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**Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Special meeting in Observance of the “International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People”**

venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries: Many thanks, Chair. I have the honor to take the floor at this important meeting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement as we commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. I wish to express my profound thanks for the – to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the crucial work that they have undertaken over the years to promote the fair cause of and the fair rights of the Palestinian people.

We also wish to extend our thanks to the Division of the Secretariat of the United Nations devoted to Palestinian rights. I also wish to extend my thanks to the Commissioner-General and the staff of UNRWA for their unstinting efforts to support attempts to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian refugees, and put an end to their unnecessary suffering. I also wish to thank all of the United Nations bodies that have special programs providing assistance and support to the Palestinian people.

And this is befitting of the United Nations ongoing responsibilities concerning the Palestinian question until this question is resolved in all its aspects and in line with international law. We wish to support the continued observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. This day is a crucial opportunity to reflect upon the ongoing examples of injustice suffered by the people on the occupied Palestinian territories in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip after decades of the denial of their inalienable rights on the behalf of Israel, the occupying power.

After almost half a century of foreign occupation suffered by the Palestinian people, during which they have continued to see their human rights violated and they have witnessed great suffering, and almost 50 years after the adoption of the Partition Plan by the General Assembly, and 50 years after the al-Nakba and after 50 years of the conflict, which continues to rage today, it is clear that the Palestinian conflict is one of the most crucial and pressing crises in the Middle East. This day of solidarity is an opportunity to renew our commitment, our shared commitments to achieving a fair and lasting solution to the Palestinian question, and our commitment to achieving lasting peace in the Middle East as a whole.

Since the very inception of the United Nations, the Palestinian question has been a recurring issue, which has continually occupied a place on its agenda. Almost seven decades have elapsed and the Palestinian people continue to be deprived of their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination and freedom. Nevertheless, the United Nations continues to deploy efforts in order to ensure that the Palestinian people can achieve independence and sovereignty as they hope to do. There has been participation in these efforts on the part of the United Nations and difficult commitments have been made.

The suffering of the Palestinian people has, nevertheless, been worsened on all fronts, and the situation on the ground has dramatically worsened due to the continued illegal policies and practices of Israel, which have sown further these seeds of instability on this ground. Peace and justice has thus been undermined. The Security Council remains in a state of gridlock where this issue is concerned, despite its obligations as enshrined in the charter. The international community, nevertheless, continues to witness the Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian territory, and this is in clear breach of international law and breeches relevant resolutions of the General Assembly as well as relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Against – during this unfair occupation, the occupying power continues to collectively punish the defenseless Palestinian population and continues to seriously violate the human rights of the Palestinian people and commit war crimes. Human rights violations being perpetrated includes the use of military force against the civilian population, the settlements being built on Palestinian lands, and the unfair blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip. The Non-Aligned Movement issues an appeal for measures to be taken in line with international law in order to put an end to human rights – the violation of human rights of the Palestinian people, and we call for protection to be afforded to the Palestinian people while this occupation continues.

Chair, the settle – the illegal settlement activities undertaken by Israel continue to be an issue of serious concern for the Non-Aligned Movement. Israel, in flagrant breach of international law and scorning the international community as a whole, has continued its settlement activities across the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and has forcefully evicted thousands of Palestinian civilians from their homes in order to alter the demographic composition of this land as well as the legal and geographic nature of this section of land. It's doing so to facilitate the de facto annexation of more Palestinian lands. Moreover, the construction and expansion of settlements and the wall, the confiscation of Palestinian lands, the demolition of homes, as well as demolition of Palestinian infrastructure as well as the forced displacement of the Palestinian civilian population, undermine the achievement of peace based on the two-state solution.

The viability of this solution is undermined on a daily basis by the occupying power. Moreover, violence, terror, intimidation, and harassment perpetrated by extremist perpetrated by extremist settlements against the Palestinian people as well as incitement and provocation perpetrated against these people, particularly in occupied East Jerusalem, have exacerbated tensions and religious sensitivities. This phenomenon could give rise to more and more dangerous destabilization.

The Non-Aligned Movement calls upon the international community, in particular the Security Council, to adopt urgent and practical measures in order to force the occupying power to cease its settlement campaign once and for all, and to comply with each and every one of its obligations under international law including the Fourth Geneva Convention, the United Nations resolution relevant in this area, the advisory opinion, and commitments made as part of the Roadmap in this area.

Chair, the Non-Aligned Movement calls for the lifting of the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip on the part of Israel. This blockade has been in place for nine years and continues to seriously affect all aspects of the daily life of the – of Palestinian civilians, and is an example of collective widespread punishment. This illegal blockade hinders the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. This Gaza Strip has been devastated by Israeli occupying forces, and indeed was devastated in 2014. And it undermines economic activity because the free movement of goods and peoples is impeded; that is the movement of people and goods between the Gaza Strip and the outside world. The occupying power also inhibits movement between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

It is unacceptable that Israel, the occupying power, continues to perpetuate all of its illegal activities and lamentable activities, which were previously referred to both in the occupied Palestinian territories and in East Jerusalem under a cloak of impunity, despite the fact that these activities have been banned by international law. The international community should step up and coordinate its efforts, and should also ensure accountability, and take measures of accountability in order to force Israel to put an immediate end to its illegal activities, and to make proper commitments to taking a step along the road to peace.

The solidarity of the international community with the just Palestinian cause should also apply to all efforts taken in order to ensure the independence and sovereignty of the Palestinian people in all territory that's been occupied by Israel since 1967. The two-state solution should be achieved, East Jerusalem should be the capital, and Palestine should become a fully fledged member of the United Nations.

Moreover, given the lack of significant process with the peace process in the Middle East, this peace process continues in a state of gridlock, despite decades of negotiations. And in light of this fact, the heads of state and governments in the Non-Aligned Movement during its Seventh Summit held in Margarita Island in Venezuela last September, these heads of state and government underscored the pressing need to continue making progress with the Middle East peace process. These endeavors should be based on relevant resolutions of the United Nations as well as other important initiatives which have been undertaken in recent years.

By way of conclusion I wish to say that the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms on this important day its unstinting commitment to a fair, lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its commitment to the Palestinian question. We reaffirm our commitment to the immediate restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as well as the restoration of their right to self-determination and our commitment to ensuring an independent, viable Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, and our commitment to ensuring a fair solution for the Palestinian refugees on the basis of Resolution 194 of the General Assembly. This solution will guarantee peace, the peace which the international community and the Palestinian people have so longed for for so long, so much time. And this is a solution to which they have committed time and time again.

Thank you.