



15 October 2025

Statement by Loureen Sayej, Second Secretary, before the 80th Session of the General Assembly Meeting of the Sixth Committee on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (Agenda Item 86)

Mr. Chair,

We align ourselves with the statement made by Oman on behalf of the Arab Group.

For all the topics that we discuss in the Sixth Committee, the human suffering borne out of disasters, natural and human made, should define the contours of our deliberations.

While science tells us that our planet is changing in ways that will have profound impacts on humanity, our lived reality confirms that the costs of such impact is measured in the lost lives and livelihoods, destroyed homes and disappearing shores, recurrent earthquakes and widespread fires.

For disasters in armed conflicts, the risk is higher and is increasing, requiring innovative solutions and greater collaborations.

No State can meet the challenges alone; and no one should stand on the sidelines.

Stemming from this belief, the State of Palestine welcomed the draft articles by ILC on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters and we reiterate our support to the ILC and for their invaluable contribution to the codification of international law in this field and other fields.

The State of Palestine also welcomed and co-sponsored Resolution 79/128 of 4 December 2024 on the elaboration and conclusion of a legally binding instrument on the protection of persons in the event of disasters by the end of 2027. We thank the core group of States that led the negotiation on the resolution.

The State of Palestine is keen in ensuring that the modalities to be decided on will lead to constructive, effective, and comprehensive outcome and by consensus, for all persons and nations affected by disasters.

The State of Palestine will also participate in the resumed session and will study the consolidated text including the draft articles and the proposals submitted by Governments to ensure that it maintains its inclusive framework, a broad definition of disasters, and reflects the humanitarian principles — humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence and non-discrimination — for cooperation and assistance.

For the State of Palestine, developing a legal multilateral framework for a more effective protection of persons in the event of disasters as well as providing guidance on cooperation must be rooted in a rights-based approach for the victims, first and foremost, and ensure that a response to the disaster respects their rights and their dignity in all circumstances.

Our deliberations should give primacy to human life and dignity and bring clarity and consistency. In this regards, we reiterate support the inclusion of ‘human dignity’ as an autonomous provision as a recognition

that it is the core and guiding principle informing and underpinning IHRL and applicable laws, including human rights treaties. Likewise, it is recognized in IHL, including common article 3 among others. We also reiterate that "under its jurisdiction and control" encompasses territories that extend beyond the sovereign territories of the state, including occupied territories

The duty to cooperate applies not only among States but also toward other humanitarian actors (INGOS and NGOS). The State of Palestine reiterates the indispensable role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and their practical experience on the ground, including in the State of Palestine and most present in the Gaza Strip, the biggest human disaster at the national and international level, and their valuable contribution to the discussion. We suggest adding "United nations and its relevant agencies". As the commentary explains, the United Nations is rightly singled out for special mention given the central role it plays in receiving requests for assistance. We agree with commentary's explanation of the important role of humanitarian NGOs in providing assistance in response to disasters, particularly in armed conflict, as enshrined in Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols.

Finally, on every continent, disasters and human suffering, whether natural or human made, have claimed untold victims. But we have pressed forward, slowly, steadily, to make a system of international rules and norms that are better and stronger and more consistent rooted in solidarity and empathy and aimed to relief human suffering, to end it, and preserve the dignity and sanctity of human life. We hope that a legally binding instrument will foster international cooperation in protecting persons in disasters and help build a resilient international community.