

**Security Council Open Debate on the Middle East and the Palestinian Question, October 15th 2012, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Mr. Mohammad Khazaei, Permanent representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations.*

Mr. President, I have the honour to address the Security Council today on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine.

At the outset, I would like to express the Movement's appreciation to Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under Secretary General for Political Affairs for his briefing to the Council today.

The Non-Aligned Movement remains firm in its conviction of the urgent need for the international community to act resolutely and collectively to fulfill its longstanding commitment to, and responsibility for, the realization of a just solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects, on the basis of international law and the terms of reference of the peace process, including the resolutions of the Council.

The Movement remains resolute to continue assisting the Palestinian people in their legitimate quest for dignity, justice and their inalienable right to self-determination in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. This issue is long overdue and its continued postponement will only put that goal further out of reach.

The Movement supports fully the application submitted by Palestine, on 23 September 2011, for membership in the United Nations and considers it to be consistent with the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence.

The Movement regrets that all efforts exerted to date by international and regional parties, including by the Quartet, have been unable to achieve any progress owing to the deliberate obstruction by Israel, the occupying Power, its refusal to respect the parameters of the peace process and its insistence on continuing to change the facts on the ground, in total contradiction of the two-State solution, the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The Movement remains concerned about the ongoing and intensifying acts of violence, terrorism and racist hate crimes, demolition of houses, revocation of residency, attacks on towns and villages across the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, excavations under Al-Aqsa Mosque and storming the Mosque compound, firing stun grenades at Palestinian worshippers, the latest of which took place on Friday 5 October 2012 causing many injuries among Palestinian worshippers, as well as the uprooting of olive and other trees by illegal Israeli settlers.

The Movement expresses its grave concern over continued Israeli illegal colonial settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around East Jerusalem and the construction of the Apartheid annexation wall, in violation of international law, relevant UN resolutions, and the ICJ Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004, and to calls upon the international community, including the Security Council, to compel Israel to cease these illegal actions and measures.

The Non-Aligned Movement expresses grave concern regarding the deteriorating situation and deplorable conditions of thousands of Palestinian prisoners and detainees unlawfully held in Israeli jails and detention centers, including at least 300 children as well as women and elected officials, and calls for their immediate release.

In the light of the very difficult conditions on the ground, the Non-Aligned Movement calls once again for specific measures to address, in particular, the grave impact of Israel's settlement policies on the Palestinian people and their land, including the violent actions by Israeli settlers against Palestinian property and Palestinian civilians, including women and children, as well as provocations and incitement, including against holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem and the vandalizing of mosques and churches.

Equally, the Movement remains concerned about the new round of deadly violence, terror and the ongoing missile air strikes and artillery bombardment by Israel, the occupying Power against the Palestinian people in the besieged Gaza Strip including the deadly attacks carried out on 7 October 2012. The Movement strongly condemns such attacks which are in grave breach of international law, including international humanitarian law and the relevant provisions regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the prohibition of reprisals and collective punishment against the civilian population under occupation. The intensification of Israel's aggression against the Gaza Strip threatens to further destabilize the situation on the ground and to fully ignite yet another round of deadly violence. The Movement also remains concerned about the critical humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. We call once again for the full and immediate lifting of the illegal Israeli blockade, which has now entered its sixth year, in violation of resolution 1860 (2009), other relevant United Nations resolutions and international humanitarian law, which prohibits collective punishment of the civilian population under occupation. Israel must promptly and unconditionally open all its crossing points with Gaza and end its continued obstruction of the freedom of movement of persons and of the reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip.

The Movement stresses that those actions must be ended, as they undermine the resumption of credible negotiations and obstruct the achievement of a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This demands the attention of the international community, particularly the Security Council, which is duty-bound to act to maintain international peace and security and ensuring respect for international law.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its call for the Security Council to act, and demands that Israel, the occupying Power, immediately ceases all such violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, and fully abides by its legal obligations, including those under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel's blatant impunity and disregard for the law cannot be tolerated.

The Movement also takes this opportunity to express its support for Palestinian reconciliation efforts, which continue to be sponsored by Egypt, and hopes that Palestinian unity will soon be restored in the interest of the legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Turning to Lebanon, the Movement condemns Israel's ongoing violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and calls on all parties concerned to fully implement resolution 1701 (2006), in order to end the current fragility and avoid the resurgence of hostilities. Concerning the occupied Syrian Golan, the Movement reaffirms that all measures and actions taken, or to be taken, by Israel, the occupying Power, to alter the legal, physical and demographic status of the occupied Syrian Golan, as well as Israeli measures to impose its own jurisdiction and administration there, are null, void and have no legal effect. The Non-Aligned Movement demands 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).

Mr. President, I shall now speak in my national capacity and I would like to refer to the present political and security situation in the Middle East region which is becoming more and more delicate and risky. There are now more threats from terrorism, extremism, militarization of the region and the existence of nuclear arsenal of the Zionist regime. Under such circumstances, any miscalculation, wrong decision, military intervention would only foment extremism, terrorism and sectarian clashes. This is particularly true with regard to the situation in Syria. Iran believes that any foreign military involvement in or against Syria would only exacerbate the crisis and extends insecurity to other countries in the region. Iran is of the view that the way out of present crisis lies in strengthening a comprehensive peaceful political process under regional and international initiatives with the aim of establishing first and foremost a cessation of the hostilities between the parties and holding national dialogue between the opposition and the Syrian government for a peaceful political process. This view was reiterated in the talks between Lakhtar Brahimi, the UN special envoy visiting Iran in the course of his meeting held yesterday and today with our high ranking officials and we assured him of our support of his initiatives. We believe that the countries in the region should cooperate with one another to make this dialogue and national reconciliation possible. It seems that there is no other alternative if we want to bring back peace and stability to Syria and to the region and we should all work together and therefore I do not comment on some of the statements made in this regard.