

Statement delivered by
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Chairperson, Excellencies, Delegates,

We salute you on this 44th Session of the FAO Conference and we hope that we will achieve the objectives. I speak to you today on behalf of the Palestinian people that is currently subjected to genocide in the Gaza Strip. At the hands of Israel, the occupying power that has been occupying Palestine for over 58 years, our people that has been subjected to the Nakba catastrophe 77 years ago, has been forced to migrate, to leave its land and homeland and is still subjected to policies and practices of settler colonialism, colonization and an occupation that is controlling and stealing and using all the resources of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and it is forcing the Palestinians to leave their land and is conducting apartheid against them.

Today we are only five years away from 2030. This is a milestone, and the world expects to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) while Israel is continuously destroying life and development, especially in the Gaza Strip. More than 70 percent of arable land has been destroyed in northern and central Gaza through direct bombing or using bulldozers. Plastic houses, grazelands, also water wells have been targeted.

The occupation forces have also destroyed trees and have burned agricultural land as well as killing chickens and bombing animals. More than 90 percent of the people of Gaza are suffering from acute food insecurity and more than a million people are facing famine because food and seeds and fuel are not allowed to enter during this genocide and ecocide in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian machinery are not allowed to remove the remnants of war and of people and they are not allowed to get fuel, and so Gaza, which was a fertile land, has now become non-arable land and Israel is making sure that this land can no longer be planted, can no longer be viable to achieve the objectives of the occupation, either killing or forced displacement.

In June today, more than 300 martyrs fell in Gaza while they were waiting for food aid from international organizations, some of them United Nations organizations. How is it that we can turn a line of people waiting for food to a killing field and a death trap? In February 2024, more than 118 Palestinians fell victims in a massacre that was known as the Flour Massacre as they were waiting for flour, to get a bag of flour - and that was part of a series of bloody incidents with 100 civilians that were killed as they were trying to get food, and according to investigations, including Israeli investigations, Israeli soldiers in the IDF themselves admitted that they received orders to shoot Palestinians as they were waiting for aid. This, all of these actions, the destruction of the infrastructure were a direct order from Israeli occupation.

Since about 21 months, and with the Israeli genocide and the siege against 2.3 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, food has no longer become a human right, but a dream. A dream that is difficult to acquire. More than that, it has become a death trap, and food and water have become weaponized against the

people in the Gaza Strip. And here I would like to note the official report that was issued by the Special Representative for Human Rights at the European Union (EU) at the request of 17 Member Countries and based on independent sources including the ICJ, it concluded that Israel is violating its commitments according to Article 2 of its agreement with the EU which connects bilateral relationships to the respect of human rights and democratic principles.

This report specifies six violations in the Gaza Strip, prohibiting and preventing humanitarian aid, attacks against civilians, systemic bombing of hospitals, forced migration, killing journalists and total absence of accountability. In the West Bank, more than 50 000 Palestinian citizens were forced to leave their homes and became internally displaced. Infrastructure was destroyed in addition to the attacks of settlers and the terror of settlers and their attacks on farms and farmers, burning their homes and their produce.

In addition to other violations in the West Bank, the confiscation of land, the illegal settlements, arbitrary detention, inhuman treatment, cutting trees, attacking farmers and besieging every part of Palestine and the people, and preventing the movement of Palestinians, preventing the movement of students and not allowing them to reach their schools or their colleges.

Ladies and gentlemen, Chairperson, why are we presenting this to the FAO Conference? Because starvation in Gaza is not by chance. It is a systemic policy, the weaponizing of food.

More than 500 civilians were killed as they were waiting for food. More than 2 million are suffering from acute food insecurity, half of them children. This is not just a humanitarian crisis. This is a crime against humanity. What we are witnessing today is not just a systemic destruction of arable land, it is an intentional destruction of all the basis of life and development.

It is a violation of humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions and the principles of sustainable development that everyone committed to. Therefore, we demand that all countries, all Members of FAO, will request the following:

that you recognize that starvation is used as a means of war in the Gaza Strip and to condemn it,

to send independent commissions to monitor the situation of food and nutrition in the Gaza Strip under the supervision of the United Nations and to declare Gaza an area of famine based on the IPC classification,

to protect all humanitarian aid and the staff of humanitarian organizations and to hold accountable anyone who attacks them, any kinds of attacks against them, to call for the removal of the siege against Gaza immediately and to allow the entry of food and medicine in accordance with international humanitarian law.

We call upon countries to comply with the ICJ advisory opinions and primarily the end of the occupation, the illegal Israeli occupation.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Israeli occupation does not leave any hope for achieving development or food security. It deepens dependencies and destroys all potential. We are not asking for charity.

We are asking for our legitimate right to land, to water, to food, to medicine, to dignity, the right to life, the right to movement and self-determination according to international law. Silence in the face of starvation, of intentional starvation is a kind of complicity. To be neutral in this case is not taking a position. It is an alignment with the killer against the victim.

We demand that you stand with the right, with the law, with implementing the law to stay away from double standards when dealing with any humanitarian case or environmental case or political case that impacts a human or nature. The lack of food security in Gaza today is not the result of climate change or a natural disaster. It is a direct result of the siege and an attack on the food infrastructure. It is mass punishment. Hunger in Palestine is not a natural disaster. It is a human crime.

Before blaming the environment, the world has to face the truth that some kind of hunger and starvation is caused by the occupation, by the siege. And how can we demand that people plant their land when they are being bombed every day?

The first step to achieving fair development and food security starts by ending injustice, not just by providing technical assistance or financing. Through clear positions, brave politics and accountability to the criminals, we demand that Palestine cannot stay as an exception when we are talking about food justice. Without ending the occupation, there won't be any development or food security or human dignity. Freedom to the people of Palestine and dignity to all the people of the world.

Thank you.