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PALESTINE AT THE UNITED NATIONS

1. THE SPEECH OF YASSER ARAFAT

Yasser Arafat, as the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, addressed the United Nations General Assembly on November 13, 1974, during the debate on Palestine. The following is a translation of the speech, originally delivered in Arabic.¹

Mr. President, I thank you for having invited the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the plenary session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am grateful to all those representatives of United Nations member states who contributed to the decision to introduce the question of Palestine as a separate item on the Agenda of this Assembly. That decision made possible the Assembly's resolution inviting us to address it on the question of Palestine.

This is a very important occasion. The question of Palestine is being re-examined by the United Nations, and we consider that step to be as much a victory for the world organization as it is for the cause of our people. It indicates anew that the United Nations of today is not the United Nations of the past, just as today's world is not yesterday's world. Today's United Nations represents 138 nations, a number that more clearly reflects the will of the international community. Thus today's United Nations is more capable of implementing the principles embodied in its Charter and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as being more truly empowered to support causes of peace and justice.

Our people are now beginning to feel that change. Along with them, the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America also feel the change. As a result, the United Nations acquires greater esteem both in our people's view and in the view of other peoples. Our hope is thereby strengthened that the United Nations may contribute actively to the pursuit and triumph of the causes of peace, justice, freedom and independence. Our resolve to build a new world is fortified — a world free of colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism and racism in all its forms, including Zionism.

Our world aspires to peace, justice, equality and freedom. It hopes that oppressed nations, at present bent under the weight of imperialism, may gain their freedom and their right to self-determination. It hopes to place the relations between nations on a basis of equality, peaceful coexistence, mutual respect for each other's internal affairs, secure national sovereignty, independence and territorial unity on the basis of justice and mutual benefit. This world resolves that the economic ties binding it together should be grounded in justice, parity and mutual interest. It aspires finally to direct its human resources against the scourge of poverty, famine, disease and natural calamities, toward the development of productive scientific and technical capabilities to enhance human wealth — all this in the hope of reducing the disparity between the developing and the developed countries. But all such aspirations cannot be realized in a world that is at present ruled by tension, injustice, oppression, racial discrimination and exploitation, a world also

¹ *From the United Nations official English text and compared with the Arabic text printed in al-Nahar (Beirut), November 14, 1974 — Ed.*

threatened with unending economic disaster, wars and crises.

Many peoples, including those of Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa and Palestine, among many others, are still victims of oppression and violence. Their areas of the world are gripped by armed struggles provoked by imperialism and racial discrimination. These, both merely forms of aggression and terror, are instances of oppressed peoples compelled by intolerable circumstances into a confrontation with such oppression. But wherever that confrontation occurs it is legitimate and just.

It is imperative that the international community should support these peoples in their struggles, in the furtherance of their rightful causes and in the attainment of their right to self-determination.

In Indo-China the people are still exposed to aggression. They remain subjected to conspiracies preventing them from the enjoyment of peace and the realization of their goals. Although peoples everywhere have welcomed the peace agreements reached in Laos and South Vietnam, no one can say that genuine peace has been achieved, for the forces responsible in the first place for aggression are determined that Vietnam should remain in a state of disturbance and war. The same can be said of the present military aggression against the people of Cambodia. It is therefore incumbent on the international community to support these oppressed peoples, and also to condemn the oppressors for their designs against peace. Moreover, despite the positive stand taken by the Democratic Republic of Korea with regard to a peaceful and just solution of the Korean question, there is as yet no settlement of that question.

A few months ago the problem of Cyprus erupted violently before us. All peoples everywhere shared in the suffering of the Cypriots. We ask that the United Nations continue its efforts to reach a just solution in Cyprus, thereby sparing the Cypriots further war and ensuring peace and independence for them instead. Undoubtedly, however, consideration of the question of Cyprus belongs within that of Middle Eastern problems as well as of Mediterranean problems.

In their efforts to replace an outmoded but still dominant world economic system with a new, more logically rational one, the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America face implacable attacks on these efforts. These countries have expressed their views at the special session of the General Assembly on raw materials and development. Thus the plundering, exploitation, and the siphoning off of the wealth of impoverished peoples must be terminated forthwith. There must be no deterring of these peoples' efforts to develop and control their wealth. Furthermore, there is a grave necessity for arriving at fair prices for raw materials from these countries.

In addition, these countries continue to be hampered in the attainment of their primary objectives formulated at the Conference on the Law of the Sea at Caracas, at the population conference and at the Rome food conference. The United Nations should therefore bend every effort to achieve a radical alteration of the world economic system, making it possible for developing countries to advance rapidly. The United Nations must resolutely oppose forces that are trying to lay the responsibility for inflation on the shoulders of the developing countries, especially the oil-producing countries. The United Nations must firmly condemn any threats made against these countries simply because they demand their just rights.

The world-wide armaments race shows no sign of abating. As a consequence, the entire world is threatened with the dispersion of its wealth and the utter waste of its energies. Armed violence is made more likely everywhere. Peoples expect the United Nations to devote itself single-mindedly to putting an end to the armaments race; to convert the vast sums spent on military technology until the stage is reached where nuclear weapons are destroyed, and resources go into projects for development, for increasing production, and for benefiting the world.

And still, the highest tension exists in our part of the world. There the Zionist entity clings tenaciously to occupied Arab territory; the Zionist entity is holding on to the Arab territories it has occupied and persisting in its aggressions against us.

New military preparations are feverishly being made. These anticipate another, fifth war of aggression to be launched against us. Such signs behoove the closest possible watching, since there is a grave likelihood that this war would forbode nuclear destruction and cataclysmic annihilation.

The world is in need of tremendous efforts if its aspirations to peace, freedom, justice, equality and development are to be realized, if its struggle is to be victorious over colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism and racism in all its forms, including Zionism. Only by such efforts can actual form be given to the aspirations of all peoples, including the aspirations of peoples whose states oppose such efforts. It is this road that leads to the fulfilment of those principles emphasized by the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Were the status quo simply to be maintained, however, the world would instead be exposed to the most dangerous armed conflicts, in addition to economic, human and natural calamities.

Despite abiding world crises, despite the powers of darkness and backwardness that beset the world, we live in a time of glorious change. An old world order is crumbling before our eyes, as imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and racism, the chief form of which is Zionism, inevitably perish. We are witnessing a great wave of history bearing peoples forward into a new world which they have created. In that world just causes will triumph. Of that we are confident.

The question of Palestine is crucial amongst those just causes fought for unstintingly by masses labouring under imperialism and oppression. I am aware that, if I am given the opportunity to address the General Assembly, so too must the opportunity be given to all liberation movements fighting against racism and imperialism. In their names, in the name of every human being struggling for freedom and self-determination, I call upon the General Assembly urgently to give their just causes the same full attention the General Assembly has so rightly given to our cause. Such recognition once given, there will be a secure foundation thereafter for the preservation of universal peace.

For only with such peace will a new world order endure in which peoples can live free of oppression, fear, injustice and exploitation. As I said earlier, this is the true perspective in which to set the question of Palestine. I shall now do so for the General Assembly, keeping firmly in mind both the perspective and the goal of a coming world order.

Even as today we address this General Assembly from an international rostrum we are also expressing our faith in political and diplomatic struggle as complements, as enhancements of armed struggle. Furthermore we express our appreciation of the role the United Nations is capable of playing in settling problems of international scope. But this capability, I said a moment ago, became real only once the United Nations had accommodated itself to the living actuality of aspiring peoples, towards which this international organization owes unique obligations.

In addressing the General Assembly today our people proclaims its faith in the future, unencumbered either by past tragedies or present limitations. If, as we discuss the present, we enlist the past in our service, we do so only to light up our journey into the future alongside other movements of national liberation. If we return now to the historical roots of our cause we do so because present at this very moment in our midst are those who, as they occupy our homes, as their cattle graze in our pastures, and as their hands pluck the fruit of our trees, claim at the same time that we are ghosts without an existence, without traditions or future. We speak of our roots also because until recently some people have regarded — and continue to regard — our problem as merely a problem of refugees. They have portrayed the Middle East question as little more than a border dispute between the Arab states and the Zionist entity. They have imagined that our people claim rights not rightfully their own and fight neither with logic nor legitimate motive, with a simple wish only to disturb the peace and to terrorize others. For there are amongst you — and here I refer to the United States of America and others like it — those who supply our enemy freely with planes and bombs and with

every variety of murderous weapon. They take hostile positions against us, deliberately distorting the true essence of the problem. All this is done not only at our expense, but at the expense of the American people and its well-being, and of the friendship we continue to hope can be cemented between us and this great people, whose history of struggle for the sake of freedom and the unity of its territories we honour and salute.

I cannot now forego this opportunity of appealing from this rostrum directly to the American people, asking them to give their support to our heroic and fighting people. I ask them wholeheartedly to endorse right and justice, to recall George Washington to mind — heroic Washington whose purpose was his nation's freedom and independence, Abraham Lincoln, champion of the destitute and the wretched, and also Woodrow Wilson whose doctrine of Fourteen Points remains subscribed to and venerated by our people. I ask the American people whether the demonstrations of hostility and enmity taking place outside this great hall reflect the true intent of America's will? What, I ask you plainly, is the crime of the people of Palestine against the American people? Why do you fight us so? Does this really serve your interests? Does it serve the interests of the American masses? No, definitely not. I can only hope that the American people will remember that their friendship with the whole Arab nation is too great, too abiding, and too rewarding for any such demonstrations to harm it.

In any event, in focusing our discussion of the question of Palestine upon historical roots, we do so because we believe that any question now exercising the world's concern must be viewed radically, in the true sense of that word, if a real solution is ever to be grasped. We propose this radical approach as an antidote to an approach to international issues that obscures historical origins behind ignorance, denial and a slavish obedience to the fait accompli.

The roots of the Palestinian question reach back into the closing years of the nineteenth century, in other words, to that period which we call the era of colonialism and settlement and the transition to the eve of imperialism. This was when

the Zionist imperialist plan was born: its aim was the conquest of Palestine by European immigration, just as settlers colonized, and indeed raided, most of Africa. This is the period during which, pouring forth out of the West, colonialism spread into the furthest reaches of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, building colonies everywhere, cruelly exploiting, oppressing, plundering the peoples of those three continents. This period persists into the present. Marked evidence of its totally reprehensible presence can be readily perceived in the racism practised both in South Africa and in Palestine.

Just as colonialism and the settlers dignified their conquests, their plunder and limitless attacks upon the natives of Africa and elsewhere, with appeals to a "civilizing mission," so too did waves of Zionist immigrants disguise their purposes as they conquered Palestine. Just as colonialism used religion, colour, race and language to justify the people's exploitation and its cruel subjugation by terror and discrimination, so too were these methods employed as Palestine was usurped and its people hounded from their national homeland.

Just as colonialism used the wretched, the poor, the exploited as mere inert matter with which to build and to carry out settler colonialism, so too were destitute, oppressed European Jews employed on behalf of world imperialism and of the Zionist leadership. European Jews were transformed into the instruments of aggression; they became the elements of settler colonialism and racial discrimination.

Zionist ideology was utilized against our Palestinian people: the purpose was not only the establishment of Western-style settler colonialism but also the severing of Jews from their various homelands and subsequently their estrangement from their nations. Zionism is an ideology that is imperialistic, colonialist, racist; it is profoundly reactionary and discriminatory; it is united with anti-Semitism in its tenets and is the other side of the same coin. For when what is proposed is that adherents of the Jewish faith, regardless of their national residence, should neither owe allegiance to their homeland nor live on equal footing with its other, non-Jewish citizens — when

that is proposed we hear anti-Semitism being proposed. When it is proposed that the only solution for the Jewish problem is that Jews must alienate themselves from communities or nations of which they have been a historical part, when it is proposed that Jews solve the Jewish problem by immigrating to and settling the land of another people by terrorism and force, this is exactly the same attitude as that of the anti-Semites to the Jews.

Thus, for instance, we can understand the close connection between Rhodes, who promoted settler colonialism in South-east Asia, and Herzl, who had colonialist designs upon Palestine. Having received a certificate of good settler conduct from Rhodes, Herzl then turned around and presented this certificate to the British government, hoping thus to secure a formal resolution supporting Zionist policy. In exchange, the Zionists promised Britain an imperialist base on Palestinian soil so that imperial interests could be safeguarded at the most important chief strategic point in the Middle East.

So the Zionist movement allied itself directly with world colonialism in a common raid on our land. Allow me now to present a selection of historical facts about this alliance.

The Jewish invasion of Palestine began in 1881. Before the first large wave of settlers started arriving, Palestine had a population of half a million, most of these Muslims or Christians, and about 10,000 Jews. Every sector of the population enjoyed the religious tolerance characteristic of our civilization.

Palestine was then a verdant land, inhabited by an Arab people in the course of building its life and enriching its indigenous culture.

Between 1882 and 1917 the Zionist movement settled approximately 50,000 European Jews in our homeland. To do that it resorted to trickery and deceit in order to plant them in our midst. Its success in getting Britain to issue the Balfour Declaration demonstrated the alliance between Zionism and colonialism. Furthermore, by promising to the Zionist movement what was not hers to give, Britain showed how oppressive the rule of colonial-

ism was. As it was then constituted, the League of Nations abandoned our Arab people, and Wilson's pledges and promises came to naught. In the guise of a mandate, British colonialism was cruelly and directly imposed upon us. The mandate document issued by the League of Nations was to enable the Zionist invaders to consolidate their gains in our homeland.

In thirty years the Zionist movement succeeded, in collaboration with its colonialist ally, in settling more European Jews on the land, thus usurping the properties of Palestinian Arabs.

By 1947 the number of Jews had reached 600,000; they owned less than 6 per cent of Palestinian arable land. The figure should be compared with the [Arab] population of Palestine, which at that time was 1,250,000.

As a result of the collusion between the mandatory power and the Zionist movement and with the support of the United States, this General Assembly early in its history approved a recommendation to partition our Palestinian homeland. This took place on November 30, 1947, in an atmosphere of questionable actions and strong pressure. The General Assembly partitioned what it had no right to divide — an indivisible homeland. When we rejected that decision, our position corresponded to that of the real mother who refused to permit Solomon to cut her child in two when the other woman claimed the child as hers. Furthermore, even though the partition resolution granted the colonialist settlers 54 per cent of the land of Palestine, their dissatisfaction with the decision prompted them to wage a war of terror against the civilian Arab population. They occupied 81 per cent of the total area of Palestine, uprooting a million Arabs. Thus, they occupied 524 Arab towns and villages, of which they destroyed 385, completely obliterating them in the process. Having done so, they built their own settlements and colonies on the ruins of our farms and our groves. The roots of the Palestine question lie here. Its causes do not stem from any conflict between two religions or two nationalisms. Nor is it a border conflict between neighbouring states. It is the cause of people deprived of its homeland, dispersed and uprooted,

the majority of whom live in exile and in refugee camps.

With support from imperialist and colonialist powers, headed by the United States of America, this Zionist entity managed to get itself accepted as a United Nations member. It further succeeded in getting the Palestine question deleted from the Agenda of the United Nations and in deceiving world public opinion by presenting our cause as a problem of refugees in need either of charity from do-gooders, or settlement in a land not theirs.

Not satisfied with all this, the racist state, founded on the imperialist-colonialist concept, turned itself into a base of imperialism and into an arsenal of weapons. This enabled it to assume its role of subjugating the Arab people and of committing aggression against them, in order to satisfy its ambitions of further expansion in Palestinian and other Arab lands. In addition to the many instances of aggression committed by this entity against the Arab states, it has launched two large-scale wars, in 1956 and 1967, thereby endangering world peace and security.

As a result of Zionist aggression in June 1967, the enemy occupied Egyptian Sinai as far as the Suez Canal. The enemy occupied Syria's Golan Heights, in addition to all Palestinian land west of the Jordan. All these developments have led to the creation in our area of what has come to be known as the "Middle East Problem." The situation has been rendered more serious by the enemy's persistence in maintaining its unlawful occupation and in further consolidating it, thus establishing a beachhead for world imperialism's thrust against our Arab nation. All Security Council decisions and calls by world public opinion for withdrawal from the lands occupied in June 1967 have been ignored. Despite all the peaceful and diplomatic efforts on the international level, the enemy has not been deterred from his expansionist policy. The only alternative open to our Arab nations, chiefly Syria and Egypt, was to expend exhaustive efforts to prepare, firstly, to resist this barbarous armed invasion by force and, secondly, to liberate Arab lands and to restore the rights of the Palestinian people, after all other peaceful means had failed.

Under these circumstances, the fourth war broke out in October 1973, bringing home to the Zionist enemy the bankruptcy of its policy of occupation and expansion and its reliance on the concept of military might. Despite all this, the leaders of the Zionist entity are far from having learned any lesson from their experience. They are making preparations for the fifth war, resorting once more to the language of military superiority, aggression, terrorism, subjugation and, finally, always to war in their dealings with the Arabs.

It pains our people greatly to witness the propagation of the myth that its homeland was a desert until it was made to bloom by the toil of foreign settlers, that it was a land without a people, and that the settler entity caused no harm to any human being. No, such lies must be exposed from this rostrum, for the world must know that Palestine was the cradle of the most ancient cultures and civilizations. Its Arab people were engaged in farming and building, spreading culture throughout the land for thousands of years, setting an example in the practice of religious tolerance and freedom of worship, acting as faithful guardians of the holy places of all religions. As a son of Jerusalem, I treasure for myself and my people beautiful memories and vivid images of the religious brotherhood that was the hallmark of our Holy City before it succumbed to catastrophe. Our people continued to pursue this enlightened policy until the establishment of the state of Israel and their dispersion. This did not deter our people from pursuing their humanitarian role on Palestinian soil. Nor will they permit their land to become a launching pad for aggression or a racist camp for the destruction of civilization, culture, progress and peace. Our people cannot but maintain the heritage of their ancestors in resisting the invaders, in assuming the privileged task of defending their native land, their Arab nationhood, their culture and civilization, and in safeguarding the cradle of the monotheistic religions.

By contrast, we need only mention briefly some instances of Israel's racist attitudes: its support of the Secret Army Organization in Algeria, its bolstering of the settler-colonialists in Africa — whether in

the Congo, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Rhodesia or South Africa — and its backing of South Vietnam against the Vietnam revolution. One can also mention Israel's continuing support of imperialism everywhere, its obstructionist stand in the Committee of Twenty-four, its refusal to cast its vote in support of independence for the African states, and its opposition to the demands of many Asian, African and Latin American nations, and several other states in the conferences on raw materials, population, the law of the sea, and food. All these facts offer further proof of the character of the enemy who has usurped our land. They justify the honourable struggle which we are waging against it. As we defend a vision of the future, our enemy upholds the myths of the past.

The enemy we face has a long record of hostility even towards the Jews themselves, for there is within the Zionist entity ugly racial discrimination against Oriental Jews. While we were vociferously condemning the massacres of Jews under Nazi rule, Zionist leadership appeared more interested at that time in exploiting them as best it could in order to realize its goal of immigration into Palestine.

If the immigration of Jews to Palestine had had as its objective the goal of enabling them to live side by side with us, enjoying the same rights and assuming the same duties, we would have opened our doors to them, as far as our homeland's capacity for absorption permitted. Such was the case with the thousands of Armenians and Circassians who still live among us in equality as brethren and citizens. But no one can conceivably demand that we submit to or accept that the goal of this immigration should be to usurp our homeland, disperse our people, and turn us into second-class citizens. Therefore, since its inception, our revolution has not been motivated by racial or religious factors. Its target has never been the Jew, as a person, but racist Zionism and aggression. In this sense, ours is also a revolution for the Jew, as a human being. We are struggling so that Jews, Christians, and Muslims may live in equality, enjoying the same rights and assuming the same duties, free from racial or religious discrimination.

a) We distinguish between Judaism and Zionism. While we maintain our opposition to the colonialist Zionist movement, we respect the Jewish faith. Today, almost one century after the rise of the Zionist movement, we wish to warn of its increasing danger to the Jews of the world, to our Arab peoples and to world peace and security. For Zionism encourages the Jew to emigrate from his homeland and grants him an artificially-made nationality. The Zionists proceed with their destructive activities even though these have proved ineffective. The phenomenon of constant emigration from Israel, which is bound to grow as the bastions of colonialism and racism in the world fall, is an example of the inevitability of the failure of such activities.

b) We urge the people and governments of the world to stand firm against Zionist attempts at encouraging world Jewry to emigrate from their countries and to usurp our land. We urge them as well firmly to oppose any discrimination against any human being, as to religion, race, or colour.

c) Why should our people and our homeland be responsible for the problems of Jewish immigration, if such problems exist in the minds of some people? Why do the supporters of these problems not open their own countries, which are much bigger, to absorb and help these immigrants?

Those who call us terrorists wish to prevent world public opinion from discovering the truth about us and from seeing the justice on our faces. They seek to hide the terrorism and tyranny of their acts, and our own posture of self-defence.

The difference between the revolutionary and the terrorist lies in the reason for which each fights. For whoever stands by a just cause and fights for the freedom and liberation of his land from invaders, settlers and colonialists would have been incorrectly called terrorist; the American people in their struggle for liberation from the British colonialists would have been terrorists, the European resistance against the Nazis would be terrorism, the struggle of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples would also be terrorism. It is actually a just and proper struggle of the Asian, African, and Latin American peoples, consecrated by the United Nations Char-

ter and by the Declaration of Human Rights. As to those who fight against just causes, those who wage war to occupy the homelands of others, and to plunder, exploit and colonize their peoples—those are the people whose actions should be condemned, who should be called war criminals: for the just cause determines the right to struggle.

Zionist terrorism which was waged against the Palestinian people to evict them from their country and usurp their land is on record in your documents. Thousands of our people have been assassinated in their villages and towns; tens of thousands of others have been forced by rifle and artillery fire to leave their homes and the crops they have sown in the lands of their fathers. Time and time again our children, women and aged have been evicted and have had to wander in the deserts and climb mountains without any food or water. No one who in 1948 witnessed the catastrophe that befell the inhabitants of hundreds of villages and towns — in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Lydda, Ramleh, and Galilee — no one who has been a witness to that catastrophe will ever forget the experience, even though the mass blackout has succeeded in hiding these horrors as it has hidden the traces of 385 Palestinian villages and towns destroyed at the time and erased from the map. The destruction of 19,000 houses during the past seven years, which is equivalent to the complete destruction of 200 more Palestinian villages, and the great number of maimed as a result of the treatment they were subjected to in Israeli prisons, cannot be hidden by any blackout.

Their terrorism fed on hatred and this hatred was even directed against the olive tree in my country, which they saw as a symbol of our spirit, a flag, and which reminded them of the indigenous inhabitants of the land, a living reminder that the land is Palestinian. Hence they uprooted or killed it by neglect, or used it for firewood. How can one describe the statement by Golda Meir in which she expressed her disquiet about “the Palestinian children born every day”? They see in the Palestinian child, in the Palestinian tree, an enemy which should be exterminated. For tens of years Zionists have been harassing our people’s cultural,

political, social and artistic leaders, terrorizing them and assassinating them. They have stolen our cultural heritage, our popular folklore and have claimed it as theirs. Their terrorism even reached our sacred places in our beloved city of peace, Jerusalem. They have endeavored to deprive it of its Arab (Muslim and Christian) character by evicting its inhabitants and annexing it.

I need not dwell on the burning of the al-Aqsa Mosque, the theft of the treasures of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the disfiguring of so many aspects of its culture and civilization. Jerusalem, with its beauty, and atmosphere redolent of history, bears witness to successive generations of our people who have lived in it, leaving in every corner of it proof of our eternal presence, of our love for it, of our civilization, of our human values. It is therefore not surprising that under its skies the three religions were born and that under that sky these three religions have shone to enlighten mankind so that it might express the tribulations and hopes of humanity, and that it might mark out the road of the future with its hopes.

The small number of Palestinian Arabs whom the Zionists did not succeed in uprooting in 1948 are at present refugees in their own country. Israeli law treats them as second-class citizens — even as third-class citizens since Oriental Jews are second-class citizens — and they have been subject to all forms of racial discrimination and terror after the confiscation of their land and property. They have been victims of bloody massacres such as that of Kafr Qassim; they have been expelled from their villages and denied the right to return, as in the case of the inhabitants of Iqrit and Kafr Bir'im. For 26 years, our population has been living under martial law and has been denied freedom of movement without prior permission from the Israeli military governor — this at a time when an Israeli law was promulgated granting citizenship to any Jew anywhere who wanted to emigrate to our homeland. Moreover, another Israeli law stipulated that Palestinians who were not present in their villages or towns at the time they were occupied are not entitled to Israeli citizenship.

The record of Israeli rulers is replete with acts of terror perpetrated on those of our people who remained under occupation in Sinai and the Golan Heights. The criminal bombardment of the Bahr al-Baqar School and the Abu Za'bal factory in Egypt are but two such unforgettable acts of terrorism. The destruction of the Libyan aircraft is another unforgettable act. The total destruction of the city of Quneitra is yet another tangible instance of systematic terrorism. If a record of Zionist terrorism in south Lebanon were to be compiled, and this terrorism is still continuing, the enormity of its acts would shock even the most hardened: piracy, bombardments, scorched earth, destruction of hundreds of homes, eviction of civilians and the kidnapping of Lebanese citizens. This clearly constitutes a violation of Lebanese sovereignty and is in preparation for the diversion of the Litani River waters.

Need one remind this Assembly of the numerous resolutions adopted by it condemning Israeli aggressions committed against Arab countries, Israeli violations of human rights and the articles of the Geneva Conventions, as well as the resolutions pertaining to the annexation of the city of Jerusalem and its restoration to its former status?

The only description for these acts is that they are acts of barbarism and terrorism. And yet, the Zionist racists and colonialists have the temerity to describe the just struggle of our people as terror. Could there be a more flagrant distortion of truth than this? We ask those who usurped our land, who are committing murderous acts of terrorism against our people and are practising racial discrimination more extensively than the racists of South Africa, we ask them to keep in mind the United Nations General Assembly resolution that called for the expulsion of South Africa from the United Nations. Such is the inevitable fate of every racist country that adopts the law of the jungle, usurps the homeland of others and oppresses its people.

For the past 30 years, our people have had to struggle against British occupation and Zionist invasion, both of which had one intention, namely the usurpation of our land. Six major revolts and tens of

popular uprisings were staged to foil these attempts, so that our homeland might remain ours. Over 30,000 martyrs, the equivalent in comparative terms of 6 million Americans, died in the process.

When the majority of the Palestinian people was uprooted from its homeland in 1948, the Palestinian struggle for self-determination continued in spite of efforts to destroy it. We tried every possible means to continue our political struggle to attain our national rights, but to no avail. Meanwhile we had to struggle for sheer existence. Even in exile we educated our children. This was all a part of trying to survive.

The Palestinian people have produced thousands of engineers, physicians, teachers and scientists who actively participated in the development of the Arab countries bordering on their usurped homeland. They have utilized their income to assist the young and aged amongst their people who could not leave the refugee camps. They have educated their younger brothers and sisters, have supported their parents and cared for their children. All along the Palestinian dream of return. Neither the Palestinian's allegiance to Palestine nor his determination to return waned; nothing could persuade him to relinquish his Palestinian identity or to forsake his homeland. The passage of time did not make him forget, as some hoped he would. When our people lost faith in the international community which persisted in ignoring its rights and when it became obvious that the Palestinians would not recoup one inch of Palestine through exclusively political means, our people had no choice but to resort to armed struggle. Into that struggle it poured its material and human resources and the flower of its youth. We bravely faced the most vicious acts of Israeli terrorism which were aimed at diverting our struggle and arresting it.

In the past ten years of our struggle, thousands of martyrs and twice as many wounded, maimed and imprisoned have been offered in sacrifice, all in an effort to resist the imminent threat of liquidation, to regain the right to self-determination and our right to return to our homeland. With the utmost dignity and the most admirable revolutionary spirit, our Palestinian people have not lost their spirit

either in Israeli prisons and concentration camps or in the great prison of Israeli occupation. The people struggle for sheer existence and continue to strive to preserve the Arab character of their land. Thus they resist oppression, tyranny and terrorism in their grimmest forms.

It is through the armed revolution of our people that our political leadership and our national institutions finally crystallized and a national liberation movement, comprising all Palestinian factions, organizations and capabilities, materialized in the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Through our militant Palestine national liberation movement, our people's struggle has matured and grown enough to accommodate political and social struggle in addition to armed struggle. The Palestine Liberation Organization has been a major factor in creating a new Palestinian individual, qualified to shape the future of our Palestine, not merely content with mobilizing the Palestinians for the challenges of the present.

The Palestine Liberation Organization can be proud of having a large number of cultural and educational activities, even while engaged in armed struggle, and at a time when it faced the increasingly vicious blows of Zionist terrorism. We have established institutes for scientific research, agricultural development and social welfare, as well as centres for the revival of our cultural heritage and the preservation of our folklore. Many Palestinian poets, artists and writers have enriched Arab culture in particular, and world culture generally. Their profoundly humane works have won the admiration of all those familiar with them. In contrast to that, our enemy has been systematically destroying our culture and disseminating racist, colonialist ideologies; in short, everything that impedes progress, justice, democracy and peace.

The Palestine Liberation Organization has earned its legitimacy because of the sacrifice inherent in its pioneering role, and also because of its dedicated leadership of the struggle. It has also been granted this legitimacy by the Palestinian masses, which in harmony with it have chosen it to lead the struggle according to its directives. The Palestine Liberation Organi-

zation has also gained its legitimacy by representing every faction, union or group as well as every Palestinian talent, either in the National Council or in people's institutions. This legitimacy was further strengthened by the support of the entire Arab nation which supports it, and further consecrated during the last Arab Summit Conference, which affirmed the right of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in its capacity as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, to establish an independent national authority on all liberated Palestinian territory.

Moreover, the Palestine Liberation Organization's legitimacy has been intensified as a result of fraternal support given by other liberation movements and by friendly, like-minded nations that stood by our side, encouraging and aiding us in our struggle to secure our national rights.

Here I must also warmly convey the gratitude of our revolutionary fighters and that of our people for the honourable attitudes adopted by the non-aligned countries, the socialist countries, the Islamic countries, the African countries and friendly European countries, as well as all our other friends in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The Palestine Liberation Organization represents the Palestinian people. Because of this, the Palestine Liberation Organization expresses the wishes and hopes of its people. Because of this, too, it brings these very wishes and hopes before you, urging you not to shirk a momentous historic responsibility towards our just cause.

For many years now, our people have been exposed to the ravages of war, destruction and dispersion. They have paid with the blood of their sons that which cannot ever be compensated. They have borne the burdens of occupation, dispersion, eviction and terror more than any other people. And yet all this has made our people neither vindictive nor vengeful. Nor have they caused us to resort to the racism of our enemies. Nor have we lost the true method by which friend and foe are distinguished.

For we deplore all those crimes committed against the Jews; we also deplore all the open and veiled discrimination suffered by them because of their faith.

I am a rebel and freedom is my cause. I know well that many of you present here today once stood in exactly the same position of resistance as I now occupy and from which I must fight. You once had to convert dreams into reality by your struggle. Therefore you must now share my dream. I think this is exactly why I can ask you now to help, as together we bring out our dream into a bright reality, our common dream for a peaceful future in Palestine's sacred land.

As he stood in an Israeli military court, the Jewish revolutionary Ehud Adiv said: "I am no terrorist; I believe that a democratic state should exist on this land." Adiv now languishes in a Zionist prison among his co-believers. To him and his colleagues I send my heartfelt good wishes.

And before those same courts there stands today a brave prince of the church, Archbishop Capucci. Raising his fingers to form the same victory sign used by our freedom-fighters, he said: "What I have done, I have done that all men may live in peace in this land of peace." This princely priest will doubtless share Adiv's grim fate. To him we send our salutations and greetings.

Why therefore should I not dream and hope? For is not revolution the making real of dreams and hopes? So let us work together that my dream may be fulfilled, that I may return with my people out of exile, there in Palestine to live with this Jewish freedom-fighter and his partners, with this Arab priest and his brothers, in one democratic state where Christian, Jew and Muslim live in justice, equality, fraternity.

Is this not a noble goal and worthy of my struggle alongside all lovers of freedom everywhere? For the most admirable thing about this goal is that it is Palestinian, from the land of peace, the land of martyrdom, heroism, and history.

Let us remember that the Jews of Europe and here in the United States have been known to lead the struggles for secularism and the separation of church and state. They have also been known to fight against discrimination on religious grounds. How can they reject this humane and honourable programme for the Holy Land, the land

of peace and equality? How can they continue to support the most fanatic, discriminatory and closed of nations in its policy?

In my capacity as Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization and commander of the Palestinian revolution I proclaim before you that when we speak of our common hopes for the Palestine of tomorrow we include in our perspective all Jews now living in Palestine who choose to live with us there in peace and without discrimination.

In my capacity as commander of the forces of the Palestine Liberation Organization I call upon Jews to turn away one by one from the illusory promises made to them by Zionist ideology and Israeli leadership. They are offering Jews perpetual bloodshed, endless war and continuous thralldom.

We invite them to emerge into a more open realm of free choice, far from their present leadership's efforts to implant in them a Masada complex and make it their destiny.

We offer them the most generous solution — that we should live together in a framework of just peace in our democratic Palestine.

In my formal capacity as Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization I announce here that we do not wish one drop of either Jewish or Arab blood to be shed; neither do we delight in the continuation of killings for a single moment, once a just peace, based on our people's rights, hopes, and aspirations has been finally established.

In my capacity as Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization and commander of the Palestinian revolution I appeal to you to accompany our people in its struggle to attain its right to self-determination. This right is consecrated in the United Nations Charter and has been repeatedly confirmed in resolutions adopted by this august body since the drafting of the Charter. I appeal to you, further, to aid our people's return to its homeland from an involuntary exile imposed upon it by force of arms, by tyranny, by oppression, so that we may regain our property, our land, and thereafter live in our national

homeland, free and sovereign, enjoying all the privileges of nationhood.

I appeal to you to enable our people to set up their national authority and establish their national entity in their own land.

Only then will our people be able to contribute all their energies and resources to the field of civilization and human creativity. Only then will they be able to protect their beloved Jerusalem and make it, as they have done for so many centuries, the

shrine of all religions, free from all terrorism and coercion.

Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom-fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand.

War flares up in Palestine, and yet it is in Palestine that peace will be born.

2. THE SPEECH OF SULEIMAN FRANJIEH

[Suleiman Franjeh, President of Lebanon, was chosen at the Rabat Conference to speak on behalf of all Arab countries during the United Nations General Assembly debate on Palestine. Below is a translation of his speech, given November 14, 1974, from the original French.]¹

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Mr. President and Distinguished Delegates,

As I appear before this august Assembly on behalf of Lebanon and of the heads of state of the other nineteen Arab countries, members of the United Nations, I would like to define the significance and the extent of the mission entrusted to me.

I am fully conscious that in recalling and defending the national rights of the Palestinian people here before you, I am indeed defending the very principles of the United Nations Charter; that in defending the manifest justice of the Palestinian and Arab cause, I am also defending the cause of universal justice itself, for justice is indivisible; and in so doing, I am also defending the cause of peace, for peace is inseparable from justice.

Therefore, I am confident that my endeavour is consonant with the sincere, lasting and fruitful cooperation which must be developed between our Arab world and the world at large.

This is in conformity with the fundamental and unchanging character of Lebanon, that land of tolerance, which is a human synthesis of peace and brother-

hood. For is not Lebanon, thus fashioned by God and by the achievements of its people, a prefiguration of what the world may be once it is delivered from the reign of violence and of policies inspired by racial and religious discrimination?

Lebanon stands by the Palestinian people in their exile from their land and their homes, because of the highest motives of both mind and heart, motives based on human solidarity and Arab brotherhood, not to mention those derived from geography and history. We are situated in the vicinity of Palestine. We have sheltered, as was our duty, hundreds of thousands of our Palestinian brethren, whom Israel has pursued with its unjustifiable acts of violence, so often condemned by various international organs.

At the same time Israel, in its vindictiveness, is bent on attacking the civilian population of Lebanon, repeating as recently as this very week its murderous raids on southern Lebanon. These raids afflict our bodies and souls and threaten our security.

There are still higher considerations which make my country even more qualified to address this assembly of nations. Because of its limited size and its presence and role in the world, Lebanon has explicitly linked its destiny to that of justice. Its very existence is an illustration of the pre-eminence of values named justice, liberty and brotherhood. Faith, charity and tolerance are virtues everywhere; for us,

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they are more than this — they are the very foundation of our state. For all these reasons, my country considers itself a natural messenger of peace based on justice, and in defending the Palestinian people employs an eloquence which goes far beyond that of speech, since it expresses the persuasive power of our way of life and action.

But in addition to the principles of right and justice, we also wish to convey the message of wisdom.

Wisdom teaches that violence is short-lived; that it cannot serve to ensure a true and definitive peace; that it is particularly vain and inhuman when it is expressed against the fundamental rights of a whole people, such as the case of the Palestinian people; that violence can only intensify the determination of this people in its resistance within the occupied territories and its will for liberation exercised from without; that this is the lesson taught by history about all movements of resistance and liberation; and that finally, looking back over the road travelled by our Palestinian brethren for half a century in order to safeguard their identity and national rights, no one could doubt their ultimate success.

In doing them justice today, the United Nations is only advancing the inevitability of history, and thus saving our area and the entire world from new convulsions constantly more grave, more dangerous and, perhaps, more widespread.

In this respect, even the most obstinate blindness must finally yield to manifest realities. Confronted with every aspect of the tragedy, our Arab world has asserted itself in its own reality, for a long time ignored: a land of revolution, a crossroads between three continents, occupying an exceptional strategic position, rich in inexhaustible spiritual and material resources, capable of making a great contribution to all aspects of human progress, if it were assured a climate of untroubled and loyal cooperation in conditions of peace.

Peace? What peace?

Let us listen to the eloquent words of His Holiness Pope Paul VI, so vivid in their immediate appeal:

“Peace is not a trap. Still less is it a totalitarian and pitiless tyranny, and above all not violence. If we seek its true source, we find that it springs from that sovereign sentiment of mankind which we call justice. Why, then, convinced as we are of the irrefutable truth, do we waste time trying to give peace a basis other than justice?”

Mr. President and Distinguished Delegates:

For twenty-five years, since the “abomination of desolation” descended upon the Holy Land, the nations have been all too slow in their sincere and determined search for ways and means which could lead to the peaceful solution of the tragic problem of Palestine. It is not my intention here to draw up an inventory of the mistakes, omissions, and delays which have contributed, since the first resolution adopted by the United Nations in 1947, to the permanent establishment of violence at the very root of this problem, thereby setting in motion a process which has inevitably excluded all chances of other solutions.

I will only recall that throughout this Israel has violated and even flouted all the resolutions of the General Assembly and the decisions of the Security Council, even including those which, since 1969, have “reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, declared that the entire respect of those rights was an indispensable element in the establishment of a just and lasting peace, condemned the governments which were denying the national rights of this people, confirmed the legitimacy of its struggle by all available means, considered that the acquisition and the conservation of a territory, in violation of the right of self-determination, was inadmissible and constituted a flagrant violation of the Charter.”

May I also recall that since 1971, the Assembly has on many occasions solemnly called the Security Council and the member states to take effective measures to ensure their implementation. Moreover, the Assembly has invited member states devoted to the ideals of freedom and peace to lend all their political, moral and material support to peoples which, like the Palestinians, are fighting for their self-deter-

mination and independence. In fact the Palestine question has long been submerged in the intricacies and obscurities of all the international policies which have a bearing on the diverse problems raised by the Middle East situation. The tree has been hidden by the forest.

But now this question has emerged from the obscurity that surrounded it and is being seen more clearly and realistically. Your General Assembly has at last decided to give concrete expression to the idea that has always been evident to us and is now recognized by all — that of the legitimate existence of the Palestinian people — and to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the legitimate representative of that people and to invite it to attend the debate of the Assembly in plenary session.

You have at last heard the truth from those who have suffered the most and are in a position to know. Dialogue with them is valid because they have a natural right to be represented here.

Palestine is now present among us — a Palestine still suffering and with her national rights not yet fully restored, but her very presence here constitutes a step towards the success of a just cause and the culmination of a just fight.

But by recognizing the Palestinian people and their representatives we have reached only half a truth. To reach the whole truth this people must be helped to recover their national rights in full. This is the realistic approach to the heart of the problem. Here, too, lies the key to a fruitful and valid solution that will revive all lost hopes.

May I add that this encouraging manifestation of consciousness on the part of the United Nations, which we hope will be effective this time, is a question of the hap-

piness or misery, even the life or death of millions of human beings. The overflow of this conflict of historic dimensions could not be contained any longer. A new regional war would make peace precarious anywhere in the world.

It is now our role, the role of all of us here, in this Assembly, to assert the rule of law and ensure the triumph of justice. The international community cannot remain indifferent to the sufferings and the justified impatience of the Palestinian people. Nor can it ignore the fact that territories conquered by force must be returned. Greater courage and wisdom are required from us when we look for the solution to this major conflict.

Mr. President and Distinguished Delegates:

The fate which has befallen Jerusalem should in itself have been sufficient to arouse the conscience of the world. Jerusalem is not only a parcel of land. It is the high place *par excellence* from which generations of men have drawn their faith and where they have had their roots. How can we talk of peace when the only place which brings together and unites Muslims, Christians, and Jews around the one God has become a place of divisions and hatred, when the Holy City provides one of the most glaring examples of Israel's refusal to abide by the repeated resolutions of the United Nations? When, in spite of the condemnations of the United Nations and Unesco, Israel obstinately persists in disfiguring, defacing and undermining the Holy Places and, in particular, the foundations of the revered Aqsa Mosque.

We are, perhaps, and we can be on the threshold of a process that will lead to true peace. I call upon your Assembly to seize this opportunity.