

Statement by Ambassador Masood Khan, Permanent Representative of Pakistan on behalf of the OIC on Agenda Item-7 "Human Rights Situation in Palestine and other Occupied Arab Territories" Geneva, 6 March 2007

Mr. President

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).

We are meeting under extraordinary circumstances arising out of relentless Israeli military attacks against innocent Palestinians in Gaza. Israel has resorted to use of disproportionate force, deliberate destruction of infrastructure and killing of civilians.

The right of Palestinians to life and property is severely violated by Israel's deadly attacks is evident by the killing of over 1000 Palestinians in less than one year. In the last one week, over 125 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip including 40 children that includes a 20 days old baby girl have died. Special Rapporteur John Duggard has rightly pointed out that it is obligatory on Israel as the occupying power to comply with international humanitarian law under which Palestinians are protected people. In clear violation of its obligations, Israel treats Gaza as "enemy territory" and blocks essential supplies, including medicine, food and fuel.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) essential services including water and sanitation are close to break down. Essential drug items needed for operations are at zero availability. Infrastructure has been damaged.

The OIC has condemned these acts as they grossly violate the international human rights and humanitarian law. The OIC Secretary General has condemned the continued Israeli assaults and expressed his aversion to the deliberate murder by Israel of Palestinian civilians in Gaza, especially children and women. He called this Israeli carnage a flagrant violation of international law and norms. The Secretary General has called on the Human Rights Council and the international community to act decisively to end the suffering of the Palestinian people. These attacks have also served a severe blow to the peace initiatives and Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

Mr. President,

The Israeli military incursion and attacks can not be justified because of the sporadic rocket attacks by some Palestinians. The root cause of all violence, insecurity and instability in the region is Israel's protracted and forcible

occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories. If violence and retaliation has to be effectively countered, the international community will need to step up its efforts to end this occupation.

Israel should support, not undermine an amicable solution of Palestinian issue on the basis of the Security Council resolutions, the Quartet's Road Map and the targets outlined in the outcome of Annapolis Summit.

Mr. President,

The human rights situation in the occupied Syrian Golan is also deteriorating as a direct result of the Israeli occupation, which continues to violate the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Syrian population. The Israeli forces continue to detain any Syrian challenging the illegal decisions of the occupying forces. Syrian detainees and prisoners of conscience in the Israeli jails should be released immediately, the Israeli practices violating international law, human rights law, and the international law should end.

There exists a broad acknowledgment of the difficult and deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the OPT, the Golan and other occupied Arab territories. In this context, the OIC calls upon the Council to seriously consider the full and effective implementation of resolutions adopted by its regular and special sessions. While the only response to the serious situation faced by the people of the OPT and the Golan is the end of occupation, the human rights and humanitarian situation can be improved somewhat with the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Council.

Mr. President,

The OIC has also tabled a draft resolution, which addresses the ongoing serious and specific situation in Gaza caused by the recent Israeli military attacks. The draft resolution calls for immediate cessation of Israeli military attacks and the firing of crude rockets by Palestinian combatants. It also condemns the loss of considerable civilian lives including women and children and injuries to hundreds as well as urges all parties to respect the rules of international human rights and international humanitarian law. Due to the seriousness of the situation, the Council needs to act urgently and decisively. We hope that member states will address the situation from its humanitarian angle rather than entangling into political considerations and be able to adopt the resolution by consensus.

The OIC calls on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to take a lead role in ensuring the implementation of Council resolutions.

Thank you, Mr. President.