

**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, 21 July 2020**

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

**Mr. President,**

Today the decades-long suffering of the Palestinian people has become manifold as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the intensification of oppressive measures by the Israeli regime. What has made this horrific humanitarian situation in Palestine more bitter and intolerable is the regime’s continued brazen determination to further advance its unlawful expansionist policies.

Under the current unprecedented circumstances, where the situation in Palestine and the region as a whole has become further entangled and complicated, the international community has a serious responsibility to do everything in its power to address the crisis and prevent the further deterioration of regional and international peace and security.

That must start with the Security Council, which, according to the Charter of the United Nations, has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The situation of Palestine is, first and foremost, a result of the Council’s decades-long inaction in the face of the expansionist policies and unlawful practices of the Israeli regime. In order to prevent the persistent erosion of trust and confidence in the Council, and in the United Nations in general, the Council must act in accordance with its responsibility under the Charter.

Parallel to the consideration of this situation in the Security Council, the international community must also put collective coordinated pressure on the United States to compel it to put an end to its irresponsible policy of unreservedly supporting the unlawful acts of the Israeli regime, as well as its complete and systematic shielding of Israel from the Council’s measures, thus emboldening the regime to continue committing crimes with total impunity.

Unfortunately, the support of the United States has continued unabated over the past seven decades, in flagrant violation of the basic principles of international law, in contempt of all standards of international conduct and counter to all principles of humanity and morality.

While the occupation of Palestine is the main cause of the Middle East crisis, the Israeli regime, by revealing its plan to annex significant parts of the occupied Palestinian territory, has opened a new chapter in its expansionist policy, which, if unchecked, would further

exacerbate the already tense situation in the Middle East.

As a peremptory norm of international law, the occupation and acquisition of territory by force is prohibited and inadmissible. Therefore, the annexation of even the smallest part of the occupied Palestinian territory would be a gross violation of the basic principles of international law and the Charter. In fulfilment of their legal obligations under international law, all States must therefore refuse to recognize such annexation.

Additionally, the Israeli regime must also be compelled to put an end to its continued construction and expansion of settlements, as well as the sustained inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip. The latter is more urgent given the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Palestinians' dire need for food, medicine and medical equipment to treat the sick and prevent the further spread of the coronavirus.

Given the current reports about the pitiable condition of the Palestinians in Israeli prisons, the regime must also be forced to release the Palestinian prisoners — a need that is now urgent due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, ending the Israeli regime's occupation of other Arab territories must be the focus of all measures taken by the international community, including the Security Council. Accordingly, the regime must be compelled to end its occupation of all Palestinian territories, as well as the occupied Syrian Golan and parts of Lebanon. In addition, it must put an end to all its destabilizing activities in the region, including the systematic violation of the sovereignty of Syria and Lebanon.

As I once again stress the need to end the decades of occupation, aggression, crime, death and destruction in Palestine, I would like to reiterate that the Islamic Republic of Iran continues supporting the just cause of the Palestinian people and the full realization of all their inalienable rights, including their inherent right to self-determination and to establish an independent Palestinian State in all of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

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