



Statement on behalf of OIC by Ambassador Zaman Mehdi, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan during Interactive Dialogue with SR on OPT

49th HRC Session

25 March 2022

Mr. President,

On behalf of the OIC, we thank the Special Rapporteur (SR) for his important report and the valuable work done throughout the tenure.

The OIC agrees with the SR that legal prohibition against apartheid is well-established under both customary and conventional international law. Today, it is regarded as a jus cogens and non-derogable norm. Apartheid belongs to the same legal category as war crimes, aggression, territorial annexation, genocide, slavery, torture and crimes against humanity.

Since its occupation five decades ago, Israel's imposition of an apartheid regime has been manifested through its illegal policies, discriminatory laws and unilateral practices such as land grab, evictions, home demolitions and expansion of the settlement activities.

Mr. President,

To consolidate its occupation, the occupying power, Israel is using a range of brutal tools to not only undermine fundamental rights of Palestinian people but to introduce illegal demographic changes and strategic fragmentation of the Palestinian territory by dividing into separate areas of population control, with Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem physically divided from one another. This fragmentation is being geographically enforced by the occupying power through illegal walls, check-points, barricades, military closure zones, Palestinian-only roads and Israeli-only roads. In addition to the apartheid regime imposed on the Gaza Strip, two million inhabitants remain locked up without access to basic services and humanitarian assistance.

The failure of the international community to adopt economic sanctions and countermeasures against Israel, provides the occupying power with an impunity to continue with its violations of international law, including the annexation of Jerusalem, and internationally wrongful acts of apartheid. We would appreciate SR's comments regarding reasons behind failure of international community to hold the occupying power accountable.

We reiterate the urgent call for accountability, and for meaningful actions to address the root causes of this grave injustice.

I thank you.