Statement by

Her Excellency Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh

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before

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“The Question of Palestine”

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Pls. Check Against Delivery

Mr. President,

On behalf of the United Arab Emirates Delegation, I would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Fodé Seck, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and the esteemed members of this Committee for their efforts to attain justice for the Palestinian people, and for revealing the true repercussions of the Israeli occupation. I wish also to take this opportunity to reaffirm from this podium the message sent by the President of the United Arab Emirates to the Chair of the Committee this morning on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People regarding the continued support of the Government and the people of the United Arab Emirates to the Palestinian people in their struggle to realize their legitimate aspirations to establish an independent sovereign state.

Mr. President

Our discussions today on this topic are especially relevant in view of the grave developments in Palestine, underscored by the persistent impasse of the peace negotiations due to Israel’s failure to carry out its agreed-upon commitments. The growing unrest and serious deterioration of security, humanitarian and social conditions, in the Palestinian territories resulting from the unrelenting aggressive policies taken by Israel against the Palestinian people, particularly in East Jerusalem, continue to negatively affect the situation on the ground.
The alarming daily unilateral security measures taken by Israel, most recently illustrated by the storming of Al Aqsa Mosque by Israeli forces and extremist settlers and the repeated flagrant aggressions against the Palestinian worshipers, including women, have contributed to escalating the current atmosphere of confrontation, leading to retaliatory clashes, tension and violence in the Palestinian territories.

The truth is that the systematic Israeli attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque provokes Muslims all over the world, and will lead to more crises and affect peace and security in the Middle East. In this context, we support the position of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan regarding the administration of the holy Islamic and Christian places in Jerusalem, and we commend its recent endeavors to reduce tension resulting from the unacceptable Israeli practices, and emphasize that Israel must respect the sanctity and inviolability of such holy places and implement its other related obligations under international law.

The large-scale violations committed by Israel in the Palestinian territories now include excavations near the holy places in East Jerusalem, confiscation of additional lands, and destruction of Palestinian properties and infrastructure. The systematic construction of settlements and expansion their areas in villages and towns of the West Bank, especially in the occupied East Jerusalem and its environs. Furthermore, Israel continues its unjust siege on Gaza, and obstructs the efforts of reconstruction and recovery needed to meet the basic emergency needs of its population, which exceeds 1.8 million persons.

Mr. President

The UAE renews its strong condemnation of all war crimes committed by Israel, and welcomes the Secretary-General's recently formed internal investigation committee to investigate Israel’s attacks on buildings, schools and UN facilities in the Gaza Strip, and hopes that this independent investigation is expanded to cover all crimes committed by Israel during the same period which resulted in the death of more than 2189 Palestinians, including 513 children and 269 women at minimum, in order to identify those who are responsible for these crimes and hold them accountable under international criminal law.

In this context, we emphasize that the time has come for the international community, especially the Quartet and the Security Council, to act in accordance with the provisions of international law and the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, including taking effective measures for the protection of
the Palestinian people. In this regard, we stress the urgent priority of the following:

First: demanding Israel to immediately and completely cease all its settlement activities, including its separation wall built in the West Bank and the surroundings of Jerusalem under international supervision, as these activities are null and void.

Second: Compelling Israel to remove all barriers and restrictions preventing the freedom of movement for the Palestinians and their trade and economic activity, and lifting the unjust siege imposed on the Gaza Strip since 2006.

Thirdly: Obligating Israel to release more than five thousand Palestinian prisoners, including those under administrative detention.

In this regard, we emphasize that the justifications given by Israel to maintain its security in the region can’t be proven through its flagrant and repeated violations of its obligations under international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel’s security will be achieved only when it fully complies with its obligations as an occupying power, demonstrates a genuine political will towards achieving a real peace in the region, and cooperates in achieving the two-state solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, in accordance with the Arab peace initiative.

Mr. President

The UAE, which is deeply concerned about the dire and unprecedented humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, welcomes the commencement of the operations of the temporary Gaza reconstruction mechanism earlier this month, and supports the very important role played by the UNRWA and other international organizations in the implementation of this mechanism. The UAE also urges the international community to pressure Israel to fully and unconditionally cooperate with this mechanism through removing all restrictions put in place more than 14 months ago to allow the entry of the construction materials needed for the rebuilding of vital projects in Gaza. For its part, the United Arab Emirates will continue to fulfill its commitment of paying $200 million in aid for Gaza, as part of its direct and indirect financial, humanitarian and development aid programs.

We also welcome the important role played by Egypt in its continuous support for the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people, and we call upon the
international community to strengthen its political and development support to the Palestinian National Authority to enable it carry out its responsibilities.
Mr. President, In conclusion, we emphasize that the time has come for Israel to realize that its existence as a secure country relies on normalizing its relations and establishing stable economic cooperation with the countries of the region, which requires it to reconsider its aggressive positions against the Palestinian people and neighboring countries. We also stress the importance of achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement for the Palestinian issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel and neighboring countries in mutual peace and security in the region.

Thank you Mr. President,