



**OIC group statement, delivered by Amb. Bilal Ahmad, during General Debate under
agenda Item 7
HRC 55th Session
26 March 2024**

Mr. President,

The OIC Group¹ reaffirms the sanctity of Agenda Item 7 of the Human Rights Council as an integral part of the IB (*Institution-Building*) package.

The unimaginable horror of the human rights situation in the OPT (*Occupied Palestinian Territory*), not only in Gaza but also the West Bank and East Al-Quds, is the definitive – if tragic – validation of this agendum’s relevance and urgency.

The long-running settler-colonial project graduated to apartheid and has now attained its final stage with acts amounting to the crime of Genocide.

We are deeply dismayed that some delegations have chosen to look away even as Palestinian civilians in the besieged Gaza Strip and throughout the OPT face all-out aggression from the occupation forces and unprecedented settler violence.

In the West Bank, last year marked the highest level of violence by occupation forces and extremist settlers against Palestinian civilians since the UN began keeping records in 2005. This was true even before the events of 7 October 2023.

In the last months of the year, the occupation regime abandoned all pretence of respect for international law. Unequivocal expressions of support by some emboldened its brazen aggression and should be cause for introspection.

In the besieged Gaza Strip, the occupying power has unleashed acts amounting to the crimes of Genocide and ethnic cleansing against Palestinian civilians, including through starvation, restrictions on humanitarian relief, indiscriminate and disproportionate targeted attacks on civilian infrastructure, and attempts at forcible population transfer. Accompanying these actions is a broadcasting of intent: through incitement and dehumanizing rhetoric from the highest levels.

Mr. President,

We echo our abiding support for the work of the Commission of Inquiry and Special Rapporteur. We also appreciate the multitude of UN Special Procedures, Office of the High Commissioner, and allied mechanisms that have spoken out.

We look forward to early progress in proceedings at the ICJ and ICC.

¹ Except Albania

The provisional measures ordered by the ICJ must be implemented in full to prevent further acts of genocide against the Palestinian people.

We condemn in the strongest terms the occupying power's brutal atrocities against Palestinian civilians spanning more than seven decades and ongoing barbaric aggression, and call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, unimpeded and adequate humanitarian relief, and the opening of humanitarian corridors.

We reiterate our call for the realization of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine along the lines of June 1967 with its capital, Al-Quds Al-Sharif, with recognition as a UN member state leading towards a two-state solution.

We also demand an immediate end to Israel's illegal occupation of all occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan, and in Lebanon.

Thank you.