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Item 7

Mr. President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

I speak today on behalf of eleven Palestinian human rights organisations.¹ Together, we commend the work of the International Fact-Finding Mission on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and welcome its presentation here today.

We are compelled to remind the Council, however, that in 1979 a UN Security Council commission on settlements was established, which reached similar findings to those of this Mission: that Israel's settlement policy 'is an official government programme' resulting in the 'annexation of lands' and the 'containment [and] expulsion of the Palestinian inhabitants'.

Thirty-four years later, the number of settlers in the OPT has increased fivefold to over half a million, the number of settlements has doubled, and the number of dunums of land appropriated by Israel has risen from 1.5 million to 5.6 million dunums.

The significance of the report before us today lies in its reiteration of Member States' obligations stemming from Israel's breaches of peremptory norms of international law, including the denial of the right to self-determination, the prohibition of the extensive destruction and appropriation of private property and the prohibition of colonialism and apartheid. In case of breaches of peremptory norms, all States are under an obligation not to recognise the situation as lawful; not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the unlawful situation; and to cooperate to bring the illegal conduct to an end.

Despite these obligations, concrete measures have yet to be taken to reverse Israel's policies. Given Israel's refusal to recognise its obligations as the Occupying Power under international human rights law and the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the absence of domestic judicial remedy for Palestinians in the Israeli legal system, recourse must be had at the international level.

We therefore urge the Human Rights Council to fully endorse this report and to request the Secretary General to report upon on the implications and implementation of its recommendations, particularly those to Third States, to the UN General Assembly at its 68th session.

¹ The Palestinian Human Rights Organisations Council includes: Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Al-Dameer Association for Human Rights, Al-Haq, Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Badil Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Defence for Children International - Palestine Section, Ensan Center for Human Rights and Democracy, Hurriyat - Centre for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights, Jerusalem Center for Legal Aid and Human Rights, Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling.