Statement of the Palestinian Authority Representative at 31st session of the Human Rights Council

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Your Excellency, President of the Human Rights Council, your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, we express our appreciation for the stance of your distinguished council to promote human rights and freedoms in the world, especially in the occupied state of Palestine, to allow our people to exercise its freedom and right to self-determination. This was reflected in a large number of the resolutions of the council as well as your reports, and the main role of the council that unveils the Israeli practices against our Palestinian people.

The failure of the international system to protect human rights only means more murder and destruction. Therefore, we must not fail while the voices of extremists and murderers are louder than the voice of human rights. This means we must stop and review everything, when we can hear the sound of bullets and crimes perpetrated by ISIS and we can hear the sounds of bulldozers of the Israeli occupation while establishing illegal colonies and settlements and we cannot hear the voices of those defending peace and human rights, then we must stop and ask where is humanity going, where are human rights going?

Mr. President, the State of Palestine has abided by the human rights conventions and since adhering to them has worked on implementing its commitments, and has developed the institutions of the State of Palestine to promote human rights.

While the people of Palestine have suffered of the practices of Israel, the occupying power. Your council in the reports as well as the reports of the Commissions of Inquiry and the fact-finding missions have unveiled these practices, especially in the last report of the Commission of Inquiry on Gaza in 2014.

The State of Palestine has established an independent fact-finding committee in order to follow up on these recommendations. However, the occupying power has not allowed this committee to undertake its functions and has prevented it from movement and access to Gaza.

Mr. President, today the people of Palestine face a systematic terror by Israel, the occupying power, and the security forces that are exercising extrajudicial killings and field executions of unarmed Palestinian civilians.

Since the beginning of the last popular wave, over 180 Palestinians have died, 46% of them are children. Collective punishments are being imposed, including destruction of houses, and the non-return of the corpses of the martyrs, forced exile, and other practices. Their reconstruction of thousands of homes and infrastructure destroyed during the last aggression of Israel on Gaza is still not starting since the occupying power does not allow the entry of building materials into Gaza. Not to mention, arbitrary and indiscriminate arrests, administrative detention policies, torture, and other forms of ill-treatment against detainees and especially children.

All this is a systematic and clear violation of the prohibitions of international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and the occupying power acts as if it is a state above the law, without any deterrent, without any accountability. It continues colonial settlement activity instead of working for peace.

It continues its violations of human rights, including through promoting settlements, and plundering natural resources, building walls and roads for the settlers in order to impose a new de facto situation based on racial segregation and discrimination.

The occupying power tries to change history, to change facts, it distributes documents that allow settlements and this undermines international law and the position of states that have reaffirmed the illegitimate nature of settlements and is a crime of war. This is another proof of the intentions of the occupying power, especially the continuing provocations and aggressions in Hebron and in Jerusalem in and around Al Aqsa mosque.

The Israeli forces and the extremist militias and settlers have started a wave of violence and hatred against the Palestinian people.

Mr. President, from this rostrum, we call on the council, to undertake its role in the protection of human rights, especially the rights of the Palestinian people, that have been guaranteed by international law. Israel, the occupying power, is not only contravening its commitments in accordance with the 4th Geneva Convention, it has given up its commitments, which is the reason for the lack of security and suffering.

Through you, I call on the international community and relevant international institutions to shoulder their responsibilities and work in accordance with the first common article of the Geneva Conventions and the advisory opinion of the ICJ regarding the fact that Israel, the occupying power, must abide by international humanitarian law and implement it on the occupied Palestinian land and uncover the occupation practices while holding it accountable for its crimes.

Israel continues to live in impunity, no accountability for its crimes, which leads to a crisis of a lack of justice in Palestine. It enhances the culture of impunity, which encourages it to continue such violations. If this continues, it will undermine the credibility of the UN, and the international community and the human rights system as a whole. Therefore, states, individually and collectively, must respect and guarantee the respect of international law. It must put a responsibility on third states to hold the occupying power accountable.

I call on all the countries to boycott settlements and to boycott the products of settlements and to warn of the possibility of imposing economic and commercial sanctions on the occupying power and that in accordance with guidelines on businesses and human rights. They must not deal directly or indirectly with the occupation system, in addition to not allowig the entry of illegal settlers into their countries.

The unique situation imposed by Israel on the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and the increase in attacks and violations by the occupying power, especially violations of IHL and international human rights law, enhances the necessity of discussing the situation of human rights in Palestine and other Arab occupied territories under a standing item, which is item 7 on the agenda of the council, until the end of occupation.

I call on states to discuss the situation of human rights in Palestine under this item and not to allow the attempts to undermine this item on the agenda.

Mr. President, we reiterate our commitment to a peaceful, political, diplomatic and legal track in order to implement the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people until we achieve a comprehensive and just peace that responds to the aspirations of our people to live in dignity and freedom in its country, Palestine, with east Jerusalem as its capital and to find a just solution to the issue of Palestinian refugees in accordance with resolution 194. We reaffirm the importance of a two-state solution within an international collective effort.

Therefore, the Security Council must shoulder its responsibilities and adopt a resolution regarding settlements since it is the obstacle before peace and before the two-state solution and this should be based on the international consensus regarding the illegitimate nature of settlements and this will contribute to the success of the French efforts to hold a peace conference very soon. We welcome this initiative and call on the world to support it.

Mr. President, the aspirations of our people to live in freedom, peace and security, away from occupation, from settlements, from humiliation and oppression is part and parcel of the principles of international community. Everybody must work on preserving such rights