



**Statement delivered by Mr. Ahmed Al-Kuwari,
Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations
UN General Assembly Second Committee
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Mr. President,

I have the honor to congratulate you on the assumption of your chairmanship, and I am pleased to deliver this statement in my capacity as coordinator of the Working Group on Development for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Mr. President,

ESCWA's Report "*Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan*" (A/72/90-E/2017/71), attests, with facts, numbers and statistics, to a systematic and escalating pattern of human rights violations and violations of international law and international humanitarian law as a result of the illegal, oppressive and destructive policies and measures that continue to be carried out by Israel, the occupying Power.

Mr. President,

The aforementioned ESCWA report correctly stated that Israel employs discriminatory policies and practices, excessive use of force and mobility restrictions, including the blockade on Gaza, settlement expansion, property destruction and exploitation of natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The impact of these policies on the Palestinian people, society and economy, as the report correctly states, “is multilayered and has accumulated over the decades of occupation.”

The Note of the United Nations Secretary General on the report further underscores that “The cumulative impact of such policies and practices is not confined to violations of international law, including the rights of the population under occupation; it also exacerbates the social and economic conditions of that population”.

Despite several calls by the international community to halt its illegal policies and measures, and despite the fact that colonial settlements pose the largest obstacle to the realization of the two-State solution, Israel, the occupying Power has not only continued, but has intensified, its illegal actions, which includes its colonial settlement enterprise in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Even conservative figures show that Israeli settlement construction has increased by 85% in 2017, when compared to 2016. More than 56 settlement plans have been approved by the

Israeli government since January 2017 allowing the construction of more than 5000 colonial settlement units across the Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem. These figures do not reflect the most recent decision of the Israeli occupation authorities to build more than 3,000 settlement units in various colonies erected on confiscated Palestinian properties in various parts of the West Bank, including in the illegal settlement of Givat Hamatous and in the heart of the city of Hebron/Al-khaleel. In this context, it is worth noting that Israel, the occupying Power, granted a separate municipal structure with urban planning authority to 400 Israeli settlers illegally scattered amongst 300,000 Palestinians in Hebron/Al-khaleel, where they enjoy Israeli-only streets and transportation. In this context, we wish to remind Member States of the call of the Security Council Resolution 2334 for distinguishing, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.

Mr. President,

Demolition of donor-funded humanitarian assistance structures had also increased. In January 2017, an OCHA report cited data provided by the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA), which confirmed that “by the end of 2016 there were approximately 12,500 final demolition orders outstanding against Palestinian-owned structures across Area C”. Moreover, the occupying Power continues with its exploitation of natural resources; the segregation, isolation and obstruction of Palestinian movement by numerous measures, including the annexation, apartheid Wall, and a permit regime, hundreds of

checkpoints. All of this leads us to conclude that Israel is more interested in consolidating its colonial regime over the Palestinian land, rather than achieving a just peace and security.

All of these violations must cease and Israel must be compelled to respect international law. Here, we reiterate that the Palestinian people cannot remain the exception to the responsibility to protect civilians from atrocities and flagrant breaches of the law. We stress that the matter of accountability is as urgent as addressing the humanitarian crisis, for without it Israel's impunity and depravity against the Palestinian people will surely be further emboldened with disastrous impact.

Mr. President,

It is axiomatic that the only way to end the suffering of the Palestinian people and make tangible progress towards peace, security and prosperity is by compelling Israel to comply with international law, without exception and end its half-century long occupation. Indeed, it is morally, legally and politically unacceptable to allow this to continue. Failure to reach outcome will only increase the human suffering and lead to further destabilization of this already grave situation, with far-reaching consequences. It is also imperative to enable Palestine to pursue genuine development, in line with the 2030 agenda for sustainable development unanimously adopted by the entire international community, and to ensure viable economic and social conditions for the Palestinian people, which can never be truly achieved

under occupation. We thus appeal for the continued support of all concerned Member States, as well as of the UN and its specialized agencies and programs, to assist the Palestinian people in their steadfast efforts to achieve their rights, including to self-determination, and fulfill their legitimate national aspirations and to live in justice and dignity in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Thank you, Mr. President.