

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



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة  
لدولة فلسطين  
لدى الأمم المتحدة

02 October 2024

**Statement by Loureen Sayej, Third Secretary, before the 79<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly Meeting of the Sixth Committee on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism (Agenda Item 110)**

Madam Chair,

Against all odds, and in spite of 76 years of erasure and ongoing Nakba, the State of Palestine is delivering its statement for the first time seated among Member States and in order of inscription. So, allow us to extend our gratitude to our former neighbors and forever friends, the Holy See and the European Union, and express our pleasure to be seated between our new neighbors and old friends, Sri Lanka and Sudan. We are grateful for the overwhelming support by the international community and to all the other colleagues for their warm embrace as we are one step closer to join the global family and community of nations one step closer to the 194<sup>th</sup> Member of these United Nations.

Consistent with its longstanding policy and engagements in the 6<sup>th</sup> Committee, the State of Palestine will continue to advance the universality of international law and end impunity for its violations.

Mr. President,

The State of Palestine aligns itself with the statements made by Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

For 76 years, the Palestinian people have endured the gravest forms of terrorism: oppression, displacement, colonialism, illegal occupation, blockades, persecution, apartheid, and now genocide. Their legitimate struggle to self-determination, just like many before them, has been criminalized and given three choices by the occupier: ethnic cleansing, apartheid, or genocide. A systematic criminality using death, destruction, and terror, to annihilate an entire people.

We have enough history to recognize that colonial terrorism is a threat to our international peace and security and has, historically, led to the commission of mass atrocities against indigenous peoples of the land.

Yet, and in the face of such brutality, we have chosen the peaceful and legal paths and approached these United Nations warning of the consequences of Israeli impunity and international inaction, condemning terrorism and violence against civilians, calling for international protection, and demanding that the international community, collectively, address the conditions conducive to such terrorism.

We have insisted that international law is our reference, and that the realization of our rights is the necessary condition of shared peace and security.

We have called on the international community to save lives, all lives.

76 years of Israeli impunity has enabled unspeakable violence and systematic oppression against the Palestinian people to expand a settler colonial State and maintain a racist and religious ideology of supremacy that allows it to treat the Palestinian people as what their officials call “human animals”.

76 years of impunity inevitably leading to this ongoing genocide.

There is no red line imposed by legality, rationality or humanity that Israel has not crossed.

There is no international law that Israel has not violated.

There is no crime that Israel not committed.

There is no resolution, no ICJ order, that Israel has not rejected.

There is no weapon, prohibited or not, that Israel has not used, its officials even called for dropping atomic bombs on Gaza.

There is no form of terrorism that Israel has not weaponized and its representative, just this morning, sat in the room threatening to spread their terror to the entire region by saying “there is no such place far away for us”.

“They are all terrorists, and they should also be destroyed”, said Israeli Minister of National Security in November 2023.

For an entire year, Israel has done just that. It has committed genocide through atrocities and terrorism to destroy Palestinian life. Israel’s genocidal intent is rooted in the belief that the enemy is embedded in the fabric of Palestinian life. That the fabric of Palestinian life is “terrorism” and must be eliminated. Israel can kill any Palestinian and call them either “terrorist” or a human shield to justify their murder. It uses both terms extremely loosely so they can cover anyone and everyone.

For Israel, it rejects our existence so anything a Palestinian does short of dying is terrorism. Even our death is terrorism as they hold our bodies in morgues deny us burial. Deny us story, a context to our life and death. They want to erase us from history and geography.

This barbarity that the whole world has been a witness to covers a minuscule of one year of Israel’s terror; can you imagine the past 75 years?

So it is beyond belief that that some still speak of a right to self-defense of an illegal occupying Power that has made clear it is seeking blind vengeance, forced transfer, annihilation of our people, and destabilization of our region. An illegal occupying Power which is standing trial for genocide before the ICJ and whose forces are listed on the shame list of child violators.

Israel says that there is no justification for terrorism and pretends to express sorrow for the Palestinian people it kills but sits in this room brazenly justifying how for 76 years, it had to dispossess us, how it had to illegally occupy our land, how it had to kill our people, how it had to impose a system of racial segregation and apartheid of racial and religious supremacy, had to starve us, had to drop hundreds of two-thousand-pound bombs on our children, steal our lands, change the names of our villages, kill our children, terrorize our people, conduct a biological warfare paralyzing our children, in the name of its security.

But there is no right to security that trumps the right of a nation to self-determination. There is no right to self-defense of an illegal occupier. There is no right to commit genocide or weaponize food. There is no right to kill 16,000 children, including 700 babies who were born and killed under genocide, and there is no right to cause the biggest cohort of child amputee in history. There is no right to gang rape detainees, including by weaponry. There is no right to bomb UN installations or WCK envoy or kill over 250 humanitarian personnel. No right to attack churches and mosques and obliterate universities and schools.

There is no right to threaten international peace and security, blatantly, constantly, recklessly, dangerously, to maintain its oppression, its illegal occupation, its settler colonial project.

Just like it has criminalized our existence and any opposition to its oppression. Israel has also gone after those who are a witness to our plight and those who are responsible for the enforcement of international law. It seeks to designate a United Nations General Assembly mandated agency, UNRWA, as a “terrorist organization” and has declared the Secretary-General of the UN persona-non-grata. It has shredded the UN Charter from the rostrum of the General Assembly, the same rostrum where its Prime Minister, for second year in a row, brandished a map of the Middle East erasing Palestine and the Palestinian people. Israeli representatives called for the demolition of the UN building and accused members of the Security Council and the entire UN membership, the Prosecutor of the ICC, the ICJ, civil society, students, human rights defenders, journalist, diplomats, lawyers, protestors, anyone who calls for the adherence to international law ...of supporting terrorism. Inciting against Palestinian Ambassador by calling him “a terrorist in a suit”. If those of us, and most of us in this room, who resort to international law and peaceful settlement of dispute are labelled as terrorists? Then what do we call a settler colonial apartheid regime that commits the most sadistic and organized barbarity in modern history against a civilian population, half of which is children?

The incitement by Israel, a Member State, against the United Nations under the pretext of “terrorism” has real life consequences. Such attacks against the United Nations, its Secretary General and its agencies are dangerous and threaten the lives and well-being of not just Palestine’s refugees but millions of people who rely on the UN and its humanitarian agencies for basic survival.

This is why, today, more than ever, the State of Palestine reaffirms the need for the finalization of the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism and the necessity to uphold the right to self-determination of peoples, notably of those struggling to realize their legitimate rights under colonial or alien domination and foreign occupation, as enshrined in international law.

Without a draft Convention, counter-terrorism discourse is becoming a counter-rights discourse, counter-life discourse, and counter-UN discourse, weaponized to both serve political interests over the common good and to commit mass atrocities, corroding the integrity and efficacy of the global legal order, an order that, if destroyed, we can neither revive it nor survive without.

There is no time more pressing. There is no greater responsibility on the international community.

The State of Palestine will continue to advance multilateral efforts and robust international cooperation on countering terrorism, including through cooperation agreements with over 80 states around the world and in fulfilling its obligations therein. We stress the international community's responsibility to hold Israel accountable for its terrorism, and to classify the settlers and Jewish settlement movements as terrorist groups and organizations and include them on global terrorist lists, and to work at all levels, including United Nations. We commend the States who have placed sanctions on settler individual and groups for their terrorism and encourage more integrated and comprehensive approach to hold the occupying Power accountable for all these crimes and to ensure the safety and security of the Palestinian people.

We are committed to work towards providing an organizational framework for fighting terrorism, imposing accountability measures, and insisting upon respect for human dignity and the international rule of law. We unequivocally condemn and reject all terrorist attacks against civilians, and are on record with this abiding condemnation.

The Palestinian people and their just cause for freedom remain the pivotal test of the efficacy of this multilateral system and its dignified fight against terrorism. This fight is about equality and non-discrimination; it is about justice and fairness; it is about self-determination and freedom; it is about the rule of law and the global order. We reiterate that only those who adhere to their obligations under international law can truly call themselves equal partners in our global fight against terrorism; the law is what distinguishes us from the terrorists, law is what distinguishes peace loving states from rogue states, and it is intrinsic to the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture.