

**Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Maged Abdel Aziz
Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Chair of the Coordinating Bureau
of the Non-Aligned Movement**

**Before
The Security Council**

**“The Situation in the Middle East, including the Question of
Palestine”**

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Mr. President,

I have the pleasure to address the Security Council on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and start by expressing appreciation for the monthly briefing, presented by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, which remains one of the most important tools to assess the situation on the ground and to address efforts aimed at advancing the peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The deteriorated situation in the Middle East as a result of the ongoing unlawful Israeli occupation of the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese Territories since 1967 continues to be a matter of serious concern not only for the region but for the entire international community.

The Non-Aligned Movement regrets the lack of progress made, despite increased efforts at the international and regional levels to achieve a just and lasting solution to the Question of Palestine and a comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of the two-State solution, the Madrid terms of reference, the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant Security Council resolutions, including 242, 338, 1373, 1515 and 1850. This is due to Israel's continued violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, and its rejection of all calls to cease its flagrant violations and pursue negotiations in good faith on all tracks of the peace process.

Israel, the occupying power, obstructs efforts to resume peace negotiations by its violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people including their humiliation on a daily basis in addition to its constant actions aimed at imposing unilateral solutions by illegally creating new facts on the ground, aiming at altering the demographic composition, status and character of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Israel does not refrain from measures that prejudice the outcome of negotiations on the final status issues of Jerusalem, settlements, the refugees, borders, security and water. Such illegal measures deepen mistrust, provoke further tension, prevent real progress and raise real doubts as to Israel's credibility as a partner in the peace process.

In the West Bank, Israel continues its illegal colonization of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around East Jerusalem, intensifying its confiscation of Palestinian land, expansion of settlements and transfer of settlers, construction of the Wall and other destructive measures, including the demolition of more Palestinian homes, in an attempt to de facto annex more Palestinian land. All of this is being done in grave breach of international law and United Nations resolutions, as well as Israel's commitments under the Road Map, which clearly calls for a freeze of all Israeli settlement activities, including "natural growth" and the dismantlement of all settlements "outposts" established since March 2001.

Israel has failed to commit to a freeze on all settlement activities and continue to defy the international consensus in this regard. The international community, including the Security Council, must use all the practical means and tools available under the Charter and international law to take the necessary measures to compel or bring Israel into compliance. The Non-Aligned Movement expresses deep concerns regarding the extensive damage caused by the Israeli settlements, the Wall and the spread of checkpoints, which are severing the Palestinian Territory into separate cantons, isolating East Jerusalem, undermining the continuity, integrity, viability and unity of the Palestinian territory and jeopardizing the prospects for achieving the two-State solution.

Further, the unresolved crisis in Gaza continues to have negative repercussions on all efforts to advance the peace process and wreaks unacceptable havoc on the fabric of society and civilian life in Gaza. Israel continues to impose blockade on the Palestinian civilian population, deprive them from their humanitarian needs and prevent Gaza's reconstruction, in violation to international humanitarian law and United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 1860. The NAM demands that Israel lift immediately its illegal blockade by allowing for the immediate and sustained opening of all border crossings to alleviate the humanitarian crisis and to realize the urgent early recovery and reconstruction of Gaza. The Non-Aligned Movement also believes that there is no legal, political or moral justification for the Israeli imprisonment of the Palestinian population in Gaza and calls for the end of such unlawful collective punishment.

Mr. President,

Turning to Lebanon, The Non-Aligned Movement remains deeply concerned by Israel's ongoing air and land violations of Lebanon sovereignty, in breach to Security Council resolution 1701, and calls on Israel to withdraw fully from the remaining Lebanese occupied land in the Shebaa Farms, the Kafarshuba hills and the northern part of the Al Ghajar village.

Concerning the Occupied Syrian Golan, the Non-Aligned 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 and its institutional structure, as well as the Israeli measures to impose jurisdiction and administration there, are null, void and have no legal effect. The Non-Aligned Movement demands that Israel abide by Security Council resolution 497 and withdraw fully from the Occupied Syrian Golan to the borders of June 4, 1967, in implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

Mr. President,

International determination is stronger today than ever before to work for achieving peace in the Middle East and ensuring that commitments made are commitments monitored and kept. The Arab side has reiterated time after time the readiness and willingness for peace, as stipulated in the Arab Peace Initiative based on the concept of full land for full peace. It is now the responsibility of Israel to seize the opportunity to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace by stopping its illegal settlement activities towards bringing an end to its 42-year occupation and clearly committing to the two-State solution to be achieved peacefully through negotiations on all core issues on the basis of international law and the relevant UN resolutions. In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms its firm commitment to continue to support and contribute to all efforts aimed at achieving peace in the Middle East.

Mr. President,

Turning now to speak in my national capacity, Egypt participates in the efforts to re-launch the peace process, which, regrettably, countered by continuing Israeli rejection of the requirements for peace, in forefront the full cessation of all settlement activities in accordance with the commitments of the Road Map. Israel's escalation of its settlement policy, particularly in and around East Jerusalem, does not serve the purposes of peace, but seek to change realities on the ground and create new reality to prejudge the final status negotiations, hoping that the international community will stand silent in face of attempts to seize Palestinian territory and de facto annex it . However, the international community as a whole stand against Israel's settlement policies and aware of its real endeavors and rejects them.

In this context, Egypt warns of the consequences of settlement activities, which does not stop at merely disrupt efforts to resume peace negotiations, but extend to undermine the contiguity of the Palestinian Territory and to undermine the chances of achieving an international solution based on the existence of two states on the basis of 1967 borders, which draw heavy shades on the credibility of the Government of Israel to the peace process, particularly that these practices contradict directly with the main principle upon which the process was established, namely the principle of "land for peace".

We warn of Israel's intensifying endeavors to change the features of the occupied East Jerusalem and to isolate and separate it from its Arab-Palestinian surrounding through the confiscation and demolition of Palestinian homes and the construction of new settlement units, including planning for constructing 20 new housing units in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, as well as attempts to prejudice the Islamic holy shrines in the city, and by claiming in statements that Jerusalem with all its neighborhoods is the united capital of Israel, all of these actions contradicts clearly with United Nations resolutions indicating that all Israel's measures to annex East Jerusalem are not recognized, null and void.

In the same vein, it is a must to intensify the international endeavor to attain a just and agreed solution to the long-term refugee problem, which Israel tries to evade it, particularly with the recent increase in the Government of Israel talk on the concept of a Jewish state, which carries a negative meanings affects all the Arab population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and threatens to aggravate the problem of refugees, instead of reaching a just solution to it.

Mr. President,

The international community is demanded today more than ever to work for ending Israel's violations and to compel it to comply with its obligations and to ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians and to work for promoting security and peace in the Middle East. Hence, Egypt encourages the efforts of the American Administration and welcomes the credible desire of the President of the United States to work for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East through the cessation of settlement and the setting of an objective vision based on the two-State solution. Egypt also supports the efforts of the International Quartet, which its recent meeting expressed a clear message of solidarity to the two-State solution and priority to stop settlement activities, and the re-launch of the peace process on all tracks through the conference to be convened in Moscow to follow up the implementation of Annapolis's decisions.

In addition to the above, Egypt will spare no effort to achieve Palestinian reconciliation through the Cairo dialogue, leading to the reunification of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza under the legitimate leadership of the Palestinian Authority, represented by President Abbas. Egypt is also working to find arrangements that would allow the achievement of a sustainable opening of Gaza crossing points on the basis of the Movement and Access Agreement of 2005, and to end the collective punishment applied by Israel against the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip and to achieve the honest and full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860.

Thank you Mr. President,