



**DIVISION FOR  
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS**

**UNEDITED TEXT**

**INTERNATIONAL MEETING  
ON THE QUESTION OF JERUSALEM**

*Strengthening international support for a just and lasting solution  
of the question of Jerusalem*

**Ankara, 12 and 13 May 2014**

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### **Executive summary**

The International Meeting on the Question of Jerusalem was jointly organized by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC). It aimed at raising awareness of the question of Jerusalem and at discussing strengthened international support for a just and lasting solution. During the deliberations and plenary interventions, the participants expressed great concern about Israel's attempts to "judaize" Jerusalem, underscored the on-going deterioration of the socio-economic situation and also called for a greater involvement of the International Community to hold Israel accountable and prevent Jerusalem's separation from the peace process.

While affirming Jerusalem's unique character and sacred role for the three monotheistic religions, the Meeting experts focused on specific Israeli practices that could be considered "ethnic cleansing". They also pointed to recent attempts to disrespect Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as other religious sites, which became an object of military activities and recurrent provocations. Besides, they flagged Israel's development of false narratives and usurpation of identity to justify land appropriation.

Experts stated that Jerusalem was a badly damaged city (seventy-seven per cent of non-Jewish households were poor) with clear intentions from various Israeli authorities to restrict Palestinian growth and development through the continued building of settlements, the construction of the Separation Wall and the expansion of a very complex and harsh system of

closures. Other tools of the Israeli settlement policy (national parks, archaeology, etc.) contributed to the economic asphyxiation of Jerusalem.

Disastrous health and education sectors contributed to an obliteration of the Palestinian identity, compounded by an Israeli strategy of “de-Palestinization” including separating Jerusalem from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, freezing land registration, revoking residency status, constructing settlements and building roads to serve exclusively Israeli settlers.

Several experts highlighted that Jerusalem’s exclusive character could catalyse the promotion of peace in the Middle East but noted that Israel’s intransigence and impunity were preventing it. They urged the International Community to undertake increased efforts in multi-track diplomacy, including civil society actors, and to strengthen its presence in Jerusalem in order to break the *status quo* and establish accountability for Israel.

All experts agreed that Jerusalem was an integral part of the peace negotiations and that the ultimate goal was a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. Donors and international agencies were called upon to plan for East Jerusalem as such and to urgently find ways to support Palestinian entrepreneurship in the city. Finally, it was noted that if the occupation was made costly for Israel (including divestment from projects benefitting the occupation), its leaders may return in good faith to future negotiations, whose format should be reviewed and re-structured to ensure balanced positions.

## I. Introduction

1. The International Meeting on the Question of Jerusalem was held in Ankara on 12 and 13 May 2014, under the joint auspices of the Turkish Government, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (the Committee) and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 68/12 and 68/13. The theme was “Strengthening international support for a just and lasting solution of the question of Jerusalem”.
  
2. The Government of Turkey was represented at the Meeting by its Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and other Government officials. The OIC delegation was led by its Secretary-General Iyad bin Amin Madani. The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal), Chair of the Committee; Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan), Vice-Chair; Desra Percaya (Indonesia), Vice-Chair; Wilfried Emvula (Namibia), Vice-Chair; Christopher Grima (Malta), Rapporteur; and Riyad Mansour (State of Palestine).
  
3. The Meeting consisted of an opening session, three plenary sessions and a closing session. The themes of the plenary sessions were: “The status of Jerusalem in international law”; “The current situation in Jerusalem”; and “The role of the International Community in promoting a just solution”.

4. Presentations were made by 13 experts. The Meeting was attended by 70 Member States, the State of Palestine, the Holy See, four international governmental organizations, 23 local and international civil society organizations, and three United Nations entities.

5. The summary of the Chair on the outcomes of the Meeting (see annex I) was published soon after its conclusion and is available from the website of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, as are the full papers of the experts who provided a copy for distribution.<sup>1</sup>

## II. Opening session

6. **Ahmet Davutoğlu**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, delivered a statement. He said that Jerusalem was a great city where history coincided with metaphysics and that those who did not understand Jerusalem would make it a place of destruction. Jerusalem was a symbol of humanity and a token of various prophets and sultans. All had united in Jerusalem as great leaders of humanity. Although seen as prophets of different religions, they were also seen as shared tradition.

7. The Minister added that Jerusalem was not just a political issue and that its protection and safeguard was something owed to the human conscience. Getting rid of such inheritance would not just be acting against the people of Palestine, but against the history of humanity. Also, Jerusalem should not be seen as an area of conflict, but rather as an area of peace, representing

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<sup>1</sup> See

<http://unispal.un.org/databases/dprtest/ngoweb.nsf/f12fded4d0597000852573fc005b9471/8cda78ab0a8f099e85257cc100712a11?OpenDocument>.

the humanitarian conscience as a whole. There was a responsibility to protect that conscience and to convey that message to future generations.

8. Referring to the construction of the Separation Wall the Minister added that no issue could be an excuse or apology to make Jerusalem a separate place from humanitarian conscience. He went on to say that there was no need to become politicians, diplomats or experts on the issue, but just to be human. It was important to fulfil an ethical responsibility and to act against restrictions on worshippers' access to Al-Aqsa Mosque.

9. The Minister described Jerusalem as an important cultural inheritance, emphasizing that it could not be reduced to a single religion or ethnicity. Jerusalem under the dominance of Muslims had been open to all faiths and religions. In this regard, unilateral decisions would be "dynamite" in the Middle East peace process, hence unilateral actions with regard to Jerusalem had to be rejected.

10. According to international law, Jerusalem was a territory under occupation, and those living within the city had been suffering since 1948. There was now a need to show solidarity with the Palestinians, protecting justice and law. The Minister said that the United Nations should play a more active role, reminding participants of the establishment in 1948 of a United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, which had three members: France, Turkey and the United States. It would be important to reinvigorate this Commission, and to have other fora take up the issue of Jerusalem, as the current situation represented a serious threat to

international peace and security. He called for an annual meeting on Jerusalem and said that Turkey would always be supportive of OIC and United Nations initiatives on Palestine.

11. The Secretary-General of the OIC, **Iyad bin Amin Madani**, reiterated the OIC's firm position that Jerusalem formed an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 by Israel. He similarly renewed the OIC's commitment to the defence of the Palestinian people along with its support for international efforts to end the Israeli occupation and ensure the city's return to Palestinian sovereignty, as the capital of the Palestinian State. The Secretary-General put a particular emphasis on the United Nations' responsibility for the Palestinian cause.

12. The OIC had been following with deep concern Israeli policies and their various undertakings designed to alter the city's geographic and demographic character, obliterating its Arab identity, religious and historical status. The continued construction and expansion of Israeli settlements, both within and around Jerusalem; the recurrent aggressions on the city's Islamic and Christian sanctuaries; the confiscation and demolition of properties, including people's forced eviction; the attempts to impose Israeli sovereignty on the Al-Aqsa Mosque through unjust and illegitimate laws; all were said to pose a threat to security and stability in the whole region.

13. It was a duty to face up to Israel's "apartheid" policies, expressing loud and clear views that in this world today, there was no more room or tolerance for "apartheid" States. It was now a critical political juncture, concretized by the impasse reached in the peace negotiations with the

end of the nine-month period after Israel, the occupying Power, shut down all the doors to any possible progress towards a just and comprehensive political settlement.

14. The immensity of Israeli violations of international law commanded a different brand of international intervention. It was not acceptable that Israel continued to conduct itself as if it were a State above the law. It was therefore an international responsibility for all States and institutions to deal with these violations on the basis that they formed a threat to international peace and security.

15. Palestine's access to the United Nations as a non-Member Observer State should form an appropriate foundation on which to build in favour of moving towards the achievement of a two-State solution, and in support of the continued international efforts to invigorate the peace process. However, Palestinians needed the efforts of the international community to accompany them with the peace process and permanently end the political division. In conclusion, Secretary-General Madani called for an annual meeting on the question of Jerusalem, and agreed to co-sponsor and co-host any future meetings given the importance of the issue.

16. A message was delivered on behalf of the **Secretary-General of the United Nations** by his representative at the Meeting, **Robert Serry**, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. In his message, the Secretary-General noted that the Meeting was taking place two weeks after the deadline for United States-brokered talks between Israel and Palestine to reach a comprehensive agreement.

17. The current political stalemate posed great risks to the prospects of a two-State solution and continued inaction could result in further instability. The Secretary-General warned that the parties should realize that not making a choice in favour of peace and co-existence within the two-State framework was the most detrimental choice of all. He called upon them to refrain from unilateral steps that aggravated the situation and diminished the prospects for a resumption of the talks.

18. The Secretary-General said that settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, were illegal under international law and constituted a significant obstacle to achieving peace. He also pointed out that demolishing Palestinian households and other property was a contradiction of Israel's obligation to protect civilians living under its occupation. At the same time, continuing violence and attacks against civilians, including rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israel, were deemed unacceptable. He noted with grave concern the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and while acknowledging the generous pledge of the Government of Turkey for US\$ 1.5 million to address shortages of key medicines, urged the complete opening of all crossings into the Strip.

19. The question of Jerusalem was perhaps the most divisive of the core issues, and the Secretary-General was particularly troubled by mounting tensions around the city and access to its holy sites. He stated that Jerusalem inspired faith and longing for Muslims, Jews and Christians and must be open and accessible to all. Only through a negotiated solution can Jerusalem emerge as a capital of two States, with arrangement for the holy sites acceptable to all.

20. Meanwhile, all parties should refrain from attempts to establish facts on the ground that altered the character of the Old City, or to allow provocations. The time was now opportune for the parties, with the support of the International Community and the United Nations, to take action to realize their commitment to a two-State solution, to end the occupation and conflict, in pursuit of lasting peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

21. The Chair of the Committee, **Abdou Salam Diallo**, conveyed sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Government of Turkey and the OIC, for their support and for co-organizing the Meeting with the Committee.

22. The Chair noted that 2014 was the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, aimed at raising awareness of the main issues and obstacles to a meaningful continuation of the peace process. He strongly reaffirmed that the Committee was firmly wedded to a two-State solution and was very grateful for the prodigious diplomatic engagement by United States Secretary of State John Kerry.

23. All parties to the conflict had been called upon to act responsibly and create an appropriate climate for negotiations, to resolve all final status issues and bring an end to the Israeli occupation comprising of a total Israeli withdrawal from the territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.

24. Despite the International Community's calls on Israel to stop settlement activity, their expansion continued at an alarming rate in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem,

accompanied by the demolition of Palestinian homes and the expropriation of Palestinian land, in violation of Articles 49 and 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Any measure designed to expand or consolidate settlements was illegal. In conclusion, the Chair of the Committee stated that as Member States of the United Nations, it was important to remember the collective responsibility over Jerusalem, given the successive General Assembly and Security Council resolutions dealing with this issue.

25. The Minister for Waqf and Religious Affairs representing the State of Palestine, **Mahmoud Al-Habbash**, expressed deep gratitude to the Government of Turkey, as well as the United Nations and OIC, for organizing the Meeting at a time when the Palestinian people everywhere were remembering the pain felt since the “Nakba” in 1948.

26. The Minister, looking back at history, said that Jerusalem was established by the Palestinians some 5,000 years ago, as the “City of Peace”. Since that time to date, many peoples and States had passed through Jerusalem, which had been occupied by many armies. However, what remained unchanged, was the presence of the Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian.

27. Without Jerusalem, Palestinians would lose their history and the reason for their existence. Jerusalem was an integral part of the religious heritage of Palestinians, whatever their religious conviction. The city represented the spirit of all Palestinians, a soul that gave them life and energy to go on living. Without it, the Minister said Palestinians would be dead, stating that a Palestinian State without Jerusalem would be a dead country.

28. Recalling the fall of Jerusalem to Israel in 1967, the Minister said the city had lived in sadness and suffering ever since. Palestinians in Jerusalem and surrounding areas suffered daily repression and aggression; however that would not lead them to abandon the city or stop them from staying. According to international law, Jerusalem was occupied territory until it became free again and was restored to the Palestinian people, the only ones that had held sovereignty over the city under the United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012.

29. Peace would not happen without Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. Many painful concessions had been made for the sake of peace, but in exchange, Israel persisted in denying the existence of the Palestinian people. The world must realize that in order to protect peace, war must be prevented, and the reasons for war must be eliminated. The world must urgently compensate the Palestinian people for all the pain they underwent.

30. The United Nations and the International Community must now provide practical support to the Arab Peace Initiative, based on a two-State solution which may become unmanageable or impractical in the future. The Minister added that Palestinians were not fighting Judaism, emphasizing that the real problem was not one of religion, but one of occupation. Jerusalem was a city of peace for the whole of mankind and must not remain under occupation, he concluded.

31. The Minister for Jerusalem Affairs of the State of Palestine, **Adnan Al-Husseini**, delivered a keynote address. He said Jerusalem had a special character, and was referred to with love and passion, two characteristics lacking today in this “modern hostage city”. In 1967, the

Israeli army raised the Israeli flag on the top of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, sending the message that it “belonged” to them. Fortunately, the message was not received, and the Arab World strongly insisted that the flag be removed despite Israel’s victory on that day.

32. According to the Minister, since 1993, negotiations had been a waste of time and served Israel’s expansion policy. It was a territorial war. Palestinians far from Jerusalem had been deprived of the right to enter the city, and there had been collective and individual expulsion of Palestinians, up to 600,000 families since 1967, in contravention of international law.

33. Colonization was happening, and Israeli settlers had come out, threatened and expelled Palestinians, Muslims and Christians. They were also threatening the demographic nature of Jerusalem in order to create their own space in the holy city. Some 50,000 Palestinian homes were under threat of destruction under the pretext that they “did not comply with the law”. The International Community, particularly the United Nations under Chapter VII, must act to stop that destructive process and find a binding solution. The Minister called for international intervention, with pressure placed on Israel, in accordance with international standards, emphasizing that there was a solution to the problem.

34. He went on to say that Palestinians living in Jerusalem had no civil rights. If they would leave for seven years to another country they would not have the right to come back, whereas Israelis could travel anywhere for as long as they wanted without any repercussions on their residency status. Such practice referred to as the “Absentee Property Law” threatened

Palestinian existence in Jerusalem. It was meant to appropriate the properties of people that are not *in situ*. Such laws should be revised.

35. The destruction of Jerusalem's component parts was continuing on a daily basis, changing the nature of the city, despite the fact that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) considered it a city of cultural heritage under threat. The Minister called on UNESCO to play its role, disregarding external factors, and stated that if Israel really wanted peace it would not be amputating the city of Jerusalem, it would not transform Palestine into an "archipelago". He concluded by thanking the European Union for its approach regarding products made in Israeli settlements and said that the city of Jerusalem would continue to fight until peace was achieved.

36. The Director of the Hashemite Fund for the Restoration of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, **Wasfi Kailani**, delivered a message on behalf of **Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan**, the King's Advisor for Religious and Cultural Affairs. The Prince said the inalienable rights of the Palestinians had been marginalized and violated by the Israeli occupation on a constant basis, as shown in numerous United Nations resolutions. It was important to realize that Israel's aggression vis-à-vis those rights were part of a greater move to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian State and keep the status quo. Israel's actions in Jerusalem were aimed at creating a Jewish reality, while eroding the Palestinian way of life.

37. Jordan, as the custodian of the Holy Places in Jerusalem, was playing an important role. True problems, including the "judaization" of Jerusalem's heritage, the destruction of homes, the violence of fanatical Israeli groups and the Separation Wall, must be properly pinpointed to

support Palestinian rights as expressed by King Abdullah II of Jordan at the United Nations General Assembly in 2012.

38. At a recent conference held in Amman, and entitled “The Road to Jerusalem”, participants invited the European Union and the United Nations to look carefully at the “judaization” aspects and avoid the development of erroneous versions of history. The Prince went on to say that the veto of the United States was one of the main obstacles to peace and encouraged Israel to flout United Nations resolutions. He finally expressed Jordan’s intention to appeal to the Security Council so that it could live up to its responsibilities.

### **III. Plenary sessions**

#### **A. Plenary session I**

##### **The status of Jerusalem in international law**

39. The speakers in Plenary Session I addressed the following sub-themes: (a) “International regime for Jerusalem and United Nations’ efforts to implement it”; (b) “The Holy Places”; and (c) “United Nations resolutions on Jerusalem”. The session was chaired by the Assistant Secretary-General for Al-Quds and Palestine of the OIC, **Samir Bakr**.

40. The Chairman of the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, **Mahdi F. Abdul Hadi**, expressed concern about the “tsunami colonization” and never ending “judaization” of Jerusalem. Looking at the bigger picture, there was a division, segmentation, annexation and “Israelization” of the West Bank which had been turned into an aggregate of

cantons, with only 17 per cent of the land devoted to Palestinians. What could be done to overcome these cantons and allow the functioning of life, breaking the Separation Wall and the isolation?

41. It was not enough to just say this was Israel's doing. The question was whether United Nations Security Council resolution 242 and General Assembly Resolution 181 would be implemented as till today neither of them was recognized by Israel. The United Nations should revisit its resolutions and its position on the question of Jerusalem, and not to just deal with *de facto* realities. The land and society were fragmented and there should be a way to stop Israel from dividing Jerusalem. Another serious issue was the myth of the "holy basin" allegedly located in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan, next to the Old City. Israel started to refer to it during the 2000 Camp David Summit, however there was no such thing; the notion was a simple creation of Israel.

42. Currently, there were four major components shaping the question of Jerusalem. The United Nations - with more than 25 organizations and agencies that were functioning under Israeli realpolitik instead of international law. This situation was weakening the United Nations' position and ability to act on the ground. Muslim and Arab organizations - they were very vocal on many fronts but lacked clear strategies and coordinated response towards the Palestinian people. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) - the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians since 1974 which since Oslo acted as a partner with no functions. Most major Palestinian institutions were absent from Jerusalem, it was time for the PLO to have a

continuous, visible and legitimate presence in the city with international community support. Palestinian civil society – which was crushed by the culture of fear and division of Israel.

43. Mr. Abdul Hadi concluded stating that political will was needed to change Israeli policies and practices aimed at fragmenting and dividing Palestinian society. Israel enjoyed control and power; it was time to make it apply binding United Nations resolutions. Lastly, he suggested that the international community should establish a Commissioner for Jerusalem and that the League of Arab States should do the same.

44. The former Apostolic Delegate for Jerusalem and Palestine, **Archbishop Antonio Franco**, said that the question of Jerusalem had always been at the centre of the Holy See's concerns and was one of its most important international priorities. The reason was obvious as Jerusalem was the holy city of the three monotheistic religions and so had a unique value not only for the region but also for the entire world, as it enshrined their most important holy sites.

45. Another basic reality was that two peoples claimed the city as their own and wanted it as their capital. That second aspect was of a more political nature, although it had many and delicate moral aspects. The Holy See, while asserting no competence in strictly political matters, like territorial disputes between nations, affirmed its right and duty to remind the parties of the obligation to resolve controversies peacefully, in accordance with the principle of justice and equity within the international legal framework.

46. With regard to the religious dimension of Jerusalem, the Holy See always had a specific direct interest. The Popes had always called for the protection of the identity of Jerusalem and consistently drawn attention to the need for international commitment to protect the city's unique and sacred character. The Holy See wished to preserve the uniqueness of Jerusalem's most sacred parts, the holy places, so that in the future, neither of the parties to the conflict could claim them exclusively for themselves because they were part of the world patrimony. For the Holy See, holy places were not museums or monuments for tourists, but places where believers lived with their culture and charitable institutions, among others, and had to be safeguarded in their sacredness in perpetuity.

47. To safeguard Jerusalem's religious and human dimensions from every political contingency, the Archbishop claimed that only a special statute, internationally guaranteed, could ensure the historical, material and religious character of the holy places, as well as free access to them for residents and pilgrims alike, whether local or from other parts of the world. The United Nations could be the international guarantor of such a special statute. The Archbishop pointed out that there would be no lasting peace in Jerusalem until all concerned parties learned to acknowledge and respect its unique identity and mission. He finally stated that during his forthcoming official trip to the region, Pope Francis would visit Jerusalem with a message of hope, and he would support and encourage current efforts to bring about peace and reconciliation.

48. The Qadi and Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, **Sheikh Muhammad Ahmad Hussein**, said that Jerusalem in particular and Palestine in general was an issue that concerned the Arab and Islamic

world as well as the whole world. Jerusalem was a special place, a holy city which hosted the third most important mosque in the world and represented an important pilgrimage location.

49. The city had been subjected to many Israeli attacks and attempts to “judaize” its character. Since the first days of the 1967 war and the occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, Israel had been demolishing and destroying many aspects of the city, particularly the Moroccan quarter in the Old City and all access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

50. Israelis were trying to marginalize Palestinians and stamp out their identity through a policy of *fait accompli* and a large apparatus of measures. For instance they surrounded the Al-Aqsa Mosque with settlements and attempted to get rid of the Palestinian population of the Old City. The Israeli authorities were also undertaking excavation work, digging tunnels under and around the Mosque. The Mufti talked about 60 excavations sites in the surroundings of the Haram Al-Sharif/Mosque esplanade.

51. The Mufti went on to say that Israeli incursions into the Haram Al-Sharif were frequent, 35 through the past month, and included attempts from Israeli politicians such as Knesset Member and Deputy Speaker Moshe Feiglin and Israeli Minister of Tourism Uzi Landau. Furthermore, Israeli settlers tried to annul the religious status of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which belonged to Jordan, the present Trustee for the Holy Places, and wished to replace it with an Israeli Trustee. They also recently attacked the guardian of the Al-Aqsa Mosque as well as worshipers who came to pray inside the Mosque.

52. The demolition of houses was described as another clear aspect of how Palestinians were being prevented from preserving their land and managing the buildings in these areas. Israelis were reducing Palestinian citizenship to a residency status in Jerusalem, effectively confiscating their identity. Lastly, Palestinians were not protected from Israeli attacks which even affected Muslim cemeteries. In conclusion, the Mufti called upon all Islamic and Arab countries, as well as all Member States of the United Nations, to protect Jerusalem and its heritage on a political, religious and historical level.

53. **Wasfi Kailani**, the Director of the Hashemite Fund for the restoration of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock talked about the legal situation and gave specific examples of Israeli violations aimed at changing the status quo in Jerusalem, Haram Al-Sharif and its surroundings.

54. He said that the legal situation of Jerusalem was that of an occupied city, with all resolutions and decisions well-known and well-documented. Concerning the situation of the holy sites and their surroundings, the city was suffering a “judaization” process, evacuation, expulsion, cantonization and division of specific neighbourhoods as well as an attempt to divide the Al-Aqsa Mosque itself. Speaking of house demolitions, during the first five months of 2014, about 234 houses had been demolished. A number that could be added to the 14,000 demolitions that took place since 1967. There were around 900,000 inhabitants in Jerusalem with about 300,000 Arab Jerusalemites. However, between 2008 and 2010 the building of the Separation Wall forced 100,000 people to exile and left another 100,000 people with the choice to stay inside or outside the city.

55. 50,000 settlement units had been built since the last round of negotiation which begun on 29 July 2013, including 119 around the Al-Aqsa Mosque, apart from the Jewish quarter of the Old City. On a regular basis, the Al-Aqsa Mosque was raided by Israeli soldiers, banning worshipers to access the Mosque, sometimes provoking clashes. The Al-Aqsa Mosque was the most targeted place in Jerusalem today.

56. The Mosque was crucial and so sensitive not only because it was one of the three holiest sites in Islam but also because all Waqf properties were connected to it: 101 mosques, 42 Waqf schools and about 100 churches. There were also 50 Waqf families, including 3,000 properties which nowadays were threatened and could be confiscated by the Israeli authorities. Looking at the Old City the Israeli municipality has developed a network of “public parks” in East Jerusalem to acquire more land. Sometimes they also referred to the Haram Al-Sharif as a public park, and not as a holy site.

57. The official definition of Haram Al-Sharif, as shared with the United Nations, was 144 dunums and 111 square meters above the ground and 60 dunums below the ground including 42 wells and cisterns. The Israeli definition merely included the two shrines, considering them as the only structures that were built by Muslims. The surrounding of the shrines was seen as remains of the Temple, indicating a risky and false Jewish narrative. Some other threats on the Al-Aqsa Mosque were the tunnels built around it over the past 60 years. It was pretty certain that some of them penetrated the walls of the Mosque. As of today nobody had surveillance or could know where these tunnels ended.

58. The Moroccan Quarter of the old city used to have about four schools and about three mosques, as well as prestigious families who lived there. It was completely destroyed during the 1967 war, however the demolition of what remained of its gateway began in 2004. Going back to pre-1967 days and the status of the Western Wall, it used to be three metres wide by 22 metres long. Yet it was now some 90 metres by 100 metres long, and had been expanded day after day. There had been a legal case from 1929 to 1933 by the British Commission, which had concluded that the Western Wall area was owned by and an unseparated part of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

59. On the threat of dividing the Al-Aqsa Mosque it was stated that Knesset Members and rabbis were frequently encouraging Israeli extremists to break into the Mosque and try to pray, altering the status of the holy sites. School campaigns were also developed and implemented to promote a Jewish only narrative on the Haram Al-Sharif and normalize that one day the Al-Aqsa Mosque would be demolished and the Temple re-built. On 1 January 2012 the Israeli Government allowed Israeli soldiers to tour the Mosque. Since that time 60 to 100 soldiers enter the compound on a regular basis with their weapons and in a very provocative manner. As well, Israeli soldiers were also now locking Muslim worshipers inside the Mosque while allowing Jewish extremists to visit the Haram Al-Sharif.

60. There was a clear Israeli fantasy to erase the Al-Aqsa Mosque and build the Temple and advance the “judaization” of the Old City through the conversion of mosques into synagogues, the removal of Ottoman ceramics as well as other Arabic symbols, the confiscation and conversion of Muslim graves into Jewish graves. Churches were also the target of regular

attacks. Mr. Kailani concluded by stating that those were just some of the realities, and that there was no example in different parts of the world of what Jerusalem was really suffering.

61. The Former and first Ambassador of Turkey to the State of Palestine, **Şakir Özkan Torunlar**, lived in Jerusalem for almost four years and witnessed almost all of the illegal aspects of the occupation. Despite tens of resolutions adopted by the international community, occupation still continued with all the dark stains on the daily life of Palestinians, Christians and Muslims, living in the city of Jerusalem.

62. Checkpoints, house demolitions, prevention of Palestinian politicians to exercise their duties, seizure of properties of Jerusalemites by court decisions based on fake documents, arrest and detention of representatives of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), “price tag” attacks on holy places, razing down cemeteries and defacing tombstones, limitation of the very human needs of Jerusalemites including the number of ambulances, not allowing new classrooms for Palestinian children and imposing Israeli curriculum in Palestinian schools; those were only few of the daily harassment displayed by Israeli authorities in the eyes of the international community and its diplomatic representatives who reported almost everything back to their capitals.

63. Mr. Torunlar pointed out the Separation Wall which was illegally erected and which divided Jerusalem, setting apart families. He also singled out the prevention of the activities of the Al Quds University, the continued closure of Orient House, the 24/7 CCTV surveillance of the Muslim and Christian quarters of the Old City, the harassment of Christian Jerusalemites

during the Easter processions, family deportations, etc. The renewal procedure for resident permits constituted another impediment for Jerusalemites. According to Article 9 of the 1994 Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty, the special role of Jordan was recognized, however there was no awareness as to what extent Israel allowed Jordan to display this special role. Almost on a daily basis, Israeli settlers, accompanied by the Israeli police, entered the Haram Al-Sharif to exercise rituals and sing. When Muslims praying inside the compound resisted the presence of settlers, they encountered disproportionate reactions including rubber bullets and tear gas in contravention of international law even if the occupying authority was claiming a right of self-defence.

64. The question was whether the occupier sincerely wanted a two-State solution or not. As long as the leading coalition partners in the Israeli Government individually denied the possibility of a two-State solution, the chance of the State of Palestine to exist was rather slim. Following the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006, the Quartet developed a set of principles including among others the recognition of Israel. Many diplomats privately stated that it was absurd from an international law perspective to require that a political party recognize a State. This should not be used as a pre-condition unless applied to all parties on both sides.

65. Turkey was a leading country in support of Palestinian rights in requesting the upgrade of Palestine's status at the United Nations in 2012. The reason was that all mediation efforts until then had failed while the occupation continued to increase its presence on the ground. The granting of the non-Member Observer State status to Palestine triggered a game change that could be noticed through the recent US-led efforts and the European Union Guidelines

preventing funding from Israeli institutions and companies operating in the settlements. In addition, Palestinian unity, complemented with democratic elections, would contribute to the freedom of the Palestinian people.

66. In the ensuing discussion, **Nour Olwan**, representing the Migratory Letters Campaign, said many speeches had been made about Israel's many activities in Jerusalem. Worse than a war was going on in Palestine; there were settlements, checkpoints, destruction and an inhuman life lived daily. Problems in Jerusalem were often highlighted, but there was a need for plans and solutions; stressing that mere support was not enough.

67. **Mr. Abdul Hadi** said there were many layers to the current crisis or situation or issues in Israel and Palestine, as well as many contradicting narratives on the table. The first layer was not to fall into the trap of the Jewish Zionist narrative shaking or distorting history and the facts and to clarify the Muslim/Christian Arab narrative. The second layer was to succeed in establishing public awareness of the facts, figures and accurate information about Jerusalem. This would maintain the question of Jerusalem on the world's conscience. He added that the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the OIC should be visible and present in the city and not abide to the *de facto* Israeli rules and control.

68. The representative of Namibia, **Wilfried Emvula** and Vice-Chair of the Committee, said there were those who only heard about the plight of Palestinians from meetings, through the reports of rapporteurs, United Nations special representatives and envoys. However, many of those people did not really understand what was happening in Palestine as they did not live it,

adding that there should be more meetings supported by a delegation of Palestinian supporters, illustrating the Palestinian cause and tragedy. Mr. Emvula also advised Palestinians to organize meetings and visits to capitals around the world, in order to appeal to people's humanity. He finally stated that more should be done, especially in this year of solidarity.

69. **Mr. Abdul Hadi** said it was time to expose Israeli violations of human rights and build consensus on boycott strategies towards its institutions, universities, goods and relationships and isolate Israel. It was also important that the 132 countries who voted in favour of the upgrade of Palestine's status at the United Nations translate such vote into a full recognition on the ground. **Fadi F. Hussein** from the State of Palestine Embassy in Ankara, said everybody was in agreement about the importance of Jerusalem and visiting the city and that such a meeting should be convened in the city next year.

70. **Mr. Kailani**, said the plenary focused on traumatic aspects of Jerusalem and a serious situation. All presentations were dramatic, yet that was the truth. However, that did not necessarily mean there were no good efforts being made on the ground by different parties. There was a need to find and suggest larger solutions that would aim at the end of the occupation. There was a need for pressure tools, mainly by the Security Council, and that was the responsibility of the Member States of the United Nations.

## **B. Plenary session II**

### **The current situation in Jerusalem**

71. The speakers in plenary session II addressed the following sub-themes: (a) “Measures taken by Israel”; (b) “Land expropriation and settlements”; and (c) “Social and economic issues”. The session was chaired by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations in New York and Vice-Chair of the Committee, **Zahir Tanin**.

72. The Director-General of the Applied Research Institute, **Jad Isaac**, said that Jerusalem was the epicentre of the Middle East conflict. Its unique position in Christianity, Islam and Judaism should have been a blessing that could catalyse the promotion of peace. However, it turned out to be a curse because of Israel’s zero sum game approach. As of 1967, 37 communities in West Jerusalem had been depopulated and forced to leave to East Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Ramallah. Israel adopted a strategy of “de-Palestinization”, separating Jerusalem from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, declaring it an annexed part of Israel, freezing land registration, constructing settlements, building roads to serve settlers, expropriating Palestinian land, obliterating Palestinian cultural and historical names, along with heavy taxes, poor education and constant land grab.

73. Israel started to obliterate the Jerusalem Governorate, which used to be the most important of the region, unilaterally declaring the borders of the city Jerusalem. The armistice line divided the city between east (3,825 dunums) and west (15,595 dunums) in 1949 and in 1967 Israel continued to increase West Jerusalem’s superficies, also taking land from Bethlehem to expand the municipal boundaries to 124,574 dunums.

74. Over the years, Israeli settlements expanded 367 times more than Palestinian communities. During the period 31 July 2013 – 31 March 2014, corresponding to the last round of negotiations, plans and tenders to build settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory corresponded to 17,388 units. Settlements construction was 6 times higher than what was needed for their natural growth. Through this approach Israel was building facts on the ground. Israel had also begun using the environment as a pretext to confiscate Palestinian lands, and suddenly most of the green areas appeared to be located around the “Holy Basin”. Those were biblical parks that had been created in Jerusalem to continue the “de-Palestinization” of the city. In addition Israel was linking settlements all together and building the Separation wall to segregate Jerusalem from Bethlehem and attempted to expand once more Jerusalem’s municipal boundaries through the inclusion of the “Gush Etzion”, “Ma’ale Adumim” and “Pizgat Ze’ev” settlements. More than 50,000 settlements units were already planned for construction by 2020.

75. Palestinian rural areas were becoming “human warehouses” and Palestinian Jerusalemites were forced to live outside the municipal boundaries. Ethnic displacement had been taking place with the development of the Separation Wall and the increased demolitions of Palestinian-owned houses. According to the 2008 Jerusalem Plan, the municipal authorities aimed at reducing by half the presence of Palestinians in Jerusalem, limiting the areas where they would be authorised to build. Israelis not only extended the “apartheid” system to housing, but also to health and education. Economically, the Jerusalem municipality spent only two per cent of its budget to support Palestinian infrastructure. Palestinians paid 27 per cent of municipal taxes, yet they only received 5 per cent of municipal services. Settlers moving to Jerusalem enjoyed a five-year “Arnona tax” (housing tax) exemption. Thereafter, they paid reduced rates, a privilege only

awarded to settlers and never to Palestinians. The poverty rate among Palestinian Jerusalemites was around 77 per cent.

76. The Palestinians, other Arabs, Muslims and Christians should never accept Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem. Israel's attempt to divide the Al-Aqsa Mosque may trigger a religious war with far-reaching consequences. The international community had a responsibility to prevent the continued "de-Palestinization" of Jerusalem and to protect the right of Palestinians in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was a global issue and should be under the United Nations' umbrella with full support and mandate from "super-Powers". It was important to also dispel the myths, which Israel adopted as narratives.

77. Knesset Member **Mohammad Barakeh** (Hadash/al-Jabha) said that 15 May 1948, Israel's Declaration of Independence, was felt as the date of the "Nakba". In commemoration, numerous demonstrations and political events were planned to stress the effects of the "Nakba" which practically transformed all Palestinian people into "a State of deported people". While Israel's Declaration of Independence claimed to be in accordance with United Nations resolutions, yet it stated that Jerusalem was the capital of Israel, in contravention of those resolutions, which provided for Jerusalem to be under a special international regime. De facto, since 1967, Israel was imposing its laws and sovereignty on East Jerusalem.

78. On 30 June 1980, Israel decided to impose a Constitutional Law proclaiming Jerusalem as its capital. In practice, this corresponded to an annexation of East Jerusalem. The Knesset ratified the Law on General Vote, which stipulated that the Government was obliged to put to a

vote any decision concerning East Jerusalem. That law could only be rescinded by a General Vote of the people or 80 of the 120 Knesset Members. It hermitically sealed off any potential to negotiate the fate of Jerusalem, because it would be virtually impossible for any Israeli Government to muster a two-third majority to amend the Constitutional Law. Mr. Barakeh also briefly mentioned the Basic Law proposal entitled “Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People”, which according to him was one of the most dangerous laws. He added that Israel “became Jewish” because of two factors, the expulsion of Palestinians and the automatic citizenship granted to newly-arrived Jewish immigrants. Turning to the issue of the exercise of religious rights, the Knesset Member stated that Israel proclaimed it respected all faiths and holy sites in accordance with its laws. However in practice it was far from being the case, Israel contradicted the principles, ideas, precepts and rules declared in its own laws.

79. There was an attempt from Israel to destroy the political, economic and cultural life in East Jerusalem, with a view to transforming the city into a society that was weak and unable to face challenges. Three kinds of “terrorists” groups were working towards such transformation, operating in three different areas, under the sponsorship of the Israeli authorities and external contributions. The first kind of groups operated outside Jerusalem through the confiscation of property to limit the question of Jerusalem to title holders, transactions and disputes. The second group was attempting to appropriate the religious/holy sites. The third type of groups acted like terrorists cells to make the Arabs living in Jerusalem “pay the price”. Such groups also targeted Muslim and Christians holy sites. Mr. Barakeh hoped that the forthcoming visit of Pope Francis to the region would be an occasion to shed light on this crucial issue.

80. There must be initiatives to give a new impetus to popular resistance in Jerusalem. Therefore it was important to address the absurdity of the age-based regime of access to Al-Aqsa Mosque. It was also imperative to set up a social and financial system aimed at supporting the inhabitants of East Jerusalem. There was a need to strengthen the international and Arab presence, as well as academic life in Jerusalem. Without education the Palestinian identity would be completely wiped out.

81. In conclusion, he stated that Israel was attempting to transform Jerusalem into an issue between two religious groups. It was trying to invent a new narrative to create two opposite religious sets of facts. However, Jerusalem was and remained a political issue including the question of sovereignty and of the question of the continuation of the occupation. All sorts of programmes and work agendas could be designed to ensure the protection of Jerusalem. However, what could not be done was to reach a solution without a clear position from the United States that must set up a balance of interests in the Middle East, adjusting its unwavering support of Israel.

82. The Coordinator of the Assistance to the Palestinian People Unit of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), **Mahmoud Elkhafif**, said UNCTAD's Palestinian unit was mandated in the early eighties to assess the impact of Israeli policies on the Palestinian economy. Since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA), the unit's involvement had been on technical cooperation to build the PA's capacity and eventually of the Palestinian State. Jerusalem was a crucial element of the unit's activities.

83. UNCTAD's recent study on the Palestinian economy in East Jerusalem "Enduring Annexation, Isolation and Disintegration" was the first of its kind. It was very difficult to analyze what happened since 1967 in Jerusalem because of the unavailability of maps and numbers. One recommendation had been to work on the economic and social situation in East Jerusalem and to fill the gap.

84. The first point of UNCTAD's study was that Jerusalem was not only special from a cultural, historic or religious point of view but also from an international one. Jerusalem was crucial for many people around the world.

85. The second point of the study concerned the changes on the ground. Mr. Elkhafif explained that it was important to identify the symptoms of this problem, not for the sake of criticizing, but for ensuring an appropriate analysis.

86. Since 1967, the border of Jerusalem had been changed by the municipality, creating a greater Jerusalem as well as categorizations. For instance, Palestinian Jerusalemites were classified as permanent residents with the right to live and work in Israel; however their permit could be revoked at any time. Over the years, about 50,000 Palestinians had lost their Jerusalem residency status in that manner. There were restrictions on housing with only 15 per cent of the annexed zone designated for Palestinian houses, three times less than Israeli settlers. In 2010, more than 200,000 settlers were living in 16 settlements and suburbs within the Barrier, a population almost as large as the Palestinians living in the city. Also, given the restriction on the movement of Palestinians to and from Jerusalem (about 55,000 Palestinian had no longer access

to the city), the economy of the East had lost many consumers and access to cheap production. The economic cost is around one billion USD in capital loss for the Palestinians which constituted 30 per cent of Jerusalem's population but only received seven per cent of the municipal budget. The building of the Barrier also drastically redefined the city's border and made its study even more difficult.

87. Additionally, there were no Palestinian banks in East Jerusalem. Palestinians were not willing to borrow money from Israeli banks and investment by Palestinians in Jerusalem was extremely difficult. As a result, most East Jerusalemites deposited their savings (around USD 200 million) in Palestinian banks in the West Bank without getting loans or credits from them. This created a lack of competitiveness as well as an inability to produce. Unemployment and poverty were much higher in Jerusalem as compared to Israel. The poverty rate in East Jerusalem was 77 per cent for non-Jewish households as compared to 25 per cent for Israeli households. East Jerusalem was also confronted with a lack of recreation and cultural services with only 45 parks compared to 100 in West Jerusalem.

88. What could be done? A) The occupying Power, Israel, had to assume its responsibility. B) The International Community had to improve its coordination in order to address the issues at stake in a better way. C) Palestinians in East Jerusalem and in the West Bank needed to assess the legal opportunities within the Israeli legal system and take advantage of them. D) Jerusalem could not survive without finding a solution to the banking sector, especially as it related to Palestinians living in East Jerusalem and the creation of opportunities.

89. In conclusion, Mr. Elkhafif said that it was very important to plan for the city as the capital of the State of Palestine, and that it should be taken seriously. A crucial issue also pertained to data collection. Here the international community had a role to play since the PA had no access to East Jerusalem.

90. **Wendy Pullan**, Head of Research and Director of the Martin Centre for Architectural and Urban Studies of the Department of Architecture of the University of Cambridge, talked about Jerusalem as a city that was very asymmetrical, where great inequalities prevailed. Jerusalem must be addressed in terms of its major urban issues. Drawing attention to a multinational and multidisciplinary project on “Conflict in Cities and the Contested State”, which she had directed, Ms. Pullan said it allowed for comparisons, albeit to a limited degree, between Jerusalem and other divided cities. That could be useful in a variety of ways.

91. Regarding the urban question it was first of all important to realize that cities were built on the frontline of cultures, producing clashes between different groups but also providing opportunities for “mixité”. After nearly 50 years of occupation and conflict, Jerusalem was a badly damaged city and any desirable long-term settlement would depend on the urban healing of the city. Threads of similar practices were being employed by Israel across Jerusalem, but they were often developed in different ways, including through settlement activities and land expropriations. Various Israeli authorities were involved, including the Government, settler organizations, the military and private enterprises. It was also important to note that there was little clear Israeli policy in the public domain, creating “strategic confusion”, which was, in and of itself, very effective.

92. However, there was a great consistency of pattern and purpose in what was going on in Jerusalem concerning the current programme to increase Israeli contiguity and control. The emphasis was intended to be on the long term and of a temporal aspect. It was important to realize that settlements connect to other areas of concern such as the holy places, but also to issues of transport, archaeology, heritage, parkland and tourism, all of which contributed to a successful Israeli settlement programme. Taking this into consideration Ms. Pullan proposed to look at three areas of settlement and land expropriation because they were all connected in terms of practices.

93. Peripheral settlements: there was a ring of settlements going around West Jerusalem creating a patchwork of Palestinian areas in the East. Settlements were placed to be as contiguous as possible, very close to inhabited Palestinian areas, restricting growth in a horizontal sense. This always represented an intentional programme. In 1985 the military used the language of creating “new ramparts against possible repartition”. Peripheral settlements had three components: the Separation Wall, the settlement itself and bypass roads. The Separation Wall was symbolically and politically very visible. However, without diminishing the suffering that it caused, the Wall was only the tip of the iceberg of a very complex and very harsh programme of closure restricting Palestinians. Unlike the Separation Wall, the settlements, built like fortresses, were very permanent. The bypass roads were also meant to stay. The new road system segregated the Palestinians and gave Israelis, including ordinary drivers, a sense of empowerment. It was also creating a difficult architecture to remove. Old roads were relegated to Palestinians. Bypass roads often included “anti-sniper walls” that effectively cut off the view of the land from the road. This meant that drivers felt their commute from Jerusalem to the

settlements was a straight and unobstructed path, which had a psychological effect on Israelis, while minimizing the presence of the original Palestinian inhabitants.

94. National parks were used as a type of settlement policy. It was not the settlement of people, but that of green space. They worked very powerfully on two levels. First, a national park was passed by law in the Knesset. Once passed, a majority of two-thirds was needed to get rid of a national park, which was virtually impossible. Another problem was the symbolic understanding of parks, which was rather a positive one. Who could argue against a park? Now such a positive symbol was used effectively as part of the land expropriation and settlements programme. Parks were cutting the Old City from other Palestinian areas, and were usually established on expropriated Palestinian land. This situation created a corridor towards Hebrew University. The most notorious park was just outside of the Old City, in the neighbourhood of Silwan. A settlers' group, El Ad, with good Government connections and funding from private interests in the United States, managed this park. Archaeological sites were also being used in a dubious mix of approximation and lack of accuracy. In Silwan for instance El Ad claimed that it found the remains of the "City of King David". According to many archaeologists it was very unlikely, but El Ad went ahead and built a park which now attracted many gullible tourists who visited the area, listening to the El Ad tour guide spreading the new but false narrative of the "City of David". The display of official signs from Jerusalem's Park Authority contributed to build trust among the public.

95. Old City settlements: the settler population in the Old City of Jerusalem was very ideological and radical, unlike settlers in the West Bank who often merely sought to benefit from

cheap housing opportunities. A patchwork of settlements was disrupting Palestinian contiguity. The Muslim Quarter, close to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, was a particular target. It could not be emphasized enough how much the tight spaces created by settlement activity in the Old City made a difference and created a tense situation. There was a peculiar topography with, in many cases, Palestinians and settlers sharing staircases, courtyards, etc. They were effectively on top of each other.

96. In conclusion, she noted that based on frontier urbanism, there was a use of civilians to form radicalized frontiers supported by urban spaces and structures (people staring at each other, no possibility of interchange, no access). Strong psychological and symbolic factors were also at work here, dealing with visibility and uncertainty. For the international community there was an issue of comprehension, it was an extremely complex place and decisions were often taken lightly. There was a tendency to describe the situation as a temporal problem, requiring temporal strategies. However the international community must look at the long term, the city had been damaged and unequal for too many years. Lastly, a simple re-division on the basis of 1967 was not realistic, Ms. Pullan said there was a need for new and creative solutions as divided cities did not flourish.

97. In the ensuing discussion, reacting to a question from the Chair, **Mr. Barakeh**, said that Palestine's accession to international conventions had come a bit too late. However, the decision to accede stressed a number of important elements, namely a different basis for negotiations, the recognition of the State of Palestine and of the Israeli occupation. **Mr. Elkhafif** stressed that the accession of the State of Palestine to international conventions was a legitimate issue. **Mr. Issac**

stated with regards to the negotiations that the United States' mediator was not impartial and regretted the move from a peace agreement to a framework agreement.

98. **Ms. Pullan**, reiterated her point about the Separation Wall, it indeed caused heavy suffering but local people proved tremendously resourceful in learning to overcome challenges. The wall was just one part of a very complex and harsh regime. Other elements like the settlements would be more difficult to address in the long-term.

99. **The representative of Chile** expressed his interest in knowing who were the owners of the properties that Jewish groups purchased to keep or convert them into Jewish businesses. **Mr. Abdul Hadi**, eventually inquired whether Palestinians were possibly in a position to ask the Committee or the General Assembly to challenge Israelis on all the measures presented by Ms. Pullan. **Türkkaya Ataöv** of the International Progress Organization asked whether a common statement could be prepared to state what could and should be done to alter the present situation, as well as call on the international community to provide more active support to Palestinians. **Usha Kula**, a Malaysian lawyer, asked whether Ms. Pullan could elaborate and explain whether there was a difference in the urban frontier between East and West Jerusalem. **Nabil Idries Sublaban** of the Early Childhood Resource Center called on the Committee to invite more women, children and youth representative as witnesses of the daily hardship faced by Palestinians.

100. **The Minister of Jerusalem Affairs of the State of Palestine** shared a list of recommendations that had been discussed by some participants of the International Meeting.

The recommendations welcomed the call of the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Turkish people to visit Jerusalem; called on the international community, academic and media institutions, schools and universities to be aware of the “judaization” of Jerusalem’s narrative; called on the United Nations to put an end to the threat posed by the accelerating pace of “judaization” measures; and tackled several issues related to Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islamic and Christian holy sites.

### **C. Plenary session III**

#### **The role of the international community in promoting a just solution**

101. The speakers in plenary session III addressed the following sub-themes: (a) “The question of Jerusalem in the permanent status negotiations”; (b) “International approaches to resolving the question of Jerusalem”; (c) “The role of the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other IGOs” and (d) “The role of non-State actors, including parliamentarians and civil society”. The session was chaired by the Chair of the Center for Strategic Research, **Ali Resul Usul**.

102. **Mohammad Shtayyeh**, President of the Palestinian Economic Council for Research and Development and Senior Adviser to President Mahmoud Abbas on negotiations with Israel said that 1947, 1948, 1967 were three important dates. With the partition plan in 1947 Jerusalem was considered to have the special status of *corpus separatum* under the trusteeship of the United Nations. With the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, the city had been divided into two parts,

and in 1967 when Israel occupied it, Jerusalem measured only six square kilometres. Since then, Israel expanded Jerusalem's boundaries up to 75 square kilometres. It also extended its laws and regulations to the city, and started to change the reality of Jerusalem in three different directions. Firstly in terms of the demographic composition aiming for as few Palestinians and as many settlers as possible; secondly in terms of land confiscation and expropriation, and finally in terms of the "judaization" of the city. Another landmark in the history of Jerusalem was related to the 1993 Oslo Accords which considered the city as part of the five final status issues. The Accords also included an important clause stating that nobody should prejudice the final status of the Palestinian territory.

103. Israel, realizing that Jerusalem was a crucial element of the negotiations, decided to create a *de facto* situation vis-à-vis the city. By 27 March 1993, a total military closure was imposed. No Palestinian was allowed to go to Jerusalem except those who managed to obtain a permit. A practice that was still persisting today. In addition, by 2002, Israel started to build the Separation Wall. The "de-Palestinization" of the city started, manifested also through the closure of Palestinian institutions.

104. The peace talks started in Madrid in 1991, and were supposed to end in Camp David in 2000. In Camp David no agreement was reached because of the Israeli demands. For instance, the Israelis offered Palestinian sovereignty on the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Esplanade along with Israeli sovereignty under the Mosque, the Western Wall and the city. For Bill Clinton there was sovereignty below and above, he also added that what was Arab would become part of the State of Palestine and what was Jewish would become part of the State of Israel.

105. When the peace talks started in Madrid in 1991, there were 190,000 Israeli settlers. Today, that number was 631,000, including 268,000 settlers in the vicinity of Jerusalem. That showed the colonization programme was meant to create a situation on the ground and further complicate the question of Jerusalem.

106. During the most recent peace talks, the Head of the Israeli delegation, Tzipi Livi, indicated its readiness to discuss Jerusalem, but another member emphasized that the city was and would remain the “eternal capital” of the Jewish people. Jerusalem was not just a question of borders. In the spirit of compromise, the Palestinian delegation proposed to have Jerusalem as an “open city”, meaning West Jerusalem as capital of Israel, East Jerusalem as capital of Palestine, and one municipal umbrella to provide service to the people. To reach this proposal, it was important to redefine the city of Jerusalem, what were the borders (1947, 1948 or 1967). The Israelis refused to discuss 1948 Jerusalem.

107. The mediators from the United States stressed that the aim of the negotiations was a Palestinian State with its capital “in” Jerusalem, following an Israeli narrative. That formulation therefore failed to specify that the Jerusalem of 1967 (East Jerusalem) would be the capital of Palestine. This was important since the city’s 1967 and post-1967 boundaries included areas that were not genuinely part of Jerusalem. The United States formulation, therefore, allowed for a deal that gave Palestinians artificial parts of Jerusalem but not the Old City, which included the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

108. According to Mr. Shtayyeh, there would be no State of Palestine without Jerusalem as its capital, emphasizing that Palestinians were not in a position to sacrifice their sovereignty over the city, just as they would not be able to relinquish their sovereignty over territories occupied in 1967. It was to be hoped that East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian State, would not remain only a “song for Arab singers”, but became a reality. Palestinians sought to break the status quo, while the Israelis wished to maintain it. The status quo could either be broken through reconciliation, by internationalizing the question of Palestine, or by leading massive resistance against the Israeli occupation, making it “too costly”.

109. **Desra Percaya**, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations in New York and Vice-Chair of the Committee, said that his country did not have, and would not open, diplomatic relations with Israel until there was an independent State of Palestine. As the occupying Power, Israel must act in accordance with international law, protecting civilians and refraining from changing the status of Jerusalem. The issue of Jerusalem could not be separated from the peace process and in the long run, finding a just solution for the city was part and parcel of a comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question. Based on the previous presentations, there was full evidence of Israel’s systematic efforts for the permanent annexation of East Jerusalem.

110. Looking at the principles of the United Nations Charter, there was an important element with respect to Palestine, which was the issue of self-determination. There had been numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions in that regard as well as the creation of specific committees. The Economic and Social Council also discussed the issue of Palestine and

Jerusalem, as well as the International Court of Justice, and the Human Rights Council, among others. The role of the Secretary-General was also primordial in the promotion of a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The OIC and the Non-Aligned Movement also had an important role in this regard.

111. The primary role of all those organizations and bodies was first of all to uphold the rules of international law and the principles of the peaceful settlement of disputes, the non-use of lethal force and the right to self-determination; to keep the issue of Palestine alive and high on the international community agenda; to act as a persistent objector to the facts created by Israel on the ground; and to strengthen the international alliance against the Israeli occupation, including non-State actors. A lot had been done, but the question was whether this was effective. The reality in the field showed that unfortunately there was a lack of enforcement to make Israel comply with UN resolutions and abide by international law.

112. The double-standard policy was very strong in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In addition, looking at the negotiation process there was an asymmetric position between Palestine and Israel. The role of the United States was also questionable as impartial mediator.

113. For that reason it was important to increase the efforts of the international community towards multi-track diplomacy. The way forward was not only one for Governments, but for everyone, civil society organizations and ordinary people, all must be included. Both the United Nations and the OIC too often worked independently on the issue. There was a need to synergize, as well as a need to strengthen alliances with non-State actors. Women and youth

were critical, in every country. Furthermore, there was a need to establish the presence of the OIC in Jerusalem. As well, the creation of a strong narrative that would have appeal for many was very important. A narrative of revenge would not be compelling. Awareness must be increased all over the world in order to shift the focus to activities that had a genuine impact on the ground. It was important that the international community move beyond statements, broaden its constituents, and increase its critical mass of pro-Palestinians with concrete actions in the field.

114. **Mohamed Taj-Eddine El Houssaini**, Professor of International Relations at University Mohamed V in Rabat, said there was a political religious conflict between Israel and Palestine with attempts from Israel to annex and “judaize” the city. Jerusalem would be forever the third holiest site of Muslim pilgrims. Israel was trying to move from the issue of sovereignty to a religious framework by all possible means, using fictitious symbols to trap the narrative.

115. Israel managed to obtain several political gains throughout the different stages of the negotiation process. However its strategy generally sought to accomplish a “fait accompli”. It managed to establish the settlements, said that Jerusalem was the “eternal capital” of Israel, etc. In order to settle the question of Jerusalem, it was important not to go backwards on what had been achieved, but to move forward, aware of the challenges. The conflict’s asymmetry had also been compounded because of the unprecedented economic crisis which turned a unipolar world into multiple centres of power competing against each other. Moreover, with the Arab Spring that became a “cold winter” - the Israelis would pay a heavy price.

116. How could the International Community face down Israel's intransigent position and how could international organizations deal with the situation? There were two scenarios: hope and despair; hope was based on international legitimacy and international law, and on the possibility of internationalizing the question of Jerusalem. Continuing the status quo, with the occupation, oppression and hegemony of Israel, would on the other hand lead to despair. The "hope scenario" called for reversion to the pre-1967 borders and a division of Jerusalem. Israel had attempted during all the negotiations to postpone the question of Jerusalem to the bitter end, as it opposed any division of the city. It even refused to allow Yasser Arafat to be buried in Jerusalem. Concerning the "despair scenario", at this time there was no difference between the political parties in Israel, all wanting to retain Jerusalem as a unified city. However a change in the position of the United States must also be noted; it was important to realize that the Congress of the United States had voted to transfer its embassy to Jerusalem. This was a dangerous development.

117. Israel was the party benefitting from the delays, and it was important to cite the physical expulsion of Palestinian citizens, the confiscation of their identity as citizens of Jerusalem, and their replacement with Israeli settlers. The question of the boycott, disinvestment and sanction movement was important, international organizations should take this into consideration especially taking note of the failure of the Security Council in advancing the peace process. Many groups such as the Non Aligned or the League of Arab States could follow the path of the European Union. It was also crucial to re-formulate the strategy to protect the holy sites and better use the media to denounce "apartheid". There was a need for a body mandated to examine

how United Nations resolutions could be implemented. Up till now, none of these resolutions had been applied.

118. In January 2014 in Marrakech under the auspices of King Mohammed VI more than 30 resolutions, some of them immensely important, had been passed. Financial support and political will would be needed if they were to go into effect. Emphasizing the importance of reconciliation among Palestinians, Mr. Taj-Eddine concluded that as long as Palestinians remained divided, the result would be disastrous for the question of Jerusalem and the conflict in general.

119. The Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), **Mohammad Halaiqah**, reminded that this conference was held in the wake of a recent event that took place in Jordan, entitled “The Road to Jerusalem” involving a large number of international experts. A certain number of recommendations confirmed the rights of Muslims to visit the Al-Aqsa Mosque and support Palestinians. He declared that from the outside the international community was failing in its duty. The voice of Jordan was quite clear however Arab and Muslim countries showed a terrible silence, with the obvious exception of Turkey. This conference should be a point of departure.

120. Jerusalem was a fundamental issue to reach a just and lasting peace in the region which unfortunately was confronted with political dilemmas and saw the recent failure of the negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis. Highlighting the role of parliamentary diplomacy, Mr. Halaiqah said that PAM had always been committed to contributing to the

Palestinian cause. There was a special Ad Hoc group in PAM dealing with this issue and operating to facilitate dialogue between the parties with the aim to achieve a just and permanent peace in the Middle East. On several occasions and often at the request of the United Nations, PAM parliamentarians visited the region, including the Gaza Strip. Last November, a PAM high-level delegation visited Amman, Ramallah and Jerusalem meeting with Israelis, Palestinians and United Nations officials. Moreover, two PAM High-level missions visited both Cairo and Moscow in March and April of 2014. At both locations, and in coordination with the United Nations, the Middle East peace process was discussed with senior officials and with Nabil Elarabi, Secretary-General of the Arab League.

121. PAM was committed to Jerusalem and convinced that the main issue revolved around sovereignty. United Nations resolutions were very clear about the division of the city however the religious dimension could add to the radicalization of positions and to an inability to reach an agreement. The continuous Israeli assaults on the Al-Aqsa Mosque were not acceptable and further complicated the prospects of peace. There would be no real security for any States in the region until the Arab-Israeli peace process proved successful. In this context, the Syrian crisis posed another great challenge to security around the Mediterranean.

122. Israeli and Palestinian leaders had, in the past months, shown their willingness to work, together with the American Administration. Unfortunately, the direct negotiations stopped. PAM was ready to offer new avenues to pursue the ideal of peace in the region.

123. **Güven Sak**, Managing Director of the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), talked about the economy of Jerusalem. He addressed the actions of the Turkish business communities and suggested ways forward for common work. He said that Jerusalem needed good jobs and inclusive growth. At the time of the Oslo Accords East Jerusalem represented 15 per cent of the Palestinian economy. Nowadays it corresponded to 7 per cent. A way to support Palestinian entrepreneurship in Jerusalem must be found, although doing business in Palestine was not easy under the Israeli occupation.

124. Ten years ago, the Ankara Forum process was established between Palestinian, Israeli and Turkish business communities. The objective was to focus on network coordination activities and negotiations to find ways to improve the private sector in Palestine. The Forum started an industrial zone project in 2010 near Jenin in cooperation with the German and Palestinian Governments.

125. In 2013, there was a total of 890,000 residents in Jerusalem comprising of 39 per cent Palestinian who mostly (98 per cent) lived in East Jerusalem and were young (1/3 below the age of 29). The GDP per capita in East Jerusalem was 8 times lower than the average in Israel. 79% of non-Jewish Jerusalemites lived below the poverty line. They were very much poorer than the people living in West Jerusalem. Seventy-five per cent of business owners in East Jerusalem saw their revenues decrease in the past two years. The international community could not afford waiting for a political settlement to invest in Jerusalem as its economic conditions would only continue to deteriorate.

126. There were three areas that could be considered for investment in East Jerusalem and improve the living conditions of the people: tourism, housing and ICT. In general, it was important to look at the number of good jobs and to identify the constraints to remove them. In the case of Jerusalem it was a question of finding mechanisms to go around the constraints. While only 12 per cent of tourists visiting Jerusalem stayed in East Jerusalem, 20 per cent stayed in West Jerusalem's hotels, which had four times the number of hotel rooms. There was a need to improve the tourism industry from taxi companies, to English speaking guides and drivers. Cheap housing was also needed in East Jerusalem, where most Palestinian families lived in cramped conditions, but they could only build on 13 per cent of the land. Those conditions must be improved. Considering the 141 million Arabic users on the Internet, ICT appeared to be a conducive area to invest in Palestine. There were already few start-ups in the West Bank, such momentum could be brought to East Jerusalem.

127. When it came to strengthening companies in Palestine, it was important to find mechanisms for sharing risks with investors who could take hard business decisions. It was possible to find funds from private investors and venture capital companies. It was important to focus on the creation of good jobs in East Jerusalem, which required good companies to flourish. There was also a need to focus on private sector-based economic activity. The occupation was definitely a major constraint specific to Palestine, and in order to offset the constraints, the Palestinian Government must be active in supporting economic activity and market-based risk-sharing mechanisms. Jerusalem should also be seen as a corporate social responsibility project for the entire international community.

128. In the ensuing discussion, **Mr. Isaac** said that while any economic activity was welcome in Palestine, experience proved that Israel used Palestinian willingness to develop in order to ensure their control. Whatever the effort, it had to be ensured that no harm was done to the Palestinian cause, particularly regarding the tourism sector. **The Ambassador of the State of Palestine** to Turkey said that some of the recommendations received during the course of the Meeting were extremely valuable, and expressed hope that they would be reflected in the outcome document and translated into Arabic and English. On the visit by the Pope, he said it would be timely to include a recommendation on the historic nature of his visit. The Pope should request that access to Jerusalem was made easier for both Christians and Muslims. **Mr. Shtayyeh** said there was need for both a public investment programme and a private sector one. It must be mentioned that President Abbas had announced a special fund for Jerusalem for the Palestinian private sector, and it was hoped that it would not only give rise to ideas for job creation in Jerusalem, but also for creating economic linkages between Jerusalem and the other parts of the Palestinian territory.

#### **IV. Closing session**

129. **Emrullah Isler**, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey expressed his gratitude to the United Nations and the OIC for their cooperation in organizing the Meeting. The situation that prevailed in Jerusalem reflected the conscious of mankind. Jerusalem was special because of its holiness to the three monotheistic religions but it could not be mentioned without talking about the suffering of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. They were continuing their fight against the historic injustice that had begun in 1948, but they had thus far been

prevented from enjoying independent Statehood under the pretext of several obstacles and excuses. The Turkish Government's objective was for the Palestinian people to live in an independent sovereign State with East Jerusalem as its capital. Among the clearest examples of Turkish support was the Government's recognition of the State of Palestine in 1988 as well as its contribution to ensuring that the General Assembly accepted Palestine as a non-Member Observer State in 2012. Turkey would continue to make every effort to guarantee the just position for Palestine as a member of the international community. International partners, particularly Islamic States, must also maintain their support for Palestine in that area; this was a moral and political obligation.

130. The Palestinian question could not be settled before the question of Jerusalem, and the Arab-Israeli conflict could not be settled before the Palestinian question was settled. There was hope that peace and reconciliation would prevail, and that Jerusalem would become a centre and symbol of peace and international understanding. Jerusalem did not belong to one people or one religion. The citizens of the whole world, whatever their religion or culture, must consider Jerusalem a common heritage of humankind as a whole. The Republic of Turkey would support any initiative by the United Nations and the OIC along those lines. It would also pursue efforts to create a Jerusalem in which all factions could live together in an atmosphere where peace and understanding prevail, as in the past.

131. The Assistant Secretary-General of the OIC, **Samir Bakr**, expressed his deep and sincere thanks to the Government and people of Turkey for hosting the Meeting, saying it bore witness to their joint efforts in support of Jerusalem. Mr. Bakr also paid tribute to the investment of the

United Nations with regard to the status of Jerusalem. The question of a Palestine that included East Jerusalem would stand as a priority in the Organization's political negotiations and as the key to peace and security in the region. Finally, Mr. Bakr also paid special tribute to the Committee for its untiring efforts for a just solution to the Palestinian question.

132. **Riyad Mansour**, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, expressed the appreciation and thanks of the Palestinian people and their leadership to the Republic of Turkey for hosting the Meeting, and to the OIC and Committee for their collaboration in organizing it. He also thanked all the other Governments, organizations and individuals who helped make the Meeting a success, including the experts who made presentations on Jerusalem. The story of the Palestinians, their pain, struggle, frustration and anger had been correctly transmitted. The pain of Palestinians was so immense that it had to be told to further educate everyone about what the Palestinian people were enduring. The international community must understand that the occupation could no longer be tolerated. All friends of Palestine needed to step up to the plate to end the conflict.

133. The Meeting had been crucial to enlarge the base of partners. Palestinians were resisting as much as they could in every place, including Jerusalem. It was their duty and they would continue doing so. Their efforts would be intensified further, especially once the split in the two wings of their political system was brought to an end. National unity was a need and a must. As well, nobody could blame the PA, under the leadership and wisdom of President Mahmoud Abbas, for not negotiating in good faith on the basis of international legitimacy. The other side was not interested in peace as it continued its colonization programme and settlement activities

during the nine-month negotiations and kept on putting new conditions on the table. Nobody was blaming the Palestinians for the failure of the negotiations that collapsed due to the intransigence of the other party.

134. More than five years ago, the Palestinian leadership started a process to create an additional tool to protect the Palestinian cause at diplomatic, political and legal levels. This materialized through the bilateral recognition of the State of Palestine. Those who recognized the State of Palestine invested in peace and the two-State solution. More than 130 countries had done so before the United Nations bid. At the General Assembly, the overwhelming majority recognised the reality of the State of Palestine. This opened doors for Palestine to join international treaties and conventions. Palestine was at a crossroads and appeared more equipped. It put all necessary efforts at the international community request to end the occupation; however the other side did not act accordingly. The world was ready for peace, including Governments, parliamentarians, media experts and civil society. It was also time for settlers and their financial supporters to be treated as criminals. Mr. Mansour finally stated that the occupation should be made costly for Israel, for its leaders to finally negotiate in good faith in order to end the conflict.

135. **Abdou Salam Diallo**, Chairman of the Committee delivered the closing statement. He said that it had been a privilege for the Committee to co-host this meeting and better understand the current situation in Jerusalem. He expressed his gratitude to the Republic of Turkey and the OIC for their cooperation.

136. The latest information on the status of Jerusalem and the complications endured daily by its faithful Palestinian residents had been heard during the Meeting. The specific measures employed by the occupying Power had also been highlighted, as had the International Community's role in promoting a just solution. A number of speakers presented some constructive ideas on the way forward. Describing the situation in Jerusalem as grave, Mr. Diallo said every Israeli action that led to the construction of new settlements represented a violation of international humanitarian law. The international community as a whole was exasperated by the provocations of Israel and right-wing activists, especially in respect of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Such provocations served no one and simply must stop.

## Annex I

### Summary of the Chair

1. The International Meeting on the Question of Jerusalem was held on 12 and 13 May 2014 in Ankara, Turkey. The Meeting was jointly organized by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The objective of the Meeting was to raise awareness of the Question of Jerusalem and discuss strengthened international support for a just and lasting solution. The Meeting was attended by 72 Member States, two Observer States, four intergovernmental organizations, three UN system entities, and 23 local and international civil society organizations. Thirteen expert speakers addressed the Meeting.

2. All speakers in the **opening session** affirmed Jerusalem's unique, sacred role for three religions, and rejected the "judaization" of the Holy City. The **Foreign Minister of Turkey** censured those who would negate the City's inheritance. He recalled that Jerusalem under the dominance of Muslims had been open to all faiths and religions. He stressed that Jerusalem was not just a political issue but represented an important cultural inheritance that could not be minimized to a single religion or ethnicity. He rejected Israel's unilateral decisions concerning Jerusalem. In accordance to international law, the City was a territory under occupation. The Minister said that the United Nations should play a more active role, suggesting that the UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established in 1948 with three members, France, Turkey and the United States of America, should be reconvened, and that other fora should also take up the issue of Jerusalem, as the *status quo* represented a serious threat to international peace and

security. He called for an annual international meeting on Jerusalem and offered Turkey's support. The **Secretary-General of the OIC** emphasized that the Holy City of Al-Quds formed an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. He expressed deep concern about Israeli policies in occupied Jerusalem, the expanding settlements, "judaization", confiscation of land. Israel's immense violations of international law represented a blatant defiance of the International Community and commanded a different brand of international intervention. All States and institutions had a responsibility to confront these violations as a threat to international peace and security. International efforts should lead to an end of the Israeli occupation and ensure the City's return to Palestinian sovereignty. The **Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People** recalled that the General Assembly had mandated 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People to raise awareness of the main issues and obstacles to the peace process. The Committee was wedded to a two-State solution, and parties had been called upon to act responsibly and create an appropriate climate for negotiations, to resolve all final status issues. He criticized Israel's settlement policies, including in East Jerusalem, accompanied by the demolition of homes and expropriation of Palestinian land. He recalled the collective responsibility of Member States of the UN, given successive General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on Jerusalem. The **Minister of Waqf and Religious Affairs and Representative of the State of Palestine** stressed that Jerusalem was an integral part of the Palestinian religious heritage. Since its occupation in 1967, Palestinians in Jerusalem and surrounding areas suffered daily repression and aggression. There would be no peace as long as the State of Palestine was not established under international law with Jerusalem as its capital. The real problem was not one of religion, but one of occupation of territory. The International

Community had to provide practical support to the Arab Peace Initiative, which was based on a two-State solution, or it may become impossible or impractical in the future. The **Minister of Jerusalem Affairs of the State of Palestine** pointed in his keynote address to the continuing daily destruction of Jerusalem as a Palestinian city with the intention of changing the city's nature. Since 1993, negotiations did not result in anything, to the contrary, Israeli expansion had doubled, settlers threatened Palestinian inhabitants, and the Israeli authorities had expelled thousands of families. The International Community had to intervene and apply pressure on Israel to find a binding solution.

3. In his message, the **United Nations Secretary-General** warned that the current political stalemate in the talks between Israelis and Palestinians posed great risks to the prospects of a two-State solution. Continued inaction could result in further instability. Failing to resume negotiations would lead further down the path of a one-state reality. Emphasizing that settlements and house demolitions were illegal under international law, the Secretary-General was particularly troubled by mounting tensions around Jerusalem and access to its holy sites, stating that Jerusalem must be open and accessible to all. Through negotiations Jerusalem should emerge as capital of two States with arrangements for the holy sites acceptable to all. In his message, the **Head of the Hashemite Foundation for the Restoration of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock** said that the inalienable rights of the Palestinians were being marginalized and violated by the Israeli occupation. It was important to realize that Israel's aggression was part of a greater move to prevent the Palestinians from realizing their self-determination and their rights. Since 1967, the imposition of a new *status quo* on the territory was being witnessed, changing the situation and eroding the life of Palestinians in Jerusalem.

4. The Meeting then explored the status of Jerusalem under international law. It was emphasized that Jerusalem as the holy city of the three monotheistic religions was a treasure for all humanity. At the same time, it was an occupied city. Despite many adopted resolutions, the occupation continued. Israel was trying to judaize the city, marginalizing Palestinian inhabitants and stamping out their identity. In the last five months, 234 Palestinian houses had been demolished. Presentations highlighted specific Israeli practices that could be considered ethnic cleansing. Jerusalem was completely cut off from the West Bank, it could not be reached without Israeli permission. Presenters spoke of the attempts to disrespect Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is under the custodianship of Jordan, the present Trustee for the Holy Sites. The Al-Aqsa Mosque became an object of military activities, soldiers restricted access, making the Mosque the most targeted place in Jerusalem. Twenty tunnels had been dug around the Mosque, Israelis had expanded the Western Wall and extremists were being urged to break in to pray, changing the status of the Holy Sites. Another serious problem was that Israel had sought to develop false narratives, such as the 'Holy Basin,' to justify land appropriation. A presence of Muslim and Arab organizations in the city was lacking as was a continuous and legitimate presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

5. The Meeting then reviewed the current situation in Jerusalem, including measures taken by Israel and the socio-economic situation of Palestinian residents. It was stated that after nearly 50 years of occupation and conflict, Jerusalem was a badly damaged city. Various Israeli authorities were involved in municipal decisions, including the settler organizations, military and private enterprises creating a strategic confusion that masked a very effective policy. There was an intention to restrict Palestinian growth and development. Presentations clearly showed the

patchwork of settlements placed very close to Palestinian towns, inhibiting growth. The Wall was the most visible aspect of the Israeli policies accompanied by a very complex and harsh system of closures resulting in ethnic displacement. A wall of settlements was built parallel to it like fortresses. National parks were part of the Israeli settlement policy, used very effectively as part of the land expropriation program. Archaeology was another tool, for example the claim made that the remains of King David's city was underneath al-Aqsa, even though most archaeologists disagreed. Access of Muslims to the Al-Aqsa Mosque was restricted to men having reached a certain age. At the same time, the most extremist of the settlers were allowed to live in East Jerusalem, terrorizing Palestinian neighbours and being responsible for recent assaults at Muslim and Christian holy places. The Knesset played its part by having ratified a law which stipulated that the Government was obliged to put to a vote any decision concerning East Jerusalem, a hurdle impossible to overcome in the Israeli legislature.

6. The Israeli policies also affected the socio-economic situation of the Palestinian population. The poverty rate in East Jerusalem was estimated at 77 per cent for non-Jewish households. Health and education sectors in East Jerusalem were in a disastrous state, which was leading to an obliteration of the Palestinian identity. Since 1967, about 50,000 Palestinians have lost their residency status. Based on the restricted movement, the economy of East Jerusalem had lost many consumers, and since there were no Palestinian banks in East Jerusalem, financial transactions there were extremely difficult. It was pointed out that Israel had adopted a strategy of "de-Palestinization" of the City, including separating it from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, freezing land registration, constructing settlements and building roads to serve exclusively settlers. One speaker urged to find ways to support

Palestinian entrepreneurship in Jerusalem, focus on the creation of good jobs and private sector-based economic activity given the endemic poverty and deteriorating way of life. Constraints existed but mitigating measures had to be found. Risk-sharing mechanisms with investors that would take hard business decisions, for example a Jerusalem Venture Capital Fund could be one such measure. Better coordination among donors and international agencies was essential, particularly on data collection and analysis for meaningful socio-economic studies. Planning for the city as the capital of Palestine, including financing options, needed to be pursued seriously.

7. Meeting participants also discussed the role of the International Community in promoting a just solution and international approaches to resolving the question of Jerusalem. It was highlighted that Jerusalem's unique position in Christianity, Islam and Judaism could catalyze the promotion of peace in the Middle East, but that Israeli intransigence was preventing it. Participants agreed that Jerusalem was a global issue and the International Community, including the United Nations should resume its responsibilities as laid out in respective Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. To date, however, Israel was able to defy UN resolutions without repercussions. Speakers all agreed that Israel, as the occupying Power, had to act in accordance with international law, protecting civilians and not changing the status of Jerusalem. The United Nations' Charter principle of self-determination was important with respect to Palestine. One speaker proposed "an International Convention on the protection of the Holy Sites" as a common body was needed with a mandate to look at how existing resolutions could be more effective. The question of Jerusalem could not be separated from the peace process, and a lasting solution to that question would be part and parcel of a comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question. There was a need to increase efforts in multi-track diplomacy. The issue

was not one exclusively for governments, but for all actors of the International Community, including civil society organizations. Intergovernmental organizations, such as the UN and the OIC should synergize their initiatives and strengthen alliances with non-State actors, parliamentarians, women and youth in every country. It was also important to establish a permanent presence of the International Community, including the UN, the OIC and other organizations in Jerusalem.

8. Participants called for the protection of Jerusalem's identity. They also called on academic and media institutions, schools and universities to maintain the internationally accepted narrative of Jerusalem and not to give in efforts to Judaize its history. There was a need for international commitment to protect Jerusalem's unique character, such as a special statute, internationally guaranteed, that could ensure the historical, material and religious character of the Holy Sites, as well as free access to them for residents and pilgrims alike. Participants suggested that the international guarantor of this mandate could be the United Nations. Presenters called on the UN to abide by international law and not submit to Israeli policies. It should uphold the civil rights of all Jerusalemites, such as the rights to citizenship, housing, education and freedom to worship. The presentation of the various reports by the United Nations and other international organizations should be strengthened by inviting eyewitnesses. Many speakers also emphasized the importance for Muslims and Christians of visiting Jerusalem to express their right to freedom of worship, to preserve their sacred sites and support the people of Jerusalem helping them to develop their community. Participants pointed to the new status of Palestine as UN Observer State which provided a huge opportunity to advance Palestine's case through international legal instruments.

9. Palestinian participants emphasized that there would be no State of Palestine without Jerusalem as its capital. Palestinians were not in a position to sacrifice their sovereignty over the City. They demanded to break the *status quo* in the City. That could be done through reconciliation, by internationalizing the question of Palestine, or by making the occupation too costly. The main obstacle was Israel's continued settlement policies, creating facts on the ground and complicating the issues. When peace talks started in 1991, the number of Jewish settlers was 190,000. Today, it was 631,000, including 268,000 in Jerusalem. In the current round of talks, the American mediators stressed that the aim was a Palestinian State with its capital *in* Jerusalem. However, that formulation failed to specify which part of present-day Jerusalem. This was important given that the boundaries after 1967 included parts that were not considered part of Jerusalem by the Palestinians. In a spirit of compromise the Palestinian delegation to the current round of talks proposed an open city, with West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, and free access for all. This was rejected. Israelis were moving to a religious framework to justify their policies, and sought to postpone the talks on Jerusalem as it opposed any division and benefitted from the delay. Jerusalem needed a serious intervention, and progress would depend on making Israel's occupation more costly to Israel. The current format of negotiations had to be reviewed and re-formatted. A clear and balanced position was needed from the United States, as unswerving support for Israel emboldened it to continue its illegal policies.

10. Speakers in the closing session expressed their appreciation to the Government of Turkey, the OIC and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their support in organizing an important Meeting on Jerusalem. The **Deputy Prime**

**Minister of Turkey** said that his Government would continue to make every effort to guarantee a fair and just resolution of the question of Palestine. Turkey would continue to make every effort to guarantee the just position of the State of Palestine as a member of the International Community. He hoped that Jerusalem would become a centre and a symbol of peace, and international understanding, as the City did not belong to one people or one religion. He reiterated Turkish support for any initiative by the UN and the OIC in this regard. The **Assistant Secretary-General of the OIC** said that the Meeting bore witness to joint work in solidarity and support of Jerusalem. The OIC recognized that the question of Palestine would remain a priority in its work as the key to peace and security in the region. The **Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine** said that the growing international recognition of the State of Palestine had enlarged the base of partners for ending the Israeli occupation. Palestine was now better equipped to continue its resistance. The International Community had encouraged the Palestinians to negotiate an end of the occupation, but the good faith of the Palestinian leadership was not reciprocated. Israel even accelerated its settlement expansion, showing its real intentions. He called upon the International Community to establish accountability for Israel, to make it pay a price for the continued occupation. Governments, parliaments, corporations, academics should divest from projects benefitting the occupation. Settlers should be declared criminals and prosecuted under national legislation. If the occupation was made costly for Israel, its leaders may return in good faith to future negotiations. The **Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People** lauded the dignity of the Palestinians from Jerusalem, in the face of their daily challenges. He welcomed the fact that constructive ideas had been presented. The Chairman concluded by saying that the situation in Jerusalem was grave and the International Community was “exasperated” by the provocations of

Israel, and such provocations had to stop. He hoped that with the help of the International Community, peace would prevail in Palestine.

**Annex II****List of participants****Speakers**

Mahdi F. Abdul Hadi	Chairman, The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs Jerusalem
Mohamed Barakeh	Member of the Knesset Jerusalem
Mohamed Taj-Eddine El Houssaini	Professor of International Relations, University Mohamed V Rabat
Mahmoud Elkhafif	Coordinator, Assistance to the Palestinian People Unit, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Geneva
Antonio Franco	Archbishop, Former Apostolic Delegate for Jerusalem and Palestine Rome

Mohammad Halaiqah	Vice-President, Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Malta Amman
Sheikh Muhammad Ahmad Hussein	Qadi and Mufti of Jerusalem Jerusalem
Jad Isaac	Director-General, Applied Research Institute Jerusalem
Wasfi Kailani	Director of the Hashemite Fund for the Restoration of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock Amman
Wendy Pullan	Director, Martin Centre for Architecture and Urban Research, Department of Agriculture, University of Cambridge Cambridge
Güven Sak	Managing Director, Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey Ankara

Mohammad Shtayyeh                      President, Palestinian Economic Council for Research  
and Development, Senior Advisor to President Mahmoud  
Abbas on negotiations with Israel  
Jerusalem

Şakir Özkan Torunlar                      Former Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey  
to the State of Palestine

**Delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the  
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**

Abdou Salam Diallo                      Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations  
Chairman of the Committee

Zahir Tanin                                  Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations  
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

Desra Percaya                              Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations  
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

Wilfried I. Emvula                        Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations  
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

Riyad Mansour                      Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

**Representative of the Secretary-General**

Robert Serry                      United Nations Special Coordinator for the  
Middle East Peace Process

**Delegation of the Government of Turkey**

Ahmet Davutođlu                      Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey

Ömer Önhon                      Deputy Undersecretary for the Middle East and Asia-Pacific

Ümit Yalçın                      Director General for the Middle East

Ali Resul Usul                      Chair of the Center for Strategic Research

Mekin Mustafa Kemal Ökem                      Deputy Director General for the Middle East

Mehmet Küçüksakallı                      Head of the Department, Deputy Directorate General  
for the Middle East

Korhan Kemik	Head of the Department, Deputy Directorate General for the Middle East
Dilan Bilgin	Second Secretary, Deputy Directorate General for the Middle East
Erdoğan Tor	Second Secretary, Deputy Directorate General for the Middle East
Necati Erbil Ertürk	Third Secretary, Deputy Directorate General for the Middle East
Ömer Uzun	Attache, Deputy Directorate General for the Middle East

### **Delegation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation**

Iyad bin Amin Madani	Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation
Samir Bakr	Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine and Al Quds Al Sharif Affairs
Shaher Saeed Mohammad Awawdeh	Adviser, Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations
Khaled Wafi	Protocol Officer

**Governments**

Afghanistan	Amanullah Jayhoon, Ambassador to Turkey Arash Elham Embassy in Turkey
Argentina	Juan José Arcuri, Ambassador Analia Verónica Carreras, First Secretary Embassy in Turkey
Azerbaijan	Dursun Hasanov, Undersecretary Embassy in Turkey
Bangladesh	Dir. Arif Rahman, Second Secretary Embassy in Turkey
Belgium	Marc Trenteseau, Ambassador to Turkey
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Jasna Martincevic, Third Secretary Embassy in Turkey

Brazil	Diogo Mendes de Almeida, Second Secretary and Charge d'affaires Embassy in Turkey
Bulgaria	Dobromira Kirova, Political Section Embassy in Turkey
Chile	Francisco Javier Bernales, Ambassador to the State of Palestine Sebastian Marin Labbe, Charge d'affaires Embassy in Turkey
Congo	Siméon Ewongo, Chargé d'affaires Embassy in Turkey
Croatia	Lovorka Ostrunic, Envoy Undersecretary
Cuba	Alberto Gonzalez Casals, Ambassador to Turkey
Czech Republic	Václav Hubinger, Ambassador to Turkey
Djibouti	Aden Houssein Abdillahi, Ambassador to Turkey
Ecuador	Arturo Cabrera, Envoy

Egypt	Hazem Fawzy, First Secretary Embassy in Turkey
France	Catherine Corm-Kammoun, First Secretary Juliette Part, Trainee Embassy in Turkey
Ghana	Perpetua O. Dufu, Chargé d'affaires, Embassy in Turkey
Greece	Kyriakos Loukakis, Ambassador Evangelos Kalpadakis, First secretary Embassy in Turkey
Guinea	Daouda Bangoura, Ambassador Lai Konate Daouda, Chief of Protocol
Hungary	Zoltán Fehér, Deputy Head of Mission
Indonesia	Desra Percaya, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations Nahari Agustini, Ambassador to Turkey Ary Aprianto, First Secretary, Permanent Mission to the United Nations

	Dyah L. Asmarani, First Secretary Embassy in Turkey
Iraq	Talal Jameel Saleh Al-Obaidi, Ambassador to Turkey Sudad Khidir Al-Byati, Undersecretary Abdulrazaq Rabca A. Al-Nacmi, Second Secretary Khalid Abdulsattar Al-Ogaidi, Attaché Embassy in Turkey
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Alireza Bikdeli, Ambassador to Turkey
Italy	Ludovico Serra, First Undersecretary, Embassy in Turkey
Japan	Hideyuki Kawai, Second Secretary, Embassy in Turkey
Jordan	Amjad Adaileh, Ambassador to Turkey Janti Glazoga, Embassy official Embassy in Turkey
Kenya	Lindsay Kiptiness, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Andrew Mujivane, Second Secretary for Political & Consular Affairs/Deputy Head of Mission

Kuwait	Jasem Al-Najem, Undersecretary Embassy in Turkey
Kyrgyzstan	Elvira Koenalieva, Attaché Embassy in Turkey
Lebanon	Rabie Narsh, Chargé d'affaires Mansour Abdallah Embassy in Turkey
Libya	Mohamed Alabedi, Deputy Ambassador to Turkey
Lithuania	Kęstutis Kudzmanas, Ambassador to Turkey
Luxembourg	Arlette Conzemius, Ambassador to Turkey Stéphane Putz, Political Consultant Embassy in Turkey
Malaysia	Amran Mohamed Zin, Ambassador to Turkey Nuryante Mohd. Yazid, Minister Counsellor Embassy in Turkey

Mauritania	Mohamed Ahmed Lahweirth, Ambassador to Turkey Abdellahi Nourad, First Counsellor Emin Kaymak Embassy in Turkey
Mexico	Joel Enrique Viveros Galindo, Second Secretary Embassy in Turkey
Moldova	Eugeniu Buga, Consultant to the Ambassador, Embassy in Turkey
Mongolia	Batkhishig Badamdorj, Ambassador to Turkey
Montenegro	Ramon Bralic, Ambassador to Turkey
Morocco	Lotfi Aouad, Ambassador to Turkey Mohamed Taj-Eddine El Houssaini, Professor of International Relations Mohammed Zerrouki, Minister Counsellor Otman Samsame, Counsellor Embassy in Turkey
New Zealand	Annie Cawthorn, Second Secretary Embassy in Turkey

Norway	Lise Albrechtsen, Chargé d'affaires, Embassy in Turkey
Oman	Abdullah Altouqi, First Secretary Embassy in Turkey
Pakistan	Mian Atif Sharif, First Secretary Embassy in Turkey
Peru	Jorge Abarca del Carpio, Ambassador to Turkey Jose Zapata, Counsellor Embassy in Turkey
Poland	Andrzej Mojkowski, Counsellor Michal Nobis Embassy in Turkey
Portugal	Luis Quartin Graça, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy in Turkey
Qatar	Alshafi Salem, Counsellor Embassy in Turkey

Republic of Korea	Kim, Eun-Jeong, Director, Middle East Division I Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kim, Mi Eun, Third Secretary, Middle East Division I, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Romania	Ambassador Radu Onofrei, Ambassador to Turkey
Russian Federation	Valery Stolbov, Undersecretary, Embassy in Turkey
Rwanda	Caesar Kayizali, Ambassador to Turkey
Saudi Arabia	Adel Siraj Merdad, Ambassador to Turkey Abdullah Mohammed Al Ghamdi, Minister Plenipotentiary, Embassy in Turkey
Senegal	Moustapha Mbacke, Ambassador to Turkey Moustapha Sokhna Diop, Deputy Head of Mission Ba Mamadou Boye, Counsellor Embassy in Turkey
Serbia	Ljiljana Belojevic, Minister Counsellor, Deputy Head of Mission Dragana Blagojevic, Third Secretary Embassy in Turkey

Slovenia	Tatjana Kovačić, Second Secretary Sara Jud, Intern Embassy in Turkey
Somalia	Mohamed Mursal Sheikh Abdirahman, Ambassador to Turkey
South Africa	Soraya Jacobs, Counsellor Embassy in Turkey
South Sudan	Nuer Stephen Rett, First Secretary Embassy in Turkey
Sudan	Ibrahim Elsheikh Abdelrazig Embassy in Turkey
Sweden	Lars Thomas Leonard Wahlund, Ambassador to Turkey
Switzerland	Didier Chassot, Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy in Turkey
Tajikistan	Mykhemumol Velish Embassy in Turkey
Tunisia	Mohamed Salah Tekaya, Ambassador to Turkey

Ali Cherif, Counsellor

Anis Hajri, Counsellor

Embassy in Turkey

Turkmenistan

Akmammedov Murat Bas, Clerk

Embassy in Turkey

Uganda

Santa M. Laker Kinyera, Counsellor

Embassy in Turkey

Ukraine

Serhiy Korsunsky, Ambassador to Turkey

Vasyl Bodnar, Minister Counsellor

Embassy in Turkey

United Arab Emirates

Mohammed Rashid Al Absi, Head of Department of  
International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ahmed Mohamed A. Mutawaa, Chargé d'affaires

Noura Said Al Mansouri, Third Secretary

Embassy in Turkey

Venezuela

Catalina Espinoza, First Secretary

Embassy in Turkey



Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean      Mohammad Halaiqah of Jordan, PAM Vice President  
and President of its 1st Standing Committee on Political cooperation

Shadi Obeidat, Administrator at the Jordanian Senate

Mourad Youssry, Deputy to PAM Secretary General  
for Assembly Affairs

### **United Nations organs, agencies and bodies**

Office of the United Nations      Elpida Rouka, Chief Regional Affairs Unit  
Special Coordinator for the  
Middle East Peace Process

The United Nations Resident      Mustapha Sinaceur, Deputy Resident Coordinator  
Coordinatorship      Halide Çaylan, UN Coordination Specialist  
Ahmet Parla, UNIC Ankara  
Selim Barkan, UN Syria Coordination Assistant  
Selim Giray, UN Coordination Assistant

### Civil society organizations

Ankara University	Seval Balci Erkan Yavaş Yilmaz
Cansu Relief and Solidarity Associaton	Cemalettin Lafçi, Assistant to the General Manager Murtaza Özkanli, Assistant to the General Manager Ankara
Directorate for Religious Affairs	Mehmet Görmez, Chairman Ankara
Early Childhood Resource Center	Nabil Idries Sublaban, General Director Jerusalem
Migratory Letters Campaign – Palestine	Nour Olwan, Activist Gaza
Human Rights Commissions for Minorities, Bangladesh	Mazharul Islam, Chief Executive Officer Liton Sorder, Personal Executive to CEO Dhaka

International Progress Organization	Türkkaya Ataöv Vienna
International Strategic Research Organisation (USAK)	İhsan Bal Ankara
Journalists' Association Ankara	Nazmi Bilgin, Chair
Kimse Yok Mu Solidarity and Relief Association	İbrahim ÇİÇEK, Central Anatolia Regional Coordinator Ankara
Middle East Strategic Studies Centre (ORSAM)	Şaban Kardaş, Chair Ankara
One Voice Movement	Obada O.A. Shtaya, Senior Youth Leader New York
Palestinians without Frontiers	Hamza I. AbuShnab, International Relations Officer Belal N. Rayyan, International Relations Officer Gaza

Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Agency	Fuat Oktay, Chairman Ankara
Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries	Savaş Alpay, General Director H. Hakan Eryetli, Head of Information and Statistics Division M. Fatih Serenli, Director of Education and Technical Cooperation Branch Nebil Dabour, Head of Research Department Ankara
Tamkeen Arab Group and Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights	Rania Madi, Permanent Representative Geneva
Turkish Centre for International Relations and Strategic Studies	Celalettin Yavuz, Vice-President Ankara
The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation	Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar Ankara

Turkish Red Crescent	Ahmet Lütfü Akar, President of Turkish Red Crescent Mehmet Güllüođlu, Director General Ankara
Union of Municipalities of Turkey	Hayrettin Güngör, Secretary-General Gülfem Kiraç Keleş, Head, International Relations Department Bora Avcı, Expert, International Relations Department Cemal Baş, Expert, International Relations Department Ankara
United Cities and Local Governments, Middle East and West Asia (UCLG-MEWA)	Mehmet Duman, Secretary-General Mohamed Almahli, Project Officer Istanbul
World Council of Churches	Manuel Abundio Quintero Perez, International Coordinator, Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel Geneva
Yunus Emre Foundation	Hasan Kocabiyik, Strategy Development Director (on behalf of the Foundation Chairman) Ankara