Plenary of the 69th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations
Agenda Item 36: Question of Palestine
Agenda Item 35: The Situation in the Middle East

Statement by:
HE Mr Ahmed Sareer, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Maldives to the United Nations

24 November 2014

Thank you Mr President,

On behalf of the Republic of Maldives, it is an honour for me to address this august assembly during this international year of solidarity with the Palestinian people. My delegation takes this opportunity to express once again its unyielding support to the people of Palestine and that of the entire region. It is with great sadness that we bear witness to new and continuing atrocities by those who choose to promote violence, hatred and fear.

This statement addresses both the agenda item on the question of Palestine, and that on the situation in the Middle East, and thus my delegation extends its thanks to the Secretary General for his reports under these agenda items. We also thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its report.

Mr President,

The inability of this Assembly to mitigate unending streams of hatred, that fuel decade long conflicts in the region, is one of the enduring failures of our community of nations. There is no blemish as dark upon the visage of this organization as that of the occupation of the State of Palestine. Generations are living and dying under such ignominy and repression that cycles of violence, hatred and fear are eternally perpetuated. Though we, as an international community, call for peace, we must understand that peace cannot be found at the end of the barrel of a gun. Peace cannot be achieved by apartheid in the guise of semi-autonomy. Peace can only be achieved through the end of occupation.

Once again, the Maldives calls for a two state solution recognizing the sovereign and independent State of Palestine, based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. Until that day, my delegation will continue to acknowledge the flagrant violations of international law which regularly occur under occupation.

We are especially distressed by recent developments, including increased tensions in occupied East Jerusalem and in the Gaza Strip. The Secretary General’s report noted with regards to the most recent assault, that “during the offensive, 2,189 Palestinians were killed, 1,486 of them identified as civilians, including 513 children and 269 women, and 11,100 were injured, including 3,374 children, 2,088 women and 410 elderly persons. It is estimated that up to 1,000 of the injured children will have a permanent disability and up to 1,500 orphaned children will need sustained support from the child protection and welfare sectors”.

This loss of life and limb is supplemented by the destruction of essential infrastructure, theft of natural resources, and daily forms of oppression. The report notes that according to official statistics, Israel arrested more than 805,000 Palestinians over the course of this conflict, and that more than 200 have died in Israeli jails as a result of torture, denial of medical treatment or deliberate killing.

Mr President,

Continued excessive and disproportionate use of force against Palestinian civilians and infrastructure are part of an institutionalized policy of collective punishment. A key example of this is the reinstatement of a policy demolishing the family homes of Palestinians suspected of crimes. The Maldives condemns any criminal activities by whomsoever they are committed, while at the same time condemning institutionalised policies of collective punishment as a flagrant violations of international law.

My delegation would like to draw special attention to Israeli settlements, whose construction have more than doubled in 2013 and attempt to alter the nature and character of the State of Palestine. These settlements are illegal and have been condemned by this General Assembly, by the Human Rights Council, by the Economic and Social Council, by the International Court of Justice and by the Security Council. Yet despite this unanimity, more settlements are constructed and more international corporations relocate and support these settlements. The overwhelming international consensus has not manifested itself in tangible outcomes.

Mr President,

Policies of hatred and oppression in Palestine have radicalized generations across the region. Its neighbours face constant instability from ideologies perpetuated by hatred and today the region faces one of its biggest threats in the form of the so-called Islamic State. State and non-state actors in the region are using religion to justify violence and the violations of international humanitarian law. The Government and the people of Maldives, strongly condemn those groups, their ideologies and their activities.

In Iraq, the Maldives remains deeply concerned that almost 2 million citizens have been internally displaced during the course of the year, and that thousands more flee for their lives every day. The situation is just as dire for more than 3 million Syrians who are currently refugees abroad, while 11 million Syrians within the country are in desperate need of humanitarian aid. Unfortunately, ongoing relentless violence prohibits aid from reaching more than half these civilians. The Secretary General noted that many “ordinary people are denied the basics required for their survival; food, healthcare, clean water... when assistance is available a short drive away.”

Mr President,

The challenges that the Middle East region faces are neither national nor regional. Instead their challenges are manifestations of the global struggle to eradicate hatred, fear and ultimately violence from our community of nations. It is our duty to lead the way, to end these cycles of violence, and go beyond the surface of the region’s problems to the instability at its core.

Thank you