



**CHAIR OF
THE COORDINATING BUREAU
OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT**



**STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE
BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA, ON BEHALF OF THE NON-
ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM), QUARTERLY OPEN DEBATE OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL ON “THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST,
INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION”**

New York, 22 January 2019

Mr. President,

1. It is an honor for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to take the floor on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at this quarterly open debate on a matter to which we have historically attached special importance, namely, the Situation in the Middle East, including the Question of Palestine.
2. Since this is the first time we take the floor in this Chamber this month, allow us to transmit our best wishes to the Delegation of the Dominican Republic, a fellow non-aligned country, in the conduction of the works of this important body throughout January 2019. Similarly, we also convey our heartfelt congratulations to all new members of the Security Council as they undertake their important duties, in particular Indonesia and South Africa who, together with the Dominican Republic, join the NAM Caucus in this body.

Mr. President,

3. Yet another year has passed, and the Question of Palestine remains unresolved. Let us briefly review some important figures from what 2018 left us: 295 Palestinians killed and more than 29,000 injured by Israeli occupying forces – this is the highest casualty toll since Israel’s war on the Gaza Strip in 2014; at least 5,618 new settlement units were constructed; and 636 structures were either demolished or seized in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, forcibly displacing hundreds of Palestinian civilians, among them at least 216 children and 127 women. Not to mention the fact that there are over 13,000 pending demolition orders by the occupying Power against Palestinian homes and other properties, including against 40 schools, or that, up to date, nearly 6,000 Palestinians remain held captive by this brutal occupation and are enduring the most inhumane treatment.
4. Reflecting on this dismal reality, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) seizes this opportunity from the outset to reaffirm once again its abiding solidarity with the



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Palestinian people and its unwavering support for their inalienable rights and just cause, particularly in the current juncture, when the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is beyond critical and clearly unsustainable.

5. In this regard, the Member States of the Movement further reaffirm, once again, that the ongoing Israeli occupation and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a whole continue to pose a serious threat to international peace and security, which requires urgent attention and remedy, in accordance with international law, the relevant UN resolutions and, of course, the UN Charter itself and the tools provided by multilateral diplomacy. We are firm believers in multilateralism and, as noted in General Assembly Resolution 73/127, which was promoted by our Movement, we remain committed to the settlement of disputes through peaceful means, including through the approach provided by diplomacy.

Mr. President,

6. The Security Council has a clear responsibility. It must uphold its Charter duties and it must act to implement its own resolutions, which not only comprise the foundation for a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the conflict, but are on top of that legally binding to all UN Member States. We are deeply concerned that this body has been for too long unable to fulfill its mandate on this important question due to the use of veto by one permanent member as well as the failure to hold accountable Israel, the occupying Power, for its violations and lack of respect for the Council's authority.
7. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) still believes that Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) provides the most viable path to peace, setting forth the essential requirements and parameters for the achievement of a just solution on the basis of the two-State solution on the pre-1967 lines, in respect of the longstanding terms of reference of peace endorsed by the international community, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Roadmap, and ensure the fulfillment by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and independence in their State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Hence, we call for its full and effective implementation. This important body, entrusted with ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security, must insist on respect for this resolution, particularly by the occupying Power.
8. Similarly, the Member States of the Movement continue to call for the full respect and implementation of all other relevant resolutions, including in regards to the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities and in regards to the status of Occupied East Jerusalem, for it is this that would create the necessary conditions to bring an end the



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occupation, justly resolve the conflict in all its aspects, and make Palestinian-Israeli peace and security a reality, for the benefit of both peoples, for the region and for the international community as a whole. It is imperative that action be taken immediately, in line with international law and UN resolutions, to redress the situation on the ground, de-escalate tensions, and foster an appropriate environment for the pursuit of peace, including by averting unilateral, provocative or arbitrary measures that only serve to embolden Israel to further pursue its illegal policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Mr. President,

9. In relation to the Gaza Strip, the situation remains of great concern to the Movement, particularly the grave humanitarian situation, which regrettably continues to deteriorate day by day. In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) reiterates its call for the complete lifting of the Israeli blockade, which continues to impose untold humanitarian, social and economic suffering on the more than 2 million Palestinian children, women and men in Gaza. It must be stressed once again that this crisis must be comprehensively addressed, in accordance with international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and the relevant UN resolutions, in the context of the overall situation of the continuation of the illegitimate, belligerent, Israeli foreign occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 1967, and of the unequivocal calls for an end to this over half-century occupation.
10. Moreover, as Israel has clearly abdicated its obligations as the occupying Power to protect the civilian Palestinian population, in respect of the IV Geneva Convention, the Member States of the Movement reiterate the call for the international community to ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and across the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in order to alleviate the dire state of insecurity of the occupied population and prevent the loss of more innocent human life. Failure to do so can only lead to further and repeated escalations and the tragic loss of more civilian lives.
11. In this connection, the Movement reiterates its grave concern about the lack of accountability for all the violations committed by Israel, many of which may amount to crimes of war. The absence of justice only fosters greater impunity and destabilizes the situation on the ground, further diminishing the prospects for peace. Hence, we continue to call for international action, particularly by this Security Council, to ensure a cessation of, and accountability for, the violations that are being systematically committed by the occupying Power against the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation. Israel must comply with its duties and responsibilities under international law.



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Mr. President,

12. With regard to the situation in the Occupied Syrian Golan, we reaffirm that all measures and actions taken, or to be taken by Israel, the occupying Power, such as its illegal decision of 14 December 1981 that purports to alter its legal, physical and demographic status and its institutional structure, as well as the Israeli measures to apply its jurisdiction and administration there, including its most recent attempt to exercise sovereignty therein through the convening of local elections in four Syrian villages, are null and void and have no legal effect. In this regard, and in line with our principled position, we demand once again that Israel abides by Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and withdraw fully from the Occupied Syrian Golan to the lines of 4 June 1967, in implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).
13. In sum, at the start of this new year, the Member States of the Movement seize this opportunity to reiterate the call for the international community to act collectively, with responsibility, to uphold international law and to exert and intensify all necessary efforts in support of the Palestinian cause, the ultimate goal of which is to bring an end to this injustice; to more than 51 years of the Israeli foreign occupation of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and over 70 years of the catastrophe and tragedy that befell the Palestinian people in 1948, by which they lost their homeland and by which the majority of Palestinians were forcibly uprooted from their homes and displaced, becoming refugees, whose plight continues until this day.
14. To conclude, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) reaffirm its abiding solidarity with the Palestinian people, as well as its unwavering support for their just cause, while renewing its commitment to further strengthening and coordinating the international efforts to promote a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the Question of Palestine in all its aspects, including for the plight of the Palestine refugees based on resolution 194 (III). We express our deepest hopes that this year will witness tangible progress in the heroic quest of the Palestinian people to achieve justice and fulfill their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations, including their right to self-determination, freedom and independence in their sovereign and independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

I thank you, Mr. President.