

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran):

Before I deliver my statement, let me offer my condolences to the peoples and the Governments of Japan and Ecuador for the loss of lives as a result of the recent earthquakes.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), and to convey the Movement's appreciation to the Chinese presidency for convening this open debate at this critical juncture for the Palestine people and the Middle East. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

Given the time constraints, I will deliver an abridged version of my statement. The full text will be circulated.

Each and every time the Council holds an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including question of Palestine, NAM appeals for international attention and urgent action to address the illegal and brutal Israeli occupation that is causing so much anguish to the Palestinian people, provoking deep anger and frustration and inflaming tensions. The breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, that are being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, are inflicting widespread human suffering and are deliberately destabilizing the situation, with far-reaching and serious consequences for the prospects for a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and for peace and security in the Middle East and beyond.

Each time, we repeat our call to the international community, first and foremost the Security Council, to uphold the Charter of the United Nations and international law and the obligations to respect those instruments and ensure such respect, including through the necessary measures to compel Israel to end its war crimes and human rights violations against the Palestinian people and end the illegal foreign occupation of another people's land.

Regrettably, the Security Council has failed to uphold its obligations, despite the clear global consensus on both the illegality of Israel's policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and the urgency of ending this decades long conflict so that the Palestinian people can finally realize the freedom, rights and justice they have for too long been unjustly denied. Israel, the occupying Power, has been emboldened by that inaction on the part of the international community, which has enabled it to act with impunity. Consequently, it has intensified its illegal, oppressive measures against the defenceless Palestinian civilian population, including, inter alia, by using excessive force against Palestinian civilians, including children and women, causing death and injury. As the occupying Power builds and expands more illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes not only a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention but also a war crime as defined by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Israel also continues with its illegal, repressive and punitive measures, including home demolitions, leaving countless Palestinian families homeless and without hope. The destructive impact of such Israeli violations is immense, as reflected in the increasing tensions, deteriorating socioeconomic conditions and deepening frustration and despair among the Palestinian civilian population, which has been living under the Israeli occupation for nearly half a century.

Moreover, the humanitarian disaster deliberately inflicted on the Gaza Strip by the occupying Power remains without redress, as the illegal Israeli blockade continues to obstruct the reconstruction of thousands of damaged and destroyed homes and infrastructure, and socioeconomic conditions continue to deteriorate as the blockade continues to have a suffocating effect on Gaza. The Palestinian civilian population there remains isolated from the rest of Palestine and the entire world. The situation

of youth in Gaza is especially critical, as hope and opportunity are absent. We would draw the Council's attention to that critical aspect.

The Security Council must act in accordance with international humanitarian law to ensure the protection of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation. The Council must also act, in line with international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Council's own resolutions, to bring a halt to Israel's ongoing illegal colonization of the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. That is a minimal and fundamental request to the Security Council and is not beyond the realm of reason, or its obligation for that matter.

How can the Council remain silent as Israel continues its systematic settlement policy, its construction of the wall, its confiscation and de facto annexation of Palestinian land under various pretexts, such as "State land" or "military exercises" or "building without permits"? Those and other systematic violations, including the demolition of homes, the forced displacement of Palestinian civilians, the arrest and detention of Palestinians, including children, and the incessant violence, terror and provocations by Israeli settlers and extremists, including at sensitive religious sites, particularly the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in occupied East Jerusalem, have persisted in an unabated fashion, worsening the extremely fragile situation on the ground. Such violations must be addressed immediately, because it is unacceptable to allow Israel to enjoy impunity without suffering the consequences of its actions. Any justification for such criminality must be rejected, and the time is past due to act, in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and our moral responsibilities towards the question of Palestine.

Finally, at a time when the Palestinian people are facing increasing Israeli aggression and have rapidly declining hope for the possibilities for peace and justice, the Non-Aligned Movement seizes this opportunity to reaffirm its long-standing solidarity with the Palestinian people, recognizing their decades of resilience despite so much suffering and injustice. NAM reiterates its support for the realization of their legitimate national aspirations and inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination and freedom in an independent and viable State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as well as for a just solution to ease the plight of the Palestine refugees, in accordance with resolution 194 (III), of 1948.

Lebanon continues to suffer from continuous Israeli violations of its borders and incursions into its territory, which have been followed by years of occupation and aggression. Unfortunately, Israel still continues to violate Lebanese airspace, intensifying its incursions over Lebanon. Such activities are a blatant violation of Lebanese sovereignty and the relevant international resolutions, in particular resolution 1701 (2006). The provisions of that resolution should be implemented in a manner that ensures the strengthening of the foundations of stability and security in Lebanon and prevents Israel from undertaking its daily violations of Lebanese sovereignty.

With regard to the occupied Syrian Golan, and especially in view of the recent blatant defiance exhibited against the will of the international community, the Movement condemns all the measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to alter the legal, physical and demographic status of the occupied Syrian Golan, which have intensified after the outbreak of the Syrian crisis. NAM demands once again that Israel abide by resolution 497 (1981) and withdraw fully from the occupied Syrian Golan to the borders of 4 June 1967, in implementation of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

For more information please visit [our page](#).