

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Majid Takht Ravanchi**  
**Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations**  
**On “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”**  
**Before the United Nations Security Council**  
**New York, 23 April 2020**

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*In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful*

**Mr. President,**

The situation in Palestine has recently deteriorated owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Now the Palestinian people are faced with two great challenges, namely, the continued occupation of Palestine and the outbreak of this deadly disease, which, in turn, is a serious concern and needs to be addressed properly.

Despite the strong resistance of the Palestinians against the occupation of their ancestral land as well as their longstanding struggle for the realization of their inherent right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, this crisis has lasted for well over seven decades. The Palestinian question, as the world’s longest crisis, has not yet been settled because the Israeli regime has been allowed to continue all its unlawful acts and inhumane practices with total impunity.

The Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, has been unable to end the occupation of Palestine, to protect the very basic rights of millions of oppressed Palestinians at home and abroad, or to confront an occupying regime that has systematically violated international law and committed all core international crimes.

The United States, through violations of the peremptory norms and basic principles of international law, disregarding all standards of international conduct and flouting all principles of humanity and morality, as well as by abusing its status as a permanent member of the Council, continues to completely, systematically and unreservedly shield the Israeli regime.

Those unjust measures have emboldened the occupying Power to commit more crimes with even greater brutality and to conduct more destabilizing activities in such a volatile region as the Middle East. The continued construction and expansion of settlements, the threat to annex parts or all of the West Bank, the continued inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip and the systematic violation of the sovereignty of Syria and Lebanon are only a few of the practices of the Israeli regime that continue in gross violation of international law.

The Israeli regime must therefore be compelled, first and foremost, to end the occupation of all the Palestinian territories as well as the occupied Syrian Golan and parts of Lebanon and put an end to all its destabilizing activities in the region.

With respect to the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation in Palestine, in particular the Gaza Strip, is extremely alarming, including as a result of the illegal Israeli blockade and military aggressions against Gaza, widespread poverty, high population density and an inadequate health system resulting from many years of occupation and blockade. According to United Nations reports, Palestine is exceptionally vulnerable to infection and mortality as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

To address the unprecedented health and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 on the life of Palestinians, the international community must take concrete measures.

In that context, Israel must be forced to end its more-than-a-decade-long cruel blockade against Gaza, permit the access of Palestinians to all health and medical services required for the detection, treatment and prevention of the further spread of the coronavirus disease, and release all Palestinian prisoners from the overcrowded Israeli jails, where they are at high risk of infection.

In conclusion, I must stress that the serious, severe and systematic violations of international law by the Israeli regime continue to gravely erode the credibility of and trust and confidence in the Council. The Council must live up to its responsibilities in terms of preventing crimes and threats by the Israeli regime and support in practice the full realization of all the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

**I thank you, Mr. President.**