

*Check against delivery*

**Statement to the Security Council by Ambassador Anayansi  
Rodríguez Camejo, Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of  
the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, on the situation in  
the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.**

New York, 22 January 2019

Mr. President,

I would like, at the outset, to congratulate the Dominican Republic for holding the presidency of the Security Council. The Committee also extends its congratulations to all the new members of the Council.

Mr. President,

As we gather at this first quarterly open debate of the year to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestine question, we urge the Security Council to make 2019 a year of action and progress on the road to achieving a just and lasting peace, and the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We need to redress collectively the historic injustice of an entire people left under occupation, without their independence, denied their dignity and basic rights, foremost to self-determination.

As a further testament to its existence as a full-fledged member in the community of nations, the largest group of UN Member States elected the State of Palestine as Chair of the G-77 and China to lead this Group, representing 80% of the global community, in all our collective negotiations in 2019. This is a significant development that should be given due consideration.

Mr. President,

Let me recall just a few events that marked the past year and that should serve as a reminder of the task ahead: political paralysis and a stalled peace process continued; the lack of a political horizon remained cause for frustration for Palestinians and Israelis alike and the constant risk of further destabilization a threat to the wider region.

Protests by Palestinian civilians at the Gaza fence have been ongoing since March 2018, with the indiscriminate violence of the Israeli occupying forces causing a high number of casualties, including child fatalities. The Committee has repeatedly called on Israel, the occupying Power, to lift the illegal blockade on Gaza - now entering its 12<sup>th</sup> year. Military escalation and a catastrophic conflict must be avoided at all costs, and immediate redress of the dire humanitarian crisis is needed, including through enhanced support to UNRWA and other UN agencies providing vital assistance.

Palestinian reconciliation, despite ongoing efforts by Egypt and others, has regrettably not advanced. The Committee believes that Palestinian unity remains the best insurance for a politically stable and economically viable future for the Palestinian people.

As we just heard, Israeli settlement construction and planning, demolitions and seizures of Palestinians property continue unabated, including in East-Jerusalem, as have incidents of settler-related violence, in violation *inter alia* of resolution 2334 (2016). Recent announcements of plans approving new settlements further deep in the West Bank near Ramallah and Bethlehem, as well as the opening of a five kilometers road divided down its length by a concrete wall segregating Israeli and Palestinian traffic and connecting settlements in the outskirts of Jerusalem, represent further grave violations of international law. Even the Israeli press mentioned “apartheid road” while referring to this new road.

Illegal activities by the occupying Power, such as planned demolitions of entire Bedouin villages like Khan al-Ahmar - Abu al Helu involving the relocation of its population, have only fleetingly captured the attention of this Council. The international community is turning a blind eye, not only to the obligations of the occupying Power that are being breached, but to its own obligations, as a third party under international law.

Resolution 2334 (2016), provides us with a checklist and a way forward leading to the just and final solution of two States living side by side in security within pre-1967 borders and East Jerusalem as the capital of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State. The Committee welcomes the written report by the Secretary-General on the

implementation of this resolution and looks forward to future reports in the same format. We also welcome the initial steps taken by some parliaments to ensure national implementation of para 5 of resolution 2334 (2016) and encourage others to do so.

Finally, the Committee calls on all Member States to refrain from taking unilateral actions on any final status issue contrary to international law and UN resolutions. Such actions, if implemented, would only further imperil the two-state solution and the prospects for realizing lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

On a positive note, many Member States stepped up financial support for UNRWA to ensure the continuation of its vital operations in the face of an unprecedented financial crisis in 2018. The Committee calls on all Member States to continue to fund UNRWA reliably and predictably until the issue of refugees is just and finally resolved on the basis of the relevant UN resolutions.

Mr. President,

The Committee firmly believes that while unilateral initiatives towards overcoming the current impasse might be useful, the Security Council holds a distinct responsibility in this regard and holds the key to the solution of this conflict.

In closing, the Committee would like to call on all Member States that have not done so, especially the members of the European Union, to join the majority of States in the international community – 139 so far - and recognize the State of Palestine, supporting it to become a full UN Member State and take its rightful place among the community of nations. This step would contribute towards making 2019 the year that we make peace between Israeli and Palestinians a reality and finally achieve the goal we collectively crafted 71 years ago.

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