*Please check against delivery*

**39thSESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**General Debate on Agenda Item 7 -Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories**

OIC Statement delivered by Pakistan

(24 September 2018)

Mr. President,

The OIC Member States are extremely concerned to see that due to continued international paralysis, Israel, the Occupying Power, has persisted with its deliberate, systematic and gross violations in Occupied Palestine with total impunity.

It continues to relentlessly act as a State above the law and unbound by principles of international law. It blatantly defies all UN resolutions and persistently refuses to cooperate with UN mechanisms and bodies, and all without any consequence. It continues to build the illegal wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

For the Palestinian people, this means continuation of oppression, subjugation, suffering and control over all aspects of their lives. It means more attacks and aggression from occupation forces as well as settlers, against a defenseless civilian population.

Mr. President,

Israel has repeatedly hammered its cynical narrative of being “singled out” and “targeted” by the UN and international community. The OIC rejects this distorted narrative portraying the aggressor as victim. We urge all member states to reject this misleading discourse and actively participate in agenda item-7.

Despite this rhetoric of the Occupying Power, continues disproportionate use of force against Palestinian civilians, which leads to further casualties. It must ensure prompt and unimpeded access to medical treatment to injured Palestinian as well as to facilitate impartial international investigation into the use of force against Palestinian civilians in compliance with international standards and hold those responsible accountable.

The OIC is concerned that the settlement construction and expansion in particular in Occupied East Jerusalem and the surrounding areas continues unabated. This further fragments the contiguity of the Palestinian land and destroys whatever viability may be left of the two-State solution. On 5 September, the Israeli “Supreme Court” rejected an appeal against the demolition of Khan al-Ahmar and ruled in favor of forcibly expelling its 181 inhabitants.The demolition of Khan Al-Ahmar and forcible transfer of its population is a war crime that assaults the basic rights of the Palestinian people as well as the possibility of realizing the two-state solution. In this regard the OIC urges the international community to abide by its legal obligation to put an end to the illegal abhorrent policies and practices by the Israeli occupation.

Mr. President,

The OIC believes that the passing of the “Jewish Nation-State" bill aims at legitimizing Israel’s institutional discrimination against its Arab Palestinian citizens, as well as it turns a “de-facto” Apartheid regime into a “de-jure” reality for all of historic Palestine. This law builds up on dozens of racist and discriminatory laws against non-Jews, being an extension of racist and colonialist practices that aim at burying the rights of the Palestinian people.

Mr. President,

The persistence of this situation for more than half a century, without remedy, has inflicted immense suffering on the Palestinian people. The only way to achieve meaningful peace and security in the region is to end Israel’s illegal occupation and colonization of Palestine. The OIC urges Israel to release all Palestinians, arbitrarily held in Israeli prisons in deplorable conditions.

The OIC believes that ensuring accountability is the only way forward to foster peace and end Israel’s long-standing policy of impunity. We call upon the international community to assume its legal responsibilities and to bring the human rights violations and abuses perpetrated by Israel to account. Together we must support bring the military occupation of Palestine to an end and realize its sovereignty over the borders of June 4, 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital.

I thank you.