

*Permanent Observer Mission
of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations*



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لدولة فلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

10 October 2022

Statement by Loureen Sayej, Third Secretary, before the 77th Session of the General Assembly Meeting of the Sixth Committee on Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (Agenda Item 84)

Mr. Chair,

We align ourselves with the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The rule of law is the guarantor of freedom, dignity, equality, justice, and stability. Under the rule of law, everyone is accountable; the powerless is protected and the powerful is contested.

As the world continues to witness the advancement of the rule of law, some are left behind, denied, and excluded, and some continue to breach it, thinking that they are shielded from the consequences of their own violations.

Despite being deprived of its protections for decades, the Palestinian people still believe in the rule of law, continue to fight for its authority, and exemplify its indispensability. Indeed, our Basic Law states that the principle of the rule of law shall be the basis of governance in Palestine, setting in motion a society anchored in respect for basic rights of all.

The rule of law also constitutes the legal and moral foundation of our just cause towards independence. Stemming from this belief, the State of Palestine joined tens of international treaties, including the human rights treaties, without reservations, and actively participated in the codifications of others.

The State of Palestine is working with national and international partners, as well as the United Nations, to ensure the harmonization and implementation of these treaties. We have created national committees and groups of experts to guarantee the rights of the Palestinian citizen and protect the most vulnerable amongst us, as per international responsibilities and obligations.

Mr. Chair,

The supremacy of the law, equality before the law, and accountability for breaching the law are the fundamental principles guiding our relations and according us predictability and legitimacy.

Yet, there are those who have systematically and deliberately undermined these principles, claiming for themselves a different set of rules than those enshrined in international law. Such exceptionalism, we have long warned, undermines our multilateral system and our international law-based order.

In Palestine, we are well placed to speak of these double standards. For 75 years, we have witnessed how rules applied for some and were suspended for others; how accountability depended on the identity of the perpetrators or the identity of their victims; and how international mechanisms were activated there and systematically blocked here.

This selective justice has allowed for might to trump rights, power to supplant justice, and impunity to subvert accountability. The fact is: there is no rule of law if there is no will to enforce it on the ground, on our ground, in Palestine. This is the ultimate test for the efficacy of the rule of law at the international level.

A permanent court to prosecute individuals who commit war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and crime of aggression, strikes at the essence of the rule of law and is critical to guarantee its durability.

Therefore, we turned to the International Criminal Court, seeking justice, instead of vengeance. We joined this Court of last resort to prevent recurrence of atrocity crimes against our people, because we believed in the words and ideals enshrined in the Rome Statute; because we believed we were not less human or less deserving to enjoy the protection of rule of law.

The State of Palestine will continue to cooperate, fully and effectively, with the International Criminal Court and other international mechanisms and bodies, to ensure accountability for crimes and to uphold the rule of law.

We call on the international community to ensure the protection, independence, and impartiality of our International Criminal Court, and to deter any attacks or politicization of its essential work.

Mr. Chair,

The permanence of the rule of law is embodied in the universal power of the General Assembly, the enforcement power of the Security Council, and the judicial power of the International Court of Justice. Respect for, and compliance with, UN Resolutions and Court's decisions and Advisory Opinions is indispensable to preserving the rule of law.

We recall here that eighteen years have passed since the Advisory Opinion of the Court on the Wall made clear determinations regarding the illegality of Israeli policies. The Court underlined that Israeli policies would amount to de facto annexation, in breach of the cardinal principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. Rather than reversing them, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued its plans to annex maximum Palestinian land with minimum Palestinian people, and to confine us in enclaves, depriving us of our rights, lands, and resources.

Finally, the State of Palestine reiterates its unwavering commitment to the rule of law, the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the essence of humanity, and the centrality of human rights and dignity. The State of Palestine will continue to work tirelessly to ensure the triumph of universal values, for our people and for all peoples.