

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



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لدولة فلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

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Statement by Loureen Sayej, Third Secretary, before the Special Committee on the Charter, the peaceful Settlement of Dispute

The State of Palestine was absent in the general debate as our delegation was in the Hague, at the ICJ, participating in the oral proceedings on the ICJ advisory opinion request by the GA on the question of Palestine, Israel's illegal occupation, its apartheid regime, and the legal consequences thereof on Israel, third States, and the UN.

We were joined by at least 50 other States, unprecedented in the history of the ICJ, in the history of international justice, and in the history of peaceful settlement of dispute.

We stood shoulder to shoulder with these States and millions around the world in support of the UN Charter, its principles and purposes, including the right to self-determination and the prohibition of acquisition of territory by force; we stood shoulder to shoulder with these States in support of the law, its universality, and in support of humanity and morality; we stood shoulder to shoulder with the world rejecting colonialism, occupation, aggression, domination, rejecting Israel's 75 years violations of the Charter and crimes that have haunted our multilateral system.

Before the ICJ, States laid out the laws and facts that for decades Israel has occupied the Palestinian territory, committing violations that are inherent to its presence in our land and colonial objective. Its occupation is annexationist and supremacist in nature. It is a deliberate, cynical perversion of international law. It is thus illegal. States reiterated that the only solution consistent with international law is for this illegal occupation to come to an immediate, unconditional, and total end.

Before the ICJ States argued that Israel's system of persecution, racial discrimination and apartheid over the Palestinian people, is one of its means of maintaining its control over the land by the subjugation of the indigenous Palestinian people. An abhorrent system of which the South African representative before the ICJ described it as, "the inhumane discriminatory policies and practice of the Israeli regime as an even more extreme form of the apartheid that was institutionalized against black people in my country, coincidentally from 1948... it is indistinguishable from settler colonialism which has no place in the 21st century."

We stood shoulder to shoulder with the world where justice felt possible and attainable, even in the midst of Israel's genocide, even in the midst of this unending nightmare.

In stark contrast and in parallel to these proceedings, the SC, once again failed to adopt a resolution calling for a ceasefire, owing to, once again, a veto by the United States. A veto, that in effect gives a greenlight to Israel to continue with its genocide; a greenlight to continue to kill *en masse* our children, destroy their lives, their homes, their schools, their cities, and starve them to death; a greenlight to continue dropping 2,000 pound bombs on homes, refugee camps, hospitals, schools, UN buildings, shredding our bodies piece by piece, limb by limb, finger by finger, cell by cell.

The message given to our people and peoples of the world, yet once again, is that their lives are marginal and their rights are optional and the Charter and international law and the ICJ rulings are deployed only for political convenience; not for humanity not for morality and certainly not for legality.

Simultaneously, as the US was casting its veto in the SC, its delegation happened to be in this room delivering an impassioned statement championing international law, calling on States to adhere to the Charter and its principles, they even deigned to bring up ICJ rulings and express “concerns” for the Palestinian people. It is painful and disappointing, as we grieve, to witness this glaring hypocrisy and dehumanization of our people. 30,000 lives killed 13,000 children murdered.... What’s the threshold? What’s the standard? What’s the number of Palestinians killed that will entice the SC to call for a ceasefire? What’s more of serious crime than genocide? How do you call out this racism in diplomatic language?

To state it directly: if you continually refuse to call for a ceasefire or to stop sending arms; if you cut funding for UNRWA and block and reject every effort to hold Israel accountable for its genocide for the past 130 days and its crimes against humanity and war crimes for the past 75 years, you lose the authority, and indeed the privilege and credibility to speak about the law, of the law, or for the law.

Mr. Chair,

The State of Palestine reaffirms its consistent position and longstanding adherence to all peaceful, political, legal, and diplomatic means for peaceful settlement of dispute. We believe in the force of law over the use of force; we believe in a multilateral system that is anchored in collective solidarity and security and rooted in international law and the UN Charter.

Our journey of peaceful settlement of dispute is characterized by nothing less of dehumanization, politicization, hostility, and opposition.

But we persisted despite threats against us, denying the Palestinian people their basic rights, including their right to justice, undermining the ICJ including in its latest ruling on the case brought by South Africa against Israel relating to Israel’s violations of the Genocide Convention, undermining the Rome Statue, and the promise of international justice; yet we persisted, because we are committed to the law and because it is our duty towards our people, international community, and humanity.

We will continue to persist until the realization of our rights as per the UN Charter and the laws that humanity elaborated. We are not the exception to the law but the test of its efficacy; a test that none of us can afford to fail.