# Article 20

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Text of Article 20

The General Assembly shall meet in regular annual sessions and in such special sessions as occasion may require. Special sessions shall be convoked by the Secretary-General at the request of the Security Council or of a majority of the Members of the United Nations.

Introductory note

1. The general structure of this study follows that of Article 20 in the Repertory Supplements 6, 7 and 8.

I. General survey

2. During the period under review, the General Assembly held five regular sessions, four special sessions and one emergency special session. The latter was resumed several times during the period reviewed in the present Supplement. In addition, the General Assembly held a special commemorative meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Charter of the United Nations.

3. In accordance with the provisions of Article 20 of the Charter and of rules 1 and 3 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the Assembly resumed its forty-ninth regular session and held its fiftieth to fifty-fourth sessions from 1995 to 1999 at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.

4. In addition to its regular sessions, and in accordance with the provisions of Article 20 of the Charter and of rule 7 of its rules of procedure, the Assembly held its nineteenth (1997), twentieth (1998), twenty-first and twenty-second (both in 1999) special sessions.

5. Furthermore, the General Assembly, pursuant to its resolution 377 A (V) and rule 7 of its rules of procedure, held its tenth emergency special session which was resumed four times during the period under review.

6. Also in the period under review, the General Assembly held a special commemorative meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Charter of the United Nations, at the level of heads of State and Government, at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.

7. The following table shows the opening and closing dates and the approximate duration of the sessions held during this period.
### Regular sessions

#### Forty-ninth

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<th>Approximate duration</th>
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<tr>
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<td>21 June 1995&lt;sup&gt;9&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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#### Fiftieth

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<td>11 April 1996&lt;sup&gt;20&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
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<sup>1</sup> A/49/PV.96, p. 1.
<sup>2</sup> A/49/PV.97, p. 1.
<sup>5</sup> A/49/PV.100, p. 1.
<sup>7</sup> A/49/PV.102, p. 1.
<sup>8</sup> A/49/PV.103, p. 1.
<sup>9</sup> A/49/PV.104, p. 1.
<sup>10</sup> A/49/PV.105, p. 1.
<sup>12</sup> A/49/PV.107, p. 1.
<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 14.
<sup>15</sup> A/50/PV.1, p. 1.
<sup>16</sup> To be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/50/250, sect. II.D.) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year, see A/50/PV.5, p. 2.
<sup>17</sup> A/50/PV.101, p. 1.
<sup>18</sup> A/50/PV.102, p. 1.
<sup>19</sup> A/50/PV.103, p. 1.
<sup>20</sup> A/50/PV.104, p. 1.
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<td>10 September 1996</td>
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23 A/50/PV.107, p. 1.  
30 A/50/PV.114, p. 1.  
34 A/50/PV.118, p. 1.  
36 A/50/PV.120, p. 1.  
37 A/50/PV.121, p. 1.  
38 A/50/PV.122, p. 1.  
39 A/50/PV.123, p. 1.  
### Opening date  | Closing date   | Approximate duration
--- | --- | ---
125th plenary meeting | 10 September 1996<sup>41</sup> | ½ day
126th plenary meeting | 16 September 1996<sup>42</sup> | ½ day
127th plenary meeting | 16 September 1996<sup>43</sup> | ½ day
128th plenary meeting | 17 September 1996<sup>44</sup> | 1 day
| 17 September 1995<br>**Fifty-first**<sup>45</sup> | 18 December 1996<sup>47</sup> | 13 weeks
90th plenary meeting | 31 January 1997<sup>48</sup> | 1 day
91st plenary meeting | 12 March 1997<sup>49</sup> | ½ day
92nd plenary meeting | 12 March 1997<sup>50</sup> | ½ day
93rd plenary meeting | 13 March 1997<sup>51</sup> | 1 day
94th plenary meeting | 27 March 1997<sup>52</sup> | 1 day
95th plenary meeting | 3 April 1997<sup>53</sup> | 1 day
96th plenary meeting | 18 April 1997<sup>54</sup> | 1 day
97th plenary meeting | 25 April 1997<sup>55</sup> | 1 day
98th plenary meeting | 20 May 1997<sup>56</sup> | 1 day
99th plenary meeting | 21 May 1997<sup>57</sup> | 1 day
100th plenary meeting | 22 May 1997<sup>58</sup> | 1 day
101st plenary meeting | 13 June 1997<sup>59</sup> | 1 day
102nd plenary meeting | 17 June 1997<sup>60</sup> | 1 day
103rd plenary meeting | 20 June 1997<sup>61</sup> | 1 day

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<sup>41</sup> A/50/PV.125, p. 1.
<sup>42</sup> A/50/PV.126, p. 1.
<sup>43</sup> A/50/PV.127, p. 1.
<sup>44</sup> A/50/PV.128, p. 1.
<sup>45</sup> A/50/PV.139, p. 19.
<sup>46</sup> A/51/PV.1, p. 1.
<sup>47</sup> To be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/51/250, sect. II.C.) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year, see A/51/PV.3, p. 2.
<sup>48</sup> A/51/PV.90, p. 1.
<sup>49</sup> A/51/PV.91, p. 1.
<sup>50</sup> A/51/PV.92, p. 1.
<sup>51</sup> A/51/PV.93, p. 1.
<sup>52</sup> A/51/PV.94, p. 1.
<sup>53</sup> A/51/PV.95, p. 1.
<sup>54</sup> A/51/PV.96, p. 1.
<sup>55</sup> A/51/PV.97, p. 1.
<sup>56</sup> A/51/PV.98, p. 1.
<sup>57</sup> A/51/PV.99, p. 1.
<sup>58</sup> A/51/PV.100, p. 1.
<sup>59</sup> A/51/PV.101, p. 1.
<sup>60</sup> A/51/PV.102, p. 1.
<sup>61</sup> A/51/PV.103, p. 1.
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\(^{63}\) A/51/PV.105, p. 1.
\(^{64}\) A/51/PV.106, p. 1.
\(^{65}\) A/51/PV.107, p. 1.
\(^{66}\) Ibid., p. 19.
\(^{67}\) A/52/PV.90, p. 1.
\(^{68}\) To be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/52/250, sect. II.C.) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year, see A/52/PV.4, p. 1-2.
\(^{69}\) A/52/PV.80, p. 1.
\(^{70}\) A/52/PV.81, p. 1.
\(^{71}\) A/52/PV.82, p. 1.
\(^{72}\) A/52/PV.83, p. 1.
\(^{73}\) A/52/PV.84, p. 1.
\(^{74}\) A/52/PV.85, p. 1.
\(^{75}\) A/52/PV.86, p. 1.
\(^{76}\) A/52/PV.87, p. 1.
\(^{77}\) A/52/PV.88, p. 1.
\(^{78}\) A/52/PV.89, p. 1.
\(^{79}\) A/52/PV.90, p. 1.
\(^{80}\) A/52/PV.91, p. 1.
\(^{81}\) A/52/PV.92, p. 1.
\(^{82}\) Ibid., p. 18.
### Chapter IV. The General Assembly

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<td>18 February 1999&lt;sup&gt;85&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<sup>83</sup> A/53/PV.1, p. 1.
<sup>84</sup> To be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/53/250, sect. II.C.) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year, see A/53/PV.3, p. 2.
<sup>85</sup> A/53/PV.94, p. 1.
<sup>86</sup> A/53/PV.95, p. 1.
<sup>87</sup> A/53/PV.96, p. 1.
<sup>88</sup> A/53/PV.97, p. 1.
<sup>89</sup> A/53/PV.98, p. 1.
<sup>91</sup> A/53/PV.100, p. 1.
<sup>92</sup> A/53/PV.101, p. 1.
<sup>93</sup> A/53/PV.102, p. 1.
<sup>94</sup> A/53/PV.103, p. 1.
<sup>95</sup> A/53/PV.104, p. 1.
<sup>96</sup> A/53/PV.105, p. 1.
<sup>97</sup> A/53/PV.106, p. 1.
<sup>98</sup> A/53/PV.107, p. 1.
<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 17.
### Fifty-fourth

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<tr>
<td>14 September 1999</td>
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### Special sessions

- **Nineteenth**
  - Opening date: 23 June 1997
  - Closing date: 27 June 1997
  - Approximate duration: 5 days

- **Twentieth**
  - Opening date: 8 June 1998
  - Closing date: 10 June 1998
  - Approximate duration: 3 days

- **Twenty-first**
  - Opening date: 30 June 1999
  - Closing date: 2 July 1999
  - Approximate duration: 3 days

- **Twenty-second**
  - Opening date: 27 September 1999
  - Closing date: 28 September 1999
  - Approximate duration: 2 days

### Emergency special sessions

- **Tenth**
  - Opening date: 24 April 1997
  - Closing date: 25 April 1997
  - Approximate duration: 2 days

  - 15 July 1997
  - Approximate duration: 1 day

  - 13 November 1997
  - Approximate duration: 1 day

  - 17 March 1998
  - Approximate duration: 1 day

  - 5 February 1998
  - Approximate duration: 3 days

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100 A/54/PV.1, p. 1.

101 To be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/54/250, sect. II.C.) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year, see A/54/PV.3, p. 2.

102 A/S-19/PV.1, p. 1.

103 A/S-19/PV.9, p. 33.

104 A/S-20/PV.1, p. 1.

105 A/S-20/PV.9, p. 27.

106 A/S-21/PV.1, p. 1.

107 A/S-21/PV.9, p. 43.


110 A/ES-10/PV.1, p. 1.


113 No closing date was fixed.


115 No closing date was fixed.


117 No closing date was fixed.


119 No closing date was fixed.
II. Analytical summary of practice

A. Regular annual sessions

1. Date of meeting

8. There was no amendment to rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which provides that the Assembly “shall meet every year in regular session commencing on the third Tuesday in September”. However, the General Assembly did not strictly follow this rule in the period under review, and twice met on a day other than the third Tuesday in September. The opening meeting of the fifty-third session was held on the second Wednesday of September 1998,120 and the opening meeting of the fifty-fourth session was held on the second Tuesday of September 1999.121

2. Adjournment and resumption of session

9. There was also no amendment to rule 6 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which provides that the Assembly “may decide at any session to adjourn temporarily and resume its meetings at a later date”. During the period under review, the General Assembly always recessed its meetings in December shortly before Christmas and held several additional meetings during the subsequent year.122

3. Place of meeting

10. All the sessions of the General Assembly during the period under review were held at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.123

Duration of session

11. The average duration of all General Assembly meetings in the autumn did not exceed 14 weeks during the reviewed period.124 The meetings of the General Assembly in the consecutive year were normally the length of one working day and were spread throughout the whole year.125

5. Closing date of session

12. With regard to the closing date of sessions, the general practice of the General Assembly during the reviewed period remained the same as described in Supplement No. 8.126 Upon a recommendation of the General Committee, the General Assembly every year decided to recess its sessions near the end of autumn and to close its sessions in September of the next year, often one day before the opening of the next session.127

B. Special sessions

1. Procedure for summoning

13. During the period under review, the General Assembly, in accordance with Article 20 of the Charter and rule 8 (a) of its rules of procedure, convened its nineteenth to twenty-second special sessions in New York.

(a) By the General Assembly

14. The nineteenth special session “for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21” was convened by the General Assembly in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 47/190 of 22 December 1992, 50/113 of 20 December 1995 and 51/181 of 16 December 1996, at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.128

15. With regard to participants of the nineteenth special session, the General Assembly decided to invite States members of the specialized agencies which were not members of the United Nations to participate in the work of the special session in the capacity of observers,129 namely the Cook Islands, the Holy See, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Switzerland, Tonga and Tuvalu.130 In addition, the General Assembly decided that intergovernmental and other organizations and

120 See footnote 61.
121 See footnote 75.
122 For exact dates of meetings, see the table at paragraph 6 of the present study.
123 In accordance with rule 3 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
127 See footnotes 16, 47, 68, 84 and 101 above. In this context, the fifty-first session constitutes an exemption, since it opened on the same day that the previous session closed, see footnote 45.
128 See also A/S-19/2, para. 1.
129 GA resolution 51/181, para. 4.
130 See A/S-19/PV.1, p. 7.
entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the work of the General Assembly would be invited to participate in the debate in plenary meetings. \[^{131}\] Furthermore, representatives of United Nations programmes and specialized agencies were invited to participate in the debate in plenary meetings, provided that they were represented at the highest level. \[^{132}\] States members of the specialized agencies and representatives of United Nations programmes and specialized agencies were also invited to make statements before the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. \[^{133}\]

16. With regard to the participation of non-governmental organizations, and in accordance with General Assembly decision 51/467 of 18 April 1997, the Assembly extended invitations to representatives of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21 and represented by non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and on the roster, to participate in the debate in plenary meetings. \[^{134}\] This decision was taken “without setting a precedent for other special sessions of the Assembly”. \[^{135}\] These groups, also by a decision of the General Assembly, were allowed to address the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. \[^{136}\]

17. The main parts of the above-mentioned decision 51/467 of 18 April 1997 of the General Assembly read as follows:

The General Assembly,

recalling its resolution 51/181 of 16 December 1996, in which it recognized, inter alia, the important contributions made by major groups, including non-governmental organizations, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

... 

and recalling also that in the same resolution it invited the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with Member States, to propose to Member States appropriate modalities for the effective involvement of major groups in the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly,

(a) Decided that major groups, as identified in Agenda 21 and represented by non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and on the Roster, would be invited to participate in the plenary meeting of the nineteenth special session of General Assembly in the debate on an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21;

(b) Decided also that representatives of such major groups who could not be accommodated in the debate on an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 in the plenary meeting of the nineteenth special session may be invited to address the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the special session;

... 

(d) Decided that arrangements concerning the participation of representatives of such major groups in the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly would in no way create a precedent for other special sessions of the Assembly. \[^{137}\]

18. The General Assembly also decided to allow the Inter-Parliamentary Union to participate in the plenary debate, but “without setting a precedent” for other special sessions. \[^{138}\]

19. For the nineteenth special session, the General Assembly decided to limit the duration of speeches to seven minutes. \[^{139}\]

20. The twentieth special session, for the purpose of considering “the fight against ... narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities and to propose new strategies, methods, practical activities and specific measures to strengthen international cooperation in addressing the problem of illicit drugs”, was convened by the General Assembly in accordance with its resolution 51/64 of 12 December 1996, at United Nations Headquarters. \[^{140}\] By General Assembly decision, the title of the session was later amended to

\[^{131}\] Ibid.  
\[^{132}\] Ibid.  
\[^{133}\] Ibid.  
\[^{134}\] Ibid., pp. 7-8.  
\[^{135}\] Ibid., p. 7.  
\[^{136}\] Ibid., p. 8.  
\[^{137}\] GA decision 51/467; see also A/51/49 (vol. III), p. 128.  
\[^{138}\] See A/S-19/PV.1, p. 8.  
\[^{139}\] Ibid.  
\[^{140}\] GA resolution 51/64, sect. IV, para. 2.
“Twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the world drug problem together”.

21. The General Assembly, in order to facilitate its work, decided that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs should act as the preparatory body for the special session of the General Assembly, and invited the Commission to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress in the preparations for the special session.

22. With regard to attendance at the preparatory body, the General Assembly allowed “the full participation of all States Members of the United Nations and members of specialized agencies and observers, in accordance with established practice”.

23. Concerning participation in the plenary debates, the General Assembly allowed States members of the specialized agencies of the United Nations that were not members of the United Nations — namely, the Cook Islands, the Holy See, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Switzerland, Tonga and Tuvalu — to participate in the work of the twentieth special session in the capacity of observers in the general debate of the plenary meetings.

24. With regard to the participation of non-State actors, the General Assembly decided the following: Representatives of United Nations programmes and other entities of the United Nations system may make statements in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. Representatives of non-governmental organizations were also allowed to address the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole.

25. For the twentieth special session, the General Assembly decided to limit the duration of speeches to seven minutes.

26. The twenty-first special session, to “review and appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development”, was convened by the General Assembly in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/188 of 18 December 1997, at United Nations Headquarters.

27. In order to facilitate its work, the General Assembly decided that the Commission on Population and Development should serve as the preparatory body for the final preparations for the twenty-first special session. The Commission should report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

28. With regard to participation in the plenary discussions, the General Assembly allowed States members of the specialized agencies that are not members of the United Nations to participate in the work of the special session in the capacity of observers. With regard to the participation of speakers other than Member States of the United Nations, the General Assembly decided upon the following procedure:

8. Observers may make statements in the debate in plenary;

9. Given availability of time, and bearing in mind General Assembly decision 51/467 of 18 April 1997, a limited number of non-governmental organizations may also make statements in plenary, subject to the approval of the Assembly;

10. Representatives of the United Nations system may make statements in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole;

11. Representatives of non-governmental organizations may make statements in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole.

29. Also in the context of participation in the plenary discussions, the General Assembly allowed associate members of the regional commissions to participate in the same capacity of observer that held for their
participation in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. 156

30. Concerning the attendance of Palestine, the President of the General Assembly, during the first meeting of the twenty-first special session, recalled the participation rights of Palestine, which were modified by the General Assembly in resolution 52/250 as follows:

The additional rights and privileges of participation of Palestine shall be effected through the following modalities, without prejudice to the existing rights and privileges:

1. The right to participate in the general debate of the General Assembly ...

3. The right of reply.

4. The right to raise points of order related to the proceedings on Palestinian and Middle East issues, provided that the right to raise such a point of order shall not include the right to challenge the decision of the presiding officer.

5. The right to co-sponsor draft resolutions and decisions on Palestinian and Middle East issues. Such draft resolutions and decisions shall be put to a vote only upon request from a Member State.

...

8. Palestine shall not have the right to vote or to put forward candidates. 157

31. Referring to the above-mentioned modified participation rights of Palestine, the President of the General Assembly stated that those rights were also applicable to the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly. 158

32. The length of statements in the debate in the plenary was limited to seven minutes. 159

33. The twenty-second special session, for the purpose of undertaking "a full and comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States", 160 was convened by the General Assembly in accordance with its resolutions S-19/2 of 28 June 1997, 52/202 of 18 December 1997, 53/189 A of 15 December 1998 and 53/189 B of 7 April 1999, at United Nations Headquarters.

34. In order to facilitate its work, the General Assembly decided that the Commission on Sustainable Development should serve as the preparatory body for the twenty-second special session. 161

35. With regard to participation in the plenary meetings, the General Assembly allowed States members of the specialized agencies that were not members of the United Nations 162 to participate in the work of the special session in the capacity of observers. 163 With regard to the participation of speakers other than Member States of the United Nations, the General Assembly made the following decisions: 164

8. Observers may make statements in the debate in plenary;

9. States members of the specialized agencies that are not members of the United Nations may participate in the special session in the capacity of observers;

10. Associate members 165 of the regional commissions may participate in the special session in the same capacity of observer that held for their participation in the 1994 Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;

11. Wallis and Futuna and Tokelau may participate in the special session in the capacity of observers;

12. The President may invite a limited number of intergovernmental organizations not covered under paragraph 8 above to make statements in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole;

13. Given availability of time, a limited number of non-governmental organizations may make

156 Ibid.
157 GA resolution 52/250, annex.
158 A/S-21/PV.1, p. 9.
159 Decision S-21/21, sect. G.
160 GA resolution 53/189 B, operative paragraph.
161 Ibid., para. 9.
162 See A/S-22/PV.1, p. 6.
163 Ibid.
164 Decision S-22/21, sect. H.
165 See footnote 129.
statements in plenary, subject to the approval of the President of the General Assembly;

14. Representatives of non-governmental organizations that cannot be accommodated in plenary and representatives of non-governmental organizations designated by their constituencies may make statements in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole;

15. Representatives of United Nations programmes and others in the United Nations may make statements in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole.166

36. Concerning the attendance of Palestine, the General Assembly applied the same procedure as it did during its twenty-first special session,167 as described in paragraphs 29 and 30 of this study.

37. With regard to the length of statements in the debate in the plenary, the General Assembly decided that statements in the plenary debate should not exceed five minutes.168

** (b) At the request of the Security Council

** (c) At the request of Members

** 2. Date of the meeting169

** 3. Closing date of session170

C. Emergency special sessions

38. One emergency special session was held during the period under review, namely the tenth emergency special session, at which the General Assembly considered the item entitled “Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, at United Nations Headquarters.171

166 To read the whole decision, see A/S-22/11, pp. 19-20.
167 A/S-22/PV.1, p. 7.
168 Decision S-22/21, sect. G.
169 See the table at paragraph 6 of the present study.
170 Ibid.
171 A/ES-10/1, para. 1.

1. Procedure for summoning

39. A detailed analysis of the procedure for summoning an emergency special session appears in Supplement No. 2.172

**(a) By the General Assembly

**(b) At the request of the Security Council

(c) At the request of Members

40. The tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly was requested by the Permanent Representative of Qatar on behalf of the League of Arab States, in a letter dated 31 March 1997.173 The main parts of the letter read as follows:

The Arab States have considered the failure of the Security Council to exercise its role in maintaining international peace and security owing to the use of the veto by a permanent member of the Council on two successive occasions in less than two weeks.

Given their belief that the illegal Israeli measures in question represent a threat to international peace and security as undermining the Middle East peace process and are in violation of international law and the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, and in the light of Israel’s persistence in these measures and of the failure of the Security Council to exercise its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, the States members of the League of Arab States have decided that it is necessary to convene an emergency special session of the General Assembly, pursuant to its resolution 377 A (V) of 3 November 1950, entitled “Uniting for peace”, to consider “Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory”.

Accordingly, and in my capacity as Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations, I request that an emergency special session of the General Assembly be convened pursuant to resolution 377 A (V), entitled

173 A/ES-10/1, annex.
“Uniting for peace”, in order to consider this important matter.\(^{174}\)

41. Upon receipt of the aforementioned letter, in a note dated 1 April 1997, the Secretary-General transmitted the text to Member States requesting them, bearing in mind his responsibilities under rule 9 (b) of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to inform him whether they concurred in the request for the convening of an emergency special session.\(^{175}\)

42. In a note dated 22 April 1997, the Secretary-General informed Member States that the majority of Members had concurred in Qatar’s request and that, accordingly, the tenth emergency special session would be convened on Thursday, 24 April 1997.\(^{176}\)

43. In the preamble of the first resolutions adopted during the tenth emergency special session, the General Assembly noted the reasons for the convening of the emergency special session.\(^{177}\) In particular, the General Assembly noted that it was:

Aware of the commencement, after the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/223 of 13 March 1997, of construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a new settlement in Jebel Abu Ghneim to the south of East Jerusalem on 18 March 1997, and of other illegal Israeli actions in Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

Noting with regret that the Security Council, at its 3747th meeting, on 7 March 1997, and at its 3756th meeting, on 21 March 1997, twice failed to adopt a resolution on the actions referred to above, as a result of the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council;

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is solved in all its aspects;

... Also convinced, in this context, that the repeated violation by Israel, the occupying Power, of international law and its failure to comply with relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the agreements reached between the parties undermine the Middle East peace process and constitute a threat to international peace and security;

... Aware that, in the circumstances, it should consider the situation with a view to making appropriate recommendations to the States Members of the United Nations, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 377 A (V) of 3 November 1950.\(^{178}\)

44. In the same resolution, the General Assembly decided:

\[\text{In case of continuous lack of compliance by Israel, the occupying Power, with the provisions of resolutions ES-10/2 and ES-10/3, it shall reconsider the situation with a view to making further appropriate recommendations to the States Members of the United Nations in accordance with its resolution 377 A (V) of 3 November 1950.}\] \(^{179}\)

\[(d) \text{Question of the legality of convening the tenth emergency special session}\]

45. The question of the legality of convening the tenth emergency special session was a subject of discussion at the beginning of the session and also in the course of its resumed sessions.

46. Various delegations, particularly the Arab States, welcomed the convocation of the emergency special session.\(^{180}\) The arguments that these delegations put forward in favour of the legality of the convening of the session could be summarized as follows:

(a) There was a formal request for the convening of the emergency special session according to General Assembly resolution 377 (V) of 3 November 1950, which was supported by the required majority of Member States;\(^{181}\)

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\(^{174}\) Ibid.

\(^{175}\) A/ES-10/1, para. 2.

\(^{176}\) Ibid. The provisional agenda of the session was issued as document A/ES-10/2.

\(^{177}\) GA resolution ES-10/2.

\(^{178}\) Ibid.

\(^{179}\) GA resolutions ES-10/4, para. 8, and ES-10/5, para. 7.

\(^{180}\) In the plenary debate, many States expressed their conviction that the convening of the tenth emergency special session was legal. See A/ES-10/PV.1, A/ES-10/PV.2, and A/ES-10/PV.3.

\(^{181}\) Ibid.
(b) The “illegal Israeli measures in question represent a threat to international peace and security”.

(c) The Security Council twice found it impossible to reach a decision and thus had been unable to shoulder its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, which entrusted it with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security.

(d) The Government of Israel failed to comply with relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, especially with General Assembly resolution 51/223.

47. Israel took the opposite view on this matter and observed that the convening of the tenth emergency special session had been illegal. These are the major grounds that Israel put forward in support of its position:

(a) The dispute between Israel and the Palestinians over the building of a new neighbourhood in Jerusalem, and any other dispute that may arise between the two sides, cannot be considered by any stretch of the imagination as a threat to international peace and security;

(b) Furthermore, no determination has been made, during two meetings of the Security Council, that this dispute constitutes a threat to international peace and security, nor has the Security Council called for the convening of an emergency special session of the General Assembly;

(c) The procedure of the emergency special session has not been activated for the last 15 years. It is a relic of the cold war era, and is particularly unsuited and discordant in the context of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

2. Closing date of session

48. The tenth emergency special session did not close at the end of the period under review, nor was a date fixed for its closure.

3. Adjournment and resumption of session

49. During the period under review, the General Assembly five times decided “to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the most recent General Assembly to resume its meeting upon request from Member States”.

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182 See A/ES-10/1, annex, para. 3.
183 A/ES-10/PV.1, p. 10.
184 Ibid., p. 12.
185 Ibid., p. 11.
186 Ibid., p. 7.
187 Ibid.
188 Ibid.
189 See the table at paragraph 7 of the study on Article 20 above.
190 GA resolutions ES-10/2, para. 13; ES-10/3, para. 13; ES-10/4, para. 9; ES-10/5, para. 8; and ES-10/6, para. 10.