



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

56 Rue de Moillebeau, 1211 Geneva Tel: (4122) 749.1930 Fax: (4122) 734.8085

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT

BY

**AMBASSADOR MASOOD KHAN
PAKISTAN'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

**ON BEHALF OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE**

**AT THE
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

ON

**THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN PALESTINE
AND OTHER OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES**

**Geneva,
05 July 2006**

I am making this statement on behalf of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Today the Human Rights Council is meeting to address an extremely grave situation. Resolution 60/251 gave us the mandate to respond promptly to human rights emergencies. Such an emergency is unfolding now in Palestine. We must take measuresto stop it.

The crisis is deepening. Even before this crisis, the situation was fragile, tense and precarious. The new developments have brought the two sides to the brink of war. This crisis should be averted immediately so that the region does not descend further into an irreversible cycle of violence. The international community should act now to avoid a bigger crisis.

The UN agencies working in the Palestinian territories have warned that with Palestine's economic siege, a humanitarian disaster of gigantic proportions is developing. The UN Middle East Envoy says the situation is "dangerous". Secretary General Kofi Annan has asked Israel to urgently facilitate the import of medical supplies, food and fuel into the territory. If we just look at the media footage, we will say it is terrible. We need no further testimony.

The Israeli response is overwhelming. Disproportionate force is being used in violation of international law. Complete insensitivity has been shown to human suffering. "Collective punishment" of the Palestinians breaks humanitarian law and targets unarmed civilians. In the past week, continuous military strikes against the impoverished people, infrastructure, roads, bridges and power stations have left Palestinians devastated.

In the interest of peace and stability, should we not preserve and protect Palestinian institutions and infrastructure? Why are they being attacked?

The European Union has expressed deep concern about the humanitarian consequences of the Israeli military operations. EU Commissioner Louis Michele has said that these events are heaping new misery on a population already suffering.

Let us not lose perspective. Were we not trying for lasting peace in the Middle East?

Israeli military raids and incursions in Gaza must come to an end. The resolutions to be decisive should not be used for psychological warfare but for finding peace and respect for human rights in a war torn region.

Even as we meet here today, hectic diplomatic activity is taking place but it has not had a positive impact on the ground. The escalation continues unabated.

The OIC is of the view that the current escalation infringes the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The arbitrary arrest of Palestinian ministers, lawmakers, officials, and civilians has few precedents in history of the violations of human rights and democracy. OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu has called recent Israeli actions violations of international law and a crime against democracy.

It is, therefore, incumbent on this Council to speak up for the human rights of the Palestinian people. It should rightly and justifiably demand an end to Israel's military operations. The Council should also ask Israel to abide by international humanitarian and human rights law.

Against all norms and laws, elected cabinet ministers and representatives of a sovereign parliament remain under arbitrary detention. They must be released without conditions as should be other officials and civilians.

Mr. President,

The Council's voice on this issue must be clear. This is an opportunity for the High Commissioner to urgently visit the region and intercede. This crisis portends to engulf the region in flames. Her visit may save innocent lives, protect human rights, and salvage some hope for peace. To defuse tensions, there should be instant de-escalation and a swift movement towards diplomacy. The OIC calls for immediate negotiations to resolve the current crisis.

Thank you, Mr. President.