

**Permanent Observer
Mission of Palestine
to the United Nations
Geneva**



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لفلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة في جنيف

Palestine Statement

by

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before

**First Special Session on Palestine
Human Rights Council**

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Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,

The delegation of Palestine would like at the outset to express its gratitude to all delegations that have supported the holding of this first Special Session of the Human Rights Council. Alarmed by the deepening crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the wide-ranging constituency supported convening this special session, in conformity with the provisions of resolution 60/251, to respond promptly to the human rights emergency in Palestine. Today, we are gathered to address the grave human rights breaches of the Israeli occupying power that have inflicted formidable pain and suffering on our people, particularly in the Gaza Strip.

The ongoing Israeli military offensive, dubbed as “Summer Rains”, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory constitutes the most abhorrent form of breaches against humanity. Israel claims that it is undertaking such a military operation in self-defense. Is it self-defense to make an entire population suffer for one Israeli soldier, who was captured from a military base firing missiles against Palestinian civilians? The issue of the captured soldier is but a pretext used to fulfill Israel’s premeditated intent to carry out its aggressions against the Palestinian People and impose collective punishment on them for democratically electing their representatives, most of whom have been arbitrarily arrested. The ostensible aim of this is to undermine the Palestinian Authority and its institutions and create an unstable political climate conducive for Israel to impose its unilateral policies and plans on the Palestinian people.

Calls for the release of the Israeli soldier bring to the forefront the plight of thousands of Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails, including women and children who have been kept under the most inhumane conditions. We would like to remind of the pain their families have endured and the patience they have exhausted waiting for the freedom of their loved ones.

The Israeli military attacks are in direct violation of international conventions that call to avoid indiscriminate harm to civilians. Israel has evicted 25,000 civilians from their homes in Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia rendering them homeless. Israeli F-16s and sonic booms have been traumatizing children in the Gaza Strip. The deliberate destruction by Israel, the occupying Power, of Palestinian infrastructure, including the only power station in the Gaza Strip, water networks, schools, bridges along with Palestinian ministries constitutes a war crime, as affirmed by, inter alia, Amnesty International. Various prominent officials of the UN and other states have warned against the serious ramifications of the current Israeli rampage and rightly pronounced such Israeli acts as violations of international law.

The dire human rights and humanitarian consequences of the Israeli military operations further aggravate the acute crisis arising from the economic siege imposed on the Palestinian people. Various UN agencies have reported on the steep deterioration in the humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people, warning that the situation is at the brink of disaster. Thousands of vulnerable households have been totally stripped of their resources as they have been deprived of their monthly salary for four consecutive months. Poverty levels have

as a result increased. Shortage of medical supplies and food plunges thousands of people into malnutrition and disease.

The list of grave breaches by Israel of international law is endless, including Israel's unabated confiscation of land, building of settlements, construction of the Wall on Palestinian land, severe restrictions on movement and border closures.

We urge the international community including the States Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to exert pressure on Israel to end its military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, abide scrupulously by its obligations under international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, refrain from imposing collective punishment on Palestinian civilians and immediately release the arrested Palestinian representatives and officials as well as other civilians.

Finally, we call upon the international community to work towards a negotiated solution to the current crisis. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to assure you of our unwavering commitment to a just and peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on relevant UN resolutions.

We would like to remind Israel and its people that the Palestinian people will not yield to the Israeli military power as they have not yielded for decades. Israel has only one option, and that is to end its occupation for the sake of all peoples in the region.

Thank you for your kind listening.