

Check against delivery

**Statement to the Security Council by H.E. Mr. Fode Seck,
Chairman 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**

(United Nations Headquarters, New York, 21 October 2014)

Madam President,
Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives,

I would first of all like to express our deep appreciation for the able manner in which you have guided the work of the Security Council in October.

I would also like to pay special tribute to the Secretary-General for his support for the exercise of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people and his constant assistance during the conflict over the summer. I would like to express our appreciation for his detailed briefing on the results of the Cairo conference and his visit to the region. The tireless efforts of the United Nations Special Coordinator, Mr. Robert Serry, and of the Commissioner-General for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Mr. Pierre Krähenbühl, together with their dedicated teams on the ground, must also be recognized.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend Ambassador Mansour for his briefing on the work of the Palestinian Government of National Consensus, whose daily efforts are geared to the reconstruction of Gaza.

Madam President,

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has condemned, in the strongest possible terms, the excessive and disproportionate use of force during the Israeli assault on the occupied Gaza Strip, which resulted in the death of over 2,100 Palestinians. The Committee also condemned the indiscriminate rocket fire emanating from Gaza.

In the wake of this conflict, we have heard with dismay that Israel is announcing new plans for settlements and for annexing land outside the 1967 borders of Israel. The Committee and the entire international community strongly condemn these actions, which are not conducive to a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

When in Gaza, the Secretary-General expressed the view of the vast majority of United Nations Member States when he said that “there can be no peace in the Middle East, no security for Israel, while the crisis in Gaza festers”, emphasizing that the “build-destroy” cycle must be broken and that “the mindless pattern of blockade, rockets and destruction must stop”. This Committee shares the conviction of the Secretary-General, and calls for an immediate end to the blockade of Gaza by the occupying Power.

The Committee would also like to express its appreciation for the efforts of Egypt and Norway in organizing the international donors' conference last week in Cairo, and welcomes the generosity of the international community in pledging \$5.4 billion to support reconstruction in Gaza and the daily needs of the Palestinian people.

In that connection, the role of the Special Coordinator in overseeing the delivery of construction materials through a negotiated, tripartite access regime is particularly important, and the international community, especially the Security Council, will need to ensure that this mechanism works appropriately to meet the needs of those most affected.

Madam President,

Together with the rest of the international community, the Committee welcomes the arrival of the Government of National Consensus in Gaza. Its effective work will help to consolidate governance and secure the import of equipment that is critical for the reconstruction efforts. The decision by the Government of Israel to facilitate access for Palestinian Ministers from the West Bank to Gaza is a step in the right direction, and the Committee hopes that Israel will continue to facilitate the efforts of this new Government to accomplish its immense task.

The Committee also welcomes the decision by the new Government of Sweden to recognize the State of Palestine, as well as the commitments made by the Government of France. Together with the vote last Monday by the British Parliament, these separate decisions have created a new, international momentum in support of the exercise of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

The Committee hopes that this momentum will breathe new life into negotiations between the Parties, which must recommence as soon as possible, this time with a specific deadline and a firm commitment to agree on viable borders for both the State of Israel and the State of Palestine.

Moreover, the Committee supports the proposals made by the State of Palestine at the United Nations and invites the Security Council and the rest of the international community to support this initiative.

Madam President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

With regard to the particularly volatile nature and the scale of these challenges, the viability of the two-State solution seems to be increasingly questioned by international public opinion.

Ideas which had previously been marginal are gaining greater acceptance among both Palestinians and Israelis and are encouraging extremism and violence.

To the pessimists and extremists on all sides, I would like to offer a lesson from the distinguished intellectual, Professor Noam Chomsky, who addressed our Committee last Tuesday. He emphasized that the choice for us all was either a viable two-State solution or a continuation, into an indeterminate future, of the status quo, with more settlements, a continued siege of Gaza, and a prolonged period of instability for both Palestine and Israel.

The United Nations Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People can certainly not support that the status quo continues, as the status quo guarantees the *fait accompli* represented by the occupation and the continued denial of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian People.

The Security Council of the United Nations must not let this situation continue .

Thank you.
