*Human Rights Voices Unofficial Transcript*

Oral Statements of Cuba and Nicaragua at the UN Human Rights Council, Agenda Item 7

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CUBA: Cuba fully endorses the statement given by Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Just a few days ago, the President of Cuba, Raul Castro, when speaking at the 17th summit of NAM held at Venezuela, said it is unacceptable that the Palestinian people continues to be victim to occupation violence and that the occupying power continues to prevent the creation of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Cuba therefore ratifies its support to keeping item 7 on the agenda of the Council and rejects the decision on the part of some countries to not take part in these discussions.

Mr. President, the confiscation of Palestinian land, the continued existence of the wall, the changes to demographics in the population, the demolition of houses, excavations, and the imposition of arbitrary and racist restrictions to movement for all of the occupied Palestinian territory, in particular, in and around East Jerusalem, must be brought to an immediate halt.

The block on the Gaza Strip should be lifted, and we should ensure that humanitarian aid can reach the people in this area.

Genocide against the Palestinian people must be brought to an end and those responsible and their accomplices should respond and should be held accountable to their crimes. We firmly believe –

PRESIDENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: The US has the floor.

UNITED STATES: Mr. President, the United States is calling a point of order to urge you to please remind the speaker to use language appropriate for this UN forum consistent with the appropriate standards for discourse here. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: Thank you. Let me remind you that you are expected to use the UN standard language when pointing to a country. Thank you. Please continue. You have the floor.

CUBA: I would like to know what the inappropriate language is for a United Nations forum that has been used on the part of my delegation, I’m just exercising my rights of points of order. Thank you.

PRESIDENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: Thank you very much. The US, could you please explain what term you were referring to?

UNITED STATES: Thank you. The US wanted to call a point of order against the term genocide. Thank you.

PRESIDENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: I give the floor to the delegation of Cuba.

CUBA: I’m still not going back to my statement. I’m responding to the point of order that was raised by the USA. The word genocide is a word that is recognized in the United Nations system, even from a legal point of view, I would like to invite the delegation of the United States of America to refer to the Convention against Genocide that was adopted within this organization. I will continue with my statement now, Mr. President.

Genocide against the Palestinian people must be brought to an end, and those responsible and their associates must respond and be held accountable for their crimes. We firmly believe that there is no military solution to the conflict. We reaffirm our commitment to a peaceful solution.

The situation in the occupied Syrian Golan continues to be a source of concern. The Israeli occupation continues to violate the human rights of the Syrian citizens in clear violation of international obligations.

To conclude Mr. President, Cuba reaffirms its unequivocal support to the plight of the Arab people against occupation, and to the Palestinian people’s right to fully exercise self-determination in an independent, sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. We hope that peace can be achieved without any conditions attached, that’s fair and lasting for all people in the Middle East, without exclusion. We uphold that these are the conditions for full enjoyment of human rights for all inhabitants of the Middle East.

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NICARAGUA: The delegation of Nicaragua aligns itself to the statement of NAM.

Mr. President, the occupying power continues to ignore the decisions of this Council and other UN bodies regarding the occupation of Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan. This undermines international law, international humanitarian law, and the conventions, treaties of human rights.

We deplore that Israel continues its active policy of confiscation of territories, demolition of houses, destruction of infrastructure, arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings, the pillaging of natural resources and the continuation of illegal settlements, just to name a few. All of these policies are a systematic, sustained attempt to try to make a whole people disappear: This is a policy of genocide.

Therefore, we reiterate our condemnation of the blockade on Gaza that has been suffocating the people for over a past decade. We would reiterate our call to this-

PRESIDENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: The delegation of the United States.

UNITED STATES: Thank you Mr. President. The United States is calling a point of order, I urge you to please remind the speaker to use language appropriate to this UN forum, consistent with appropriate standards for discourse here. You have already made a judgment on the use of the word genocide. Thank you.

PRESIDENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: And, let me ask first, what is the exact term that you are making a point of order on?

UNITED STATES: The use of the word genocide.

PRESIDENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: I think in the previous request for point of order, I already made the ruling, so I don’t think I need to entertain more requests for the floor on this. I will just ask the speaker to continue his statement. I have made the ruling, and I understand that observer states cannot challenge the ruling of the president, so I’ll ask the speaker to continue his statement.

NICARAGUA: We would reiterate our firm condemnation of the Gaza Strip blockade, which has been suffocating the people over the past decade and making them a prisoner in their own country. We reiterate our appeal to this Council and to the members of the international community to pressure Israel to comply with its international obligations. In this sense, we condemn the silence complicity that keeps the state policy of the occupying forces in impunity and this constitutes an example.

To finalize, Mr. President, Nicaragua reiterates its firm backing to the Palestinian people, with 1967 borders, East Jerusalem as its capital, and the right of these people to become a fully fledged member of the United Nations.