



Statement, delivered on behalf of OIC by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative to the UN, during General Debate under Agenda item 7

18 March 2021

Madam President,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the OIC.

It has been more than five decades of Israeli military occupation, and more than 70 years of denial of the right to self-determination to the Palestinian people. The occupying power, Israel, continues to commit grave human rights abuses as well as flagrant violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This consistent and systematic pattern of impunity raises serious questions over the legitimacy of international community's commitments to the Palestinian people for the realization of the right to self-determination.

The OIC expresses its deep concern over efforts to undermine Agenda Item 7. Such moves are aimed at shielding the occupying power, Israel, from international accountability. Doing so would further erode the reliability of the UN system, reward impunity and normalize foreign occupation, in violation of international law and norms.

Madam President,

While the world combats the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, Israel continues with its illegal policies and practices, exacerbating the existing health, humanitarian and socio-economic challenges of the Palestinian civilian population and further destabilizing the already-volatile situation on the ground. While the world fights the pandemic, Israel is continuing its violent attacks against civilians, destroying and appropriating their property, forced evictions, expanding illegal settlements, continuing annexation schemes, massive arrests, and acts of incitement and provocation, including at the holy sites in Occupied East Jerusalem. Contrary to Israel's claims of "suspended" annexation plans, de facto annexation continues unabated in the face of international complacency and without consequences.

The failure of international community for decades to uphold the legal obligations of UN Security Council as well as its failure to abide by its moral and legal obligations have raised serious questions on the credibility of the UN system including this Council. As Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk has stated: "*A deep-rooted problem at the heart of this conflict has not been the clarity of international law, but the unwillingness of the international community to enforce what it has proclaimed.*" This makes the decision announced on March 3 by the ICC prosecutor to initiate an investigation into the situation in Palestine even more important. It is time to bring an end to impunity and to seek justice for the victims of this illegal occupation.



The over 13- years of Israeli blockade has forced Gaza's two million inhabitants to live in deplorable humanitarian and socioeconomic conditions, with repeated military strikes and suffocating movement restrictions. Coupled with an electricity crisis that provides a supply for only a few hours a day, Gaza's over-burdened and weak health-care system cannot cope with additional suspensions or reductions of power sources while facing the threat of COVID-19.

The situation on the ground further confirms that Israel is more interested in colonizing Palestinian land, rather than achieving a just peace and security.

We urge this Council to urgently uphold its legal and moral obligations, hold Israel accountable for its illegal occupation in accordance with international law in order to pursue the path for achieving a just two states solution on the borders of June 4, 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We also reiterate long standing global demand for ending the illegal occupation of all occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan and the Lebanese territories, and the continuing violations of the human rights of its people.

I thank you.