

**Permanent Observer
Mission of Palestine
to the United Nations
Geneva**



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لفلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة في جنيف

Palestine Statement

by

**Dr. Mohammad Abu-Koash
Ambassador of Palestine to the United Nations, Geneva**

before

The Second Session of the Human Rights Council

Geneva, 26 September 2006

Mr. President
Distinguished Delegates

We thank Professor John Dugard, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, for his report that contains comprehensive analysis of the Israeli human rights violations in occupied Palestine.

The situation in the occupied Gaza Strip continues to be a desperate one and is deteriorating so steeply that it qualified to be described by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Jan Egeland, as a "ticking bomb." A year ago, the population of Gaza celebrated the dismantlement of Israeli settlements from their neighborhoods. However, their euphoria was short-lived as a result of the relentless Israeli bombardments of their residential areas, assaults, and military and economic siege. Such Israeli practices demonstrate that Israel's redeployment from the Gaza Strip and the evacuation of Israeli settlements there were not meant to end Israeli occupation in the Gaza Strip nor were they meant to constitute a step towards peace. It is both illegal and deceptive that part of the evacuated Israeli settlers was transferred from the Gaza Strip to settlements in another occupied Arab territory, namely the occupied Syrian Golan.

Recently the Quartet has stressed the urgent need to make progress towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. There cannot be a just, lasting and comprehensive peace if Israel continues to build the Separation Wall, in defiance of the ruling of the International Court of Justice, and continues to build new settlements and expand old ones. Israeli settlements, the Wall and Israeli by-pass roads together constitute a formidable hindrance to the two-state solution.

The expansion of Israeli settlements in occupied East Jerusalem and the construction of the Wall around major settlement blocs therein require particular attention. This is referred to as the E-1 plan, which aims at changing the demographic composition of the city in a way where Israelis will make up the majority of the total population, thus enforcing the Israeli annexation of the Palestinian capital. Another component of the plan is to bisect the West Bank and totally isolate occupied East Jerusalem from neighboring Palestinian cities. Only recently, Israel has issued tenders for additional housing units in Israeli settlements in the West Bank. About 700 housing units will be added in Maale Adumim and Beitar Eilit, both located in the vicinity of East Jerusalem. Added to that the construction of a tramway that will connect West Jerusalem with an Israeli settlement called Pisgat Zeev, thereby further isolating East Jerusalem and its Palestinian population and consolidating the settlement ring around the city. While the unpublished report of the EU heads of missions in Jerusalem noted that isolating East Jerusalem from surrounding Palestinian cities will have grave socio-economic and humanitarian consequences and unequivocally states that Israeli settlement activities are a violation of international law and peace agreements, some West European companies are giving assistance to Israel in

support of establishing this tramline, despite that it is built on occupied territory. We call upon the concerned states, in respect of their obligations under international humanitarian law, to refrain from rendering any form of support for this illegal tramline project.

The Middle East is in turmoil and its ramifications are not limited to that region. While Middle East sad news capture the world's attention on a daily basis, no genuine effort has been expended to address its root cause, namely ending the continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories. Israel justifies its occupation regime with security pretexts; however, it is clear that security and occupation can never coexist as it is testified by history and facts on the ground.