



PERMANENT  
OBSERVER MISSION OF  
PALESTINE  
TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS

115 EAST 65TH ST.  
NEW YORK NY 10021

TEL 212 288 8500  
FAX 212 517 2377



**Statement by Dr. Riyad Mansour, Ambassador, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, before the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 10 February 2006:**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to take this opportunity to extend Palestine's congratulations upon the re-election of the Chairman and the Members of the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. We are confident that with their guidance and stewardship, the Committee will succeed in carrying out the important work entrusted to it in the coming year.

We would also like to express our heartfelt appreciation to all of the Members and Observers of the Committee for their valuable efforts and constant support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people. Their unwavering commitment towards the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State of Palestine, delivers a strong message of solidarity to the Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation. We wish to also thank the Division for Palestinian Rights for all of their efforts in support of the Committee's important work.

Allow me to also convey our deep appreciation to His Excellency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for joining us today at this important meeting. His attendance not only reaffirms the premise that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects, but also displays his personal commitment to achieving a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We welcome him and express our appreciation to him for all of his efforts, both within the United Nations system and as a member of the Quartet, to promote peace within our region.

Mr. Chairman,

For the second time in the history of the Palestinian National Authority, the Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation went to the polls to vote in their new legislature. In fact, according to the Palestinian Central Elections Committee voter turnout was at an astonishing 77 percent. The international community, including the international observers monitoring the elections, applauded the Palestinian people for conducting the elections in a free and fair manner and their commitment to democracy

P R E S S R E L E A S E

It was a very proud day for the Palestinian people not only because of the festival of democracy displayed, but because they did so under Israel's military occupation. Even more extraordinary, the elections took place at a period of time when the Palestinian people are facing the severest imposition of restrictions, including the right to the freedom of movement. It should also be taken into account, that this is the first time in an Arab country in which a ruling party loses an election, bestows legitimacy upon the results of the elections and then proceeds to peacefully transfer the cabinet to the winning party. Indeed, this provides further evidence of the commitment to democracy by the Palestinian people living under occupation, and, as such deserves additional tribute.

Despite all of the difficulties posed by the occupation and the policies of the Israeli government, President Mahmoud Abbas remained committed to holding the elections on the set date and proceeded accordingly. He made it unequivocally clear that the elections were a sine que non for future progress and would commence regardless of the insecure environment the Palestinian people were living in under occupation. After the results of the vote were announced, President Abbas reiterated the commitment by the Palestinian side to all the treaties and agreements signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and by the Palestinian National Authority. Moreover, he reaffirmed the commitment by the Palestinian side to the road map and its intent to uphold its obligations therein. He further went to state that he expected the future new cabinet to uphold the same positions.

In that connection, I would like to reiterate that for the Palestinian side, our policy related to the question of Palestine will not change. We will continue to call for the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We will continue to shed light on the trampling upon the human rights of the Palestinian people by Israel, the occupying Power, and its violations of international law and international humanitarian law. We will continue to explicitly reject the destruction and the colonization of Palestinian land. We will continue to reaffirm the rights of the Palestine refugees, in accordance with UN resolution 194. We will continue to call for Israeli withdrawal from all the land it occupied since 1967, including east Jerusalem. And, we will continue to call for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with east Jerusalem as its capital, in order for the Palestinian people to live in freedom, peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the past week, President Abbas has engaged in intense discussions with all political parties represented in the new Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) regarding new cabinet formation. These consultations will formally continue in a meeting to be convened on 16 February to elect officers of the PLC and to be followed thereafter with the process of forming a new cabinet.

In this regard, I want to reiterate the declared position of Palestine that the economic aid provided to the Palestinian people should not be halted or interrupted. The international community must not collectively punish the Palestinian people for exercising their democratic right to elect their representatives. Irrespective of diverging opinions regarding the political parties the Palestinian people elected, it must be

remembered that it came about in a democratic manner. As such, the choice the Palestinian people made deserves respect and support.

Hence, we appeal to those parties who made negative pronouncements to revoke financial assistance to the Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation to re-evaluate and rescind such positions. Any decision to stop aid will have a tremendous negative impact on the daily lives of the Palestinian people and compound their already dire humanitarian situation. The welfare of the Palestinian people should be the main concern of the international community and ways to alleviate their hardships should be the focus, rather than ways that would intensify them.

Mr. Chairman,

I would now like to turn the direction of my statement to that of the Committee for the coming year. Over the past several months, the Bureau and the Committee, has in good faith, engaged in dialogue with many groups to involve them in the work of the Committee. As such, details of the functions of the Committee and the subject matter of upcoming Conferences of the Committee were disclosed. In doing so, the Committee hoped to actively involve them in the work of the Committee for the purpose of positively influencing the programs and activities benefiting the Palestinian people.

Furthermore, this course of action has been done to make all the activities of the Committee congruent with the political process and with the socioeconomic dimension to provide assistance to the Palestinian people. This would certainly assist in rebuilding and enhancing the capacity building for the reconstruction of Palestinian society, especially in Gaza. Such an objective can only be enhanced with the collective effort and active participation of all those who attach importance to the principles of international law and those who truly want to bring Israel's 38-year-old occupation to an end.

Mr. Chairman,

Clearly the Palestinian national struggle faces tremendous challenges. It must be recalled, that when the mandate of the Committee and other programs related to Palestine were established thirty years ago, the occupation was still in its infant stage and its brutality was not as entrenched as it is today. Thirty years ago, the monstrous Wall being built by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including east Jerusalem, and the establishment of thousands of illegal settlements, along with the transfer of hundreds of thousands of illegal settlers, swallowing up Palestinian land did not exist. Moreover, today, the Palestinian people also suffer the consequences of the imposition of hundreds of checkpoints, the imprisonment of thousands of Palestinian political prisoners, the illegal policy of extrajudicial executions and a myriad of other merciless examples of occupation against the Palestinian people, permeating every aspect of their lives. Indeed, the occupation and the illegal policies and practices of the Israeli occupying forces have made the life of every Palestinian man, woman and child intolerable.

On this note, if programs related to the question of Palestine were needed thirty years ago, it would make sense to state that, today the Palestinian people are in an even more need for the continuation and even strengthening of these programs. Even more than that, there should be contemplation of establishing additional programs for the Palestinian people to ensure that the crimes of the occupation are not concealed, but told. The tragic plight of the Palestinian people living under occupation should be transmitted to every household to create a more boisterous voice calling for the termination of the occupation once and for all and to ensure that an entire people will never be under the boot of a brutal occupier, all while the international community remained paralyzed.

As witnessed through various statements, the international community at the United Nations has demonstrated its strong view on the importance of the mandates related to the question of Palestine. Unified positions have been established to reaffirm that such mandates, as they are democratically renewed each year via the adoption of General Assembly resolutions, should not fall under the review of mandates older than five years.

Mr. Chairman,

We would also like to introduce an idea that could provide indispensable support to the Secretary-General, including supporting the role His Excellency plays in the Quartet. In this regard, it may be useful to think creatively on ways for the Committee to play a role in assisting the Secretary-General, in his personal capacity as well as a Quartet member. We must think collectively on additional ways to help His Excellency and his good offices in any possible way to further enhance the work of the Quartet and to bring a just solution to the conflict based on the road map and relevant United Nations resolutions. For my delegation, we stand ready to work with the Members and Observers of the Committee, as well as the Secretary-General, on finding ways to achieve this.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, allow me to express our thanks and appreciation to you, to the members of the Bureau and to all of the Members of this august Committee for your valuable efforts and contributions and to the Division for all their hard work. We are confident that you will continue to exert serious efforts towards enabling the Palestinian people to finally and truly exercise their inalienable rights.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.