**Statement by the**

**Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights**

**of the Palestinian People**

**at the Special Meeting in observance of the**

**International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

29 November 2022

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This special and solemn meeting held each year on 29 November, under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, observes the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. This meeting is an expression of our collective commitment to the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and of a just and comprehensive solution to the Question of Palestine, and lasting Palestinian-Israeli peace and security in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions.

Regrettably today, in the absence of a just solution 75 years since the General Assembly’s decision to partition historic Palestine with the adoption of resolution 181 (II) and the prolongation of Israel’s occupation, now for over 55 years, the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees, continue to experience increasing levels of dispossession, displacement, violence, human rights violations and insecurity. The promise of self-determination and independence and the realization of Palestinian people’s rights remain unfulfilled.

In 2022, we have witnessed a dangerous escalation in Israeli military raids across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, leading to the killing and injury of more civilians, including women and children. Violence, in whatever form, takes us further away from the international consensus to achieve a just peace in the Middle East as outlined in international law and countless UN resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016). Such violence is not the answer. The killing of civilians must stop immediately, and the perpetrators must be held accountable.

The global consensus is clear that the provocative rhetoric and actions by Israel, especially in regard to the historic and legal status quo of Jerusalem and its holy sites, which greatly inflame tensions, must end.

The ongoing expansion by Israel, the occupying Power, of illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the attendant settler violence, which is also on the rise, need decisive action. These illegal actions constitute grave breaches of international law and are a flagrant obstruction of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

The Committee is also gravely concerned that Israel's occupation of Palestinian land is not temporary, but in fact a creeping annexation as argued by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory and countless others. We are dismayed by the grave discriminatory policies and measures imposed by Israel against the Palestinian people. Israel must reverse the dispossession and forcible displacement of Palestinians as well as the transfer of its population to occupied land.

The Committee condemns Israel's relentless targeting and shrinking of Palestinian civil society space, including its baseless decision to outlaw six Palestinian civil society organizations that are partners to the UN and the Committee.

Israel must also fully lift its 15-year illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip which constitutes collective punishment, as affirmed by Special Rapporteurs and Commissions of Inquiry, and serves to further fragment the Palestinian people and its territory. Israel’s actions are the source of countless human rights violations and are leading to the de-development of Gaza. This land, air and sea blockade run contrary to peace and international law and must be brought to an end.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Even though the promise of the United Nations remains unfulfilled, the Palestinian people have shown incredible resilience over the years, never losing their convictions, hope and identity.

Over the years, against formidable odds, they became an Observer State in the United Nations, became members of international organizations, and ratified some 100 international treaties and conventions. On Friday, 11 November 2022, the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly recommended five resolutions regarding the Palestine refugees and Israeli settlement activities and other practices violating the rights of the Palestinian people, including an important request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice regarding, inter alia, the legality of Israel’s prolonged occupation.

Within those resolutions was also the important extension of the mandate of UNRWA. However, the Agency still needs sustainable and predictable funding, and the Committee continues to strongly appeal for the necessary support to the Agency to ensure the well-being and dignity of the Palestine refugees.

The Committee will tirelessly continue to serve as a torchbearer until we reach a comprehensive solution based on international law and whereby Palestine and Israel will live side-by-side along the pre-1967 lines in peace and security.

The Committee notes that the ever-deteriorating situation in Occupied Palestinian Territory calls for a political process based on UN resolutions, international law and existing agreements that will resolve all final status issues and achieve the two-State solution. To this end, the Committee continues with its targeted outreach with Member States and Regional Organizations to sustain international attention on the question of Palestine as well as to advocate for the two-State solution.

We welcome intra-Palestinian dialogue and the signing, on 13 October, of the Declaration of Algiers, a step toward reconciliation and Palestinian democracy, crucial for peace negotiations.

Finding a just and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine requires an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and the realization of self-determination and independence of the Palestinian people and a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees. This is a prerequisite for peace between Palestinians and Israelis and for regional peace and stability. On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Committee vows to continue upholding its mandate and working toward this end until its realization.

Thank you.