks with favour upon the results of the Algiers forum and supports the decision of the Palestine National Council regarding the formation of a Palestinian State within the context of a comprehensive Middle East settlement.

The Soviet Union condemns the policy of terror, violence and repression carried out by Israel against the Arab population of the occupied territories. The stubborn refusal of Tel Aviv to reject obsolete methods of a policy of force and to recognize that the Palestinian people, like the Israeli people, has the right itself to determine its fate is seriously hampering the efforts of the international community to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East through the convening of an international conference.

The Security Council cannot and must not remain indifferent to acts of lawlessness which are systematically perpetrated by the occupying Power in the Arab lands. The Soviet Union believes that the possibility for a solution to the existing conflict is determined to a great extent, if not first and foremost, by recognition of the principle of freedom of choice. As stated by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mikhail Gorbachev, at the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly: "Freedom of choice is a universal principle that should allow of no exceptions" (A/43/PV.72, p. 11).

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

He emphasized that

"If we assert ... our adherence to freedom of choice, then there is no room for the view that some live on Earth by virtue of divine will, while others are here quite by chance" (ibid., p. 12).

We are convinced that the Middle East conflict is one of those where a recognition of the freedom of choice of all parties is a most important condition for the achievement of a comprehensive solution.

The representatives of Israel often say their goal is to ensure peace for the people of Israel and to achieve conditions for secure existence. We need not argue the obvious truth that every people needs peace. But can peace for the people of Israel be built upon violence against the peoples of neighbouring countries? Have not 40 years of the existence of Israel proven that such a path leads to a dead end, and that it does not strengthen but rather undermines the basis for the establishment of genuine security for the State of Israel?

In our times, can Israel's security really be guaranteed by reliance on force, on the military fist, and on retaining occupied territories as buffer zones to insulate Tel Aviv from the Arab world? The facts say no. Genuine peace can be brought to the people of Israel only through a policy of good-neighbourliness towards other peoples and rejection of attempts to retain the territories of other peoples through violence.

The General Assembly's adoption at its forty-third session of its resolution 43/176 was a reflection of broad international agreement in favour of a comprehensive settlement through convening a conference on the Middle East and of a serious determination to seek mutually acceptable and balanced solutions. That resolution contained a call for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Organization and the five permanent members of the Security Council, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily its right to self-determination. Particularly significant from the point of view of initiating the settlement process is the request that the Security Council consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the beginning of preparatory work.

An international conference on the Middle East, as a universal mechanism for defusing the Arab-Israeli conflict, will permit the implementation of the principle of ensuring the balance of interests of all sides through the realization of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination to the same degree it is ensured for the people of Israel, the return to the Arabs of their occupied lands on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and guaranteeing all peoples and States of the Middle East the opportunity to live in conditions of peace and security.

The members of the Security Council, entrusted by the United Nations Charter with a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, must display the necessary political will and make use of the present unique opportunity to begin carrying out the process for a Middle East settlement.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for the kind words he addressed to me.

Sir Crispin TICKELL (United Kingdom): This is my first opportunity this month to speak in the Council in a formal meeting, Sir, and I should like to begin, as is only right, by thanking your predecessor for his conspicuous and successful efforts as President of the Council in January and likewise to convey our warm thanks to you for your work so far in a memorable month for the United Nations. I think we may describe it as a new jewel in the crown of the Kingdom of Nepal.

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

Almost 14 months ago, this Council made clear its view of the situation in those territories occupied by Israel since 1967. In resolution 605 (1988), the Council expressed grave concern at the deteriorating situation. It considered that Israeli policies and practices in the territories were bound to have grave consequences for efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. And the Council strongly deplored those policies and practices. It reaffirmed that the Fourth Geneva Convention applied to the territories and called once again upon Israel to abide by it. It called for maximum restraint and stressed the urgent need for a just, durable and peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Since that time, 14 months ago, we have witnessed further deterioration of the situation in those territories, with tragic results known to the whole world. The Council has not changed its view either of the gravity of the situation or of Israel's obligations as the occupying Power. The policy of repression in response to the movement of protest which began on 9 December 1987 has drawn widespread censure. I am not referring only to the almost daily incidents in which unarmed civilians, many of them young people, are either killed or seriously wounded by troops using firearms to end demonstrations. Of course, these may sometimes have been due to the indiscipline of the troops concerned.

I am thinking more of the guidelines issued to troops by the Israeli authorities. Thus the beating of civilians has received official approval; there have been such collective and arbitrary punishments as the demolition of houses and the destruction of crops; and Palestinians have suffered numerous forms of economic and administrative harassment. Nor can we ignore the violent actions taken against Palestinians by Israeli citizens illegally settled in the occupied territories.

(Sir Crispin Tickell,
United Kingdom)

Thus the human cost is already great in terms of lives, injuries and material destruction, and in the grief of countless families. But its moral cost to a society founded upon humane and democratic ideals may be just as great. Increasing numbers of people in Israel, and among the supporters of Israel elsewhere in the world, are becoming painfully aware of the wrongs being done in the occupied territories. That awareness has not so far led to any changes in the policy of repression. Indeed, far from getting better, the casualty lists in recent weeks indicate that tactics on the spot have become more harsh.

These events, brought about by a cycle of violence and counter-violence, have drawn new attention to the fundamental problems underlying the conflict. The Council's resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) remain unfulfilled. There has been little progress towards giving them effect. However events are explained or interpreted, the Israeli Government still continues to occupy territories which are not part of Israel. The ultimate solution to the problem, to be resolved at an international conference, will have to take account of the right of the Palestinians to self-determination. In the meantime the military occupation of the territories lays heavy responsibility on Israel in terms of international law.

My Government's views on this subject have been expressed many times. We look to the Israeli Government to abide fully by its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention, including the obligation under Article 27 which requires it to treat the population of the occupied territories humanely at all times. We do not accept that the need to maintain law and order should be used as a pretext to override the specific and unambiguous obligations placed upon the occupying Power under the terms of the Convention.

Earlier speakers in this debate have pointed the way towards a possible resolution of the conflict. Like them, I was struck by the intervention of the

(Sir Crispin Tickell,
United Kingdom)

Permanent Representative of Senegal, in her capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people. She then said to us:

"We appeal to all members of the Security Council to make a positive contribution to establishing a policy of dialogue among all the parties ...

"It is obvious that the problem cannot be resolved without an international political settlement that will take into account all the aspects of the question and meet the concerns of all the parties." (S/PV.2845, p. 38)

That is exactly the position of my own Government and, I believe, the position of every member of the Council. It is not the first time that the Chairman of the Committee has spoken in this fashion. But in some quarters these words have been ignored or lightly dismissed.

I listened with attention to the words of the Acting Permanent Representative of Israel when he addressed the Council on 10 February. He spoke of his Government's constant desire for peace and dialogue. He expressed regret at the Palestinian casualties in the current violence. He also drew attention to casualties among Israelis, including civilians. And I think it should go without saying that we regret violence by whomever caused, and from whatever quarter.

The Israeli Acting Permanent Representative also spoke of the need for a political solution. No agreement has yet been reached on what form that solution might take. But at least the need for it is recognized by all concerned. The Council has responsibilities in this matter that go back to the first days of the United Nations. Its members stand ready to give all the help they can. The year 1989 provides opportunities for progress which have not existed for many years. It would be tragic if they were not taken.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kind and poetic words addressed to me.

Mr. LI Luye (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Please allow me to congratulate you, Sir, the prominent representative of China's friendly neighbour, Nepal, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. There exists between China and Nepal and their two peoples a traditional and time-honoured relationship of close friendship, which has also found expression in the working relations between our two missions to the United Nations. You may rest assured that, in implementing your noble mission in the Security Council, you will receive the sincere co-operation of the Chinese delegation. I am convinced that the work of the Security Council during this month will benefit from your calm, prudent and skilful leadership; indeed it already has. I should also like to thank Ambassador Ismail Razali of Malaysia for his successful performance in completing the Council's heavy work of last month.

The uprising against Israeli military occupation and rule in the occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza has entered its fifteenth month. The Palestinian people, in waging an indomitable struggle for their basic right to existence and their inalienable national rights, have paid a high price in blood and life, thus winning extensive sympathy and support from the international community.

However, in open defiance of strong international opposition, the Israeli occupying authorities have continued to impose collective punishment on the demonstrating masses through arrests, beatings and the destruction of houses and properties. At the same time they have intensified the suppressive measures by ordering armed soldiers to shoot demonstrators and hurt innocent civilians with so-called plastic bullets, which contain metal balls, thus causing casualties to rise drastically among the Palestinian population, and among its youth and children in particular. The basic human rights of the Palestinian people are being subjected to more brutal violations, and its predicament has gone from bad to worse.

(Mr Li Luye, China)

This tragic development has caused increasingly grave concern among, and extensive condemnation by, the international community. Even the Israeli soldiers involved in the suppression of the Palestinian people "feel humiliated" by the job. Some senior Israeli officials have also criticized the Israeli army's abuse of force. The Israeli authorities bear an unshirkable responsibility for the rapid deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories. The Chinese delegation supports the Security Council in its consideration of the situation and hopes that the Council will respond resolutely and take effective measures to prevent the situation from deteriorating further.

Since the end of 1987 the Security Council has on many occasions adopted resolutions reiterating that the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War is applicable to Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, under Israeli occupation since 1967, and demanding that Israel, the occupying Power, strictly abide by the Convention.

Those resolutions reflect the common aspiration and echo the voice of the international community. Instead of turning a deaf ear to the call for reason, Israel should make an appropriate response. The Israeli authorities are duty-bound to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, implement the Fourth Geneva Convention and assure the Palestinians of their basic right to existence and life.

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

The struggle of the Palestinian people for the restoration of their national rights is a just cause. The history and reality of this struggle have proved that the attempt of the Israeli authorities to put down this just cause with military force will not prevail. On the contrary, it will only arouse even stronger resistance by the Palestinian people and land Israel in even greater isolation before world opinion.

The fundamental way to end the sufferings of the Palestinian people lies in a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Middle East question, including its core issue - the question of Palestine. More and more countries have advocated settlement of this question through an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations. At present the main obstacle to the Middle East peace process remains the Israeli authorities' erroneous Middle East policy and their rigid stand of refusing to recognize the PLO and endorse the Middle East international conference. It is our hope that the Israeli authorities will, in conformity with the world trend of political settlement of regional conflicts, judge the hour and size up the situation, give up their blind faith in force, try not to evade such substantive issues as returning the land illegally occupied by force and recognizing the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, and take a position compatible with that of the international community. This will benefit peace and stability in the Middle East region and in the world at large.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Permanent Representative of China for his kind words and friendly sentiments addressed to me and to my country.

Mr. TORNUDD (Finland): First of all I wish to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. We have already seen how conscientiously and successfully you have been able to conduct the work of the Council and we are sure

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

that the remaining tasks during this month will be handled with the same skill and sense of duty.

At the same time I wish to thank once more Ambassador Razali of Malaysia for the able and patient manner in which he guided the work of the Council during the previous month of January.

The right to rise against occupation has been used as an unquestioned starting-point by most of the previous speakers in our debate. Indeed, the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights speaks of rebellion as a last resort against oppression, and it has proved to be a fact of life that people rise in rebellion when their political rights are long denied.

Finland does not condone the use of violence in any form as a means of solving political problems. We regard violence and terror from any side as unacceptable. Both Israelis and Palestinians have a common interest in seeing that incentives to resorting to violence are completely removed. Already before the occupation itself has come to an end - as it must - much could be done. For its part, the Security Council has pointed the way in its resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988). Even during occupation, the Palestinian population should be able to enjoy its human rights and the protection to which it is entitled under international law. We therefore urge Israel to respect its legal obligations as an occupying Power in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and strictly respect the human rights of the Palestinians.

In order to break the vicious circle of violence, positive steps must be taken, first and foremost by the occupying Power. It is manifestly not possible to regard the whole problem simply as one of riot control. The uprising is a strong expression of political will by the Palestinians, who wish to exercise their right to national self-determination after living under occupation for more than 20 years

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

without any political prospects. Under these circumstances, the excessive measures imposed not only on participants in the Palestinian uprising but also on their families tend to undermine further what should become a basis for mutual confidence and a negotiated and lasting peace settlement in the area.

The Government of Finland has been encouraged by the recent developments towards a mutually acceptable basis for a Middle East settlement as well as by the opening of new channels for dialogue. We have also been encouraged by the seriousness of purpose with which the urgent need for negotiations and peaceful settlement has been stressed during our debate in the Security Council.

We welcome the intention expressed by Israel in this debate to build confidence and to seek dialogue. However, we believe that too little is done and too slowly. Day by day the situation grows more dangerous and intolerable. It seems to us that the situation now requires more resolute action than merely the gradual application of confidence-building measures. Moreover, such action is required not only from the parties, but also from the whole international community, including the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We follow with keen interest the steps taken by the Secretary-General in order to clarify positions regarding the Middle East and to pave the way out of the present situation.

We have stated on several occasions that mutual recognition of the rights of Israel, on the one hand, and of the Palestinians, on the other, constitutes a pre-condition for negotiations leading to a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. An international peace conference seems to be the most suitable form for the necessary negotiations. Whatever precise negotiating procedures the parties may choose, it remains essential that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

be represented in the negotiations where the future of the Palestinians is determined, as the Palestinian population very largely identifies itself with the PLO.

The present political environment offers new opportunities for a lasting peace in the Middle East. It is an urgent task for the international community to accelerate the process towards a just, durable and peaceful settlement. Meanwhile, there is a way to orderly conditions of life in the occupied territories - full application of human rights for the Palestinians.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Permanent Representative of Finland for his kind words addressed to me.

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

Mr. ORAMAS OLIVA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, my delegation is extremely pleased to see you guiding the work of the Security Council during this month because your sound judgement, experience and fair-mindedness are especially reassuring for everyone at a time when this important body is involved in the adoption of historic decisions in respect of Namibia.

We would also like to convey our gratitude to Ambassador Ismail Razali, the representative of Malaysia, for the efficient and extremely worthy manner in which he performed his duties as President last month.

Once again the Council has been convened to consider the serious and persistent events in the occupied Palestinian territories which have shaken the occupying Power, Israel, and the international community as a whole. Seldom has a people rising up with sticks and stones written pages in history so filled with heroism and martyrdom as the Palestinian people has done. We shall not refer here to the cruelty shown by the occupying Power, since other speakers have eloquently done so. None the less, we wish to place on record our view that the genocide must be stopped. More than 500 dead and 50,000 wounded are already testimony powerful enough to move even the hardest of hearts. The world cannot continue witnessing such a situation without the adoption of the measures called for by this tragic situation.

The intifadah is like the tolling of the bells. It is the determination of a people to be free, and that march of giants will not end until independence has been won. There is no army, however powerful, capable of holding in check the firm determination of the Palestinian people. History teaches that it has never been possible to stifle the rebellion of a people against the occupier - as the current membership of the United Nations well demonstrates.

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

Everyone in the Middle East region has the right to live in peace and everything must now be done to accelerate the holding of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 43/176, in order to resolve the Gordian knot of the problem, which is the inescapable historic and human need for everyone to accept the Palestinian State. Surely, the fact that some 100 countries have recognized that State proclaimed by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) shows that these are the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of the international community.

We believe that the Chairman of the PLO, Yasser Arafat, has held out the olive branch, and it is essential to have the courage not to turn one's back on history and to agree to seek an honourable, just and worthy solution at the negotiating table. Israel must heed the cry of mankind and realize that at this crucial moment it is not on the side of reason.

Cuba considers that the Security Council, pursuant to its mandate under the Charter, must urgently make a resolute effort to promote peace in the Middle East, and in this regard begin work on the convening of the International Peace Conference.

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

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

Mr. KAM (Panama) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation I wish first to thank you and all the other members of the Council for allowing my delegation to take part in the consideration of a question of such crucial importance for international peace and security as the situation in the occupied Arab territories.

(Mr. Kam, Panama)

Permit me to say, Sir, how very pleased my delegation is to see a distinguished son of the Kingdom of Nepal presiding over the work of the Security Council for this month. I have no doubt that under your wise guidance the Council will see its work crowned with success.

I also wish to extend cordial thanks for the laudable work done last month by your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Ismail Razali.

More than 40 years ago, Panama - together with Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark and the Philippines - was honoured by being made a member of the United Nations Commission, which, under the guidance of the Council, was entrusted with the task of taking the necessary measures to implement the Palestine partition plan provided for in General Assembly resolution 181 (II).

Various historical circumstances, which I shall not analyse at this time, made it impossible for that task to be fully carried out as mandated by the majority of the international community at the time.

Today, almost half a century later, we are deeply disturbed to see that the rights of one of the two communities settled on Palestinian territory continue to be disregarded, thus causing grave suffering for the peoples of the region, but particularly for the Palestinian Arab people, whose rights have been systematically ignored.

My country has come to the Council to reiterate its solidarity with the Palestinian people and its just struggle. We join in the general call made by the community of nations and international public opinion which expects the Council to adopt decisions commensurate with the gravity of the situation.

The events which have occurred since the beginning of the uprising of the people in the occupied Arab territories - now known the world over as the intifadah - send a clear, unequivocal message as to the firmness and determination

(Mr. Kam, Panama)

of a people to struggle, a people which intends at any cost to exercise its legitimate right to self-determination and independence. The tenacity, perseverance and vigour shown by that heroic people in a clearly one-sided struggle can only be explained in the light of the existence of values higher than life itself: the unbreakable spirit and determination to achieve freedom and a deeply held feeling of national identity.

Those who think that the indiscriminate use of overwhelming oppressive force will be able to stifle the fighting spirit of that people are not only making a political mistake with grave consequences for peace in the area but also unjustly undermining elementary human values and basic principles of civilized coexistence.

As the unforgettable Panamanian leader, General Omar Torrijos Herrera, once said:

"No one has yet invented a bullet capable of killing an ideal."

To be sure, it is possible to kill men, women, young people, children and the aged; but never the ideal of freedom.

(Mr. Kam, Panama)

The uprising of the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories is but the direct result of the determination of that people not to remain any longer under an occupation régime that has lasted for more than 20 years. It is a faithful expression of their determination to take into their own hands their own national destiny under their own democratically elected and legitimate leaders.

The months that have passed since the Council last considered the situation in the occupied Arab territories have witnessed an evolution in favour of a negotiated solution of the question of Palestine and a lasting and comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict.

In that connection the meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers in December of last year was a historic event. We would emphasize particularly the extraordinary significance of the Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine, representing as it does a gigantic step forward that has created new political conditions for reaching a peaceful solution to the problems of the region for the benefit of world peace.

At that National Council meeting, and in subsequent statements, the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Yasser Arafat, and the Palestinian people gave evidence of their sincere desire to reach a negotiated political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, within the framework of the United Nations Charter, the norms of international law and United Nations resolutions, including the most recent decisions of the Security Council on the question, namely resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988).

They have also undertaken to abide by and uphold Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which constitute a basis for a comprehensive solution to the conflict.

(Mr. Kam, Panama)

Those initiatives have clearly indicated the abandonment of positions traditionally held by the leadership of the Palestinian people, which deserves our praise and recognition. The spirit of flexibility, dialogue and moderation must permeate the attitude of all the protagonists in the region, as well as all States in a position to influence events in the area, to promote an atmosphere conducive to a political settlement satisfactory to all parties.

Again, the only way to achieve a lasting peace and stability in the Middle East lies in a comprehensive political solution that will guarantee the right of all the peoples of the region to self-determination and independence, as well as their right to live and develop in peace within secure and internationally recognized and respected borders. An indispensable element of such a solution is the recognition, exercise and effective realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, independence and the establishment of their own independent State on their national territory, with effective arrangements to guarantee the security and peace of all States of the region, including Israel.

The best method to achieve those objectives is undoubtedly that of negotiation among the parties concerned. The convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation on an equal footing of all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization and the permanent members of the Security Council, on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1978), has been recognized as one of the most effective formulas for dealing comprehensively with the whole range of problems that must be tackled in order to achieve a definitive solution to the conflict.

(Mr. Kam, Panama)

Among those, recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in particular their right to exercise self-determination and independence, are pre-eminent.

Together with the convening of the International Conference, an initiative my country supports, the Council must urgently promote the adoption of measures designed to foster dialogue and negotiation between Palestinian Arabs and Israelis. To that end, it is essential that the moderation and realism that have marked the conduct of the Palestine political leadership in recent months be met with an equivalent attitude on the part of the Israeli leadership. Repressive measures and violations of the human rights of the inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories in no way contribute to the establishment of a climate conducive to détente and dialogue, but rather serve to increase tension and violence and cause ever-increasing bitterness.

The Security Council and the United Nations as a whole must through every available means support consolidation of the process of negotiation until peace agreements are concluded. It is essential, however, that the Security Council take immediate steps to secure respect for the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and demand that the occupying Power meet its international obligations.

Panama has emphatically affirmed the universal validity of the right of peoples to self-determination. With a firmness equal to that with which we claim for ourselves, as Panamanians, the exercise of our own right to self-determination, which is now under siege by foreign aggression, we also demand that right for all the peoples of the world, particularly those of Namibia, Western Sahara, Puerto Rico and Palestine.

(Mr. Kam, Panama)

It has been said time and again that peace is indivisible. Until the Palestinian people fully exercise their national rights, the peace of the world will continue to be precarious and fragile. Let us all work to make sure that the movement towards peace that is making promising progress in other parts of the world will also spread and be consolidated in the Middle East, for that would represent an immeasurable contribution to international peace and security.

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

The next speaker is the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. KITTIKHOUN (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic I should like first to congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the post of President of the Security Council for this month. Aware of your great diplomatic qualities and wisdom, I should like to express the hope that the Council's present work will be successful.

I should also like to take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representative of Malaysia, Ambassador Razali, for the outstanding manner in which he guided the Council's work last month.

I thank the members of the Council for having agreed to my request to speak on the matter currently before it.

(Mr. Kittikhoun, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

Once again the Security Council must consider the situation in the occupied Arab territories. Since the outbreak of the intifadah, the world has borne mournful witness to the new measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to oppress ever more brutally the Palestinian people, which has risen up en masse against tyranny. Thus far 494 have died and thousands have been wounded, including women and children. After 22 years of Israeli occupation the Palestinian people is still denied its right to existence, first and foremost because the Israeli authorities have not yet come to grips with its legitimate aspirations. The Palestinians are a people, and like all other peoples on Earth have the right to a nation and a land, and to live there in peace and harmony with their neighbours. A comprehensive, just and lasting peace can be established only when the people of Palestine can exercise its inalienable national rights.

To this day the Israeli authorities continue to describe the intifadah as a violent operation, as a disturbance of the peace, and as a violation of the law. More surprising, they view it as having been incited from outside. That is a totally erroneous view, lacking in foundation and moral validity. The international community considers the intifadah a form of sacrifice, popular resistance and heroic struggle by a people against foreign occupation aimed at triumphing and achieving national independence. Those who still dream of snuffing out the uprising of an oppressed people are sadly mistaken, and sooner or later will understand this.

The Palestinians are indivisible. Within and outside the occupied territories they are a single people united in their action, and their living embodiment is the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

(Mr. Kittikhoun, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

Today international relations are marked by major new developments. Among the trends that hold promise for the development of world events are international détente, peaceful coexistence, mutual trust, multifaceted economic co-operation, growing understanding among nations and States, and the choice of dialogue to resolve conflicts. Some conflicts in various regions that once seemed insoluble are now on the way to a political solution. The negotiated settlement of conflicts has now become a reality, and the Middle East - whose peoples, including the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, have suffered too long - must be no exception.

In the framework of these new world-wide trends, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Yasser Arafat, realistically and courageously announced a new initiative on 13 December 1988 before the General Assembly in Geneva by unequivocally accepting a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and respect for the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, particularly its right to self-determination and national independence. New conditions propitious for dialogue towards a peaceful solution have thus emerged, and it is time for Israel to react favourably and sincerely to this will of the Palestinians for peace.

My delegation considers that the Security Council should take measures to achieve an overall solution taking into account the legitimate interests of all parties concerned, including the Palestinian side, represented by the PLO. In that context the immediate convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, as approved by the international community, is vitally imperative. We

(Mr. Kittikhoun, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

hope for positive participation in this peace process by all States, in particular the States permanent members of the Security Council, to provide a political solution to this old conflict, which has lasted too long. The continuation of this conflict, which has already caused such suffering to the peoples of the region, can only damage the present climate of international co-operation, which is beneficial for all peoples and has been welcomed the world over. The sooner the conflict is resolved, the better it will be for the interests of the peoples involved and peace in the region and throughout the world.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the kind words he addressed to me.

In view of the lateness of the hour, I intend to adjourn the meeting now. With the concurrence of the members of the Council, the next meeting of the Security Council to continue the consideration of the item on the agenda will take place this afternoon, Friday, 17 February 1989, at 3.30 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.