



45th Session of the Human Rights Council

Item 7: General Debate on the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories, during the 45th session of the UN Human Rights Council

30 September 2020

Statement by Sri Lanka

Madam President,

Sri Lanka aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Non Aligned Movement.

Sri Lanka's long held principled position on this matter has been clear. We recognize the legitimate and inalienable right of the people of Palestine to statehood and to the natural resources in their territory. Any form of annexation, irrespective of its size, would constitute a violation of international law, jeopardize prospects for a peaceful settlement to the issue and cause destabilization of peace and security in the Middle East region.

Recent UN reports, including by the Secretary General, have indicated continued human rights violations of the Palestinian people in the OPT. We therefore urge Israel to abandon completely its annexation plans as well as similar activities, and respect the rights of the Palestinian people to fundamental freedoms and security. We echo the expectation of the Secretary General that the recent agreement would lead to an opportunity for re-engagement for constructive and meaningful negotiations to resolve conflict in line with the two-state solution based on relevant UN resolutions and international law.

We note with concern the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and in Israel consequent to COVID-19 and urge both parties to work in cooperation with the international community in the fight against the pandemic. We appreciate the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for responding to the new humanitarian challenges in the OPT and call the international community for strengthened support to their activities.

While recognizing the legitimate and sensitive security concerns of both the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples, Sri Lanka observes that uncertainty that continues in the region will only contribute to further deepening the crisis, and we encourage both parties to exercise maximum restraint.

Sri Lanka remains committed to supporting a negotiated settlement fully in line with the internationally agreed parameters of two states living side by side in harmony with one another on the basis of the 1967 borders.

Thank you.