

The Palestinian Mission
Kingdom of the Netherlands
The Hague



البعثة الفلسطينية
المملكة الهولندية
لاهاي

STATE OF PALESTINE

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR AMMAR HIJAZI
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS
AT THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF
THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS
CONVENTION**

State of Palestine
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Mr. Chairperson,
Director-General,
Ambassadors and delegates,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the OPCW, on his election as Chairman of the twenty-eighth session of our conference. We are confident that our meeting will reach successful conclusions under his able leadership.

We would also like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to the Chairman of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of States Parties, Ambassador Vusimuzi Madon-Sela, the Permanent Representative of South Africa, for his professional and skilled management of the conference's work.

I also extend our appreciation to the Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his efforts and for the report he presented to this session, and our gratitude for the continuous efforts made by the Technical Secretariat to strengthen the Organization's role in eliminating weapons of mass destruction and implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

Palestine aligns with the statement on behalf of the members of the non-aligned movement NAM that are states parties to the chemical weapons convention and China delivered by H.E. Ambassador Calixto Ortega Rios, Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW.

We also associate ourselves with the statement that will be delivered by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on behalf of a group of States parties, on addressing the threat from Chemical Weapons use.

Mr. Chairperson,

For the past seven weeks, the colonial occupying power, Israel, has rained down death and destruction, using all munitions imaginable on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, killing and wounding tens of thousands of civilians – most of them, thousands of women and children. This is a war against the Palestinian people, who are under constant bombardment, siege, and starvation. It is a war waged with genocidal intentions, openly declared by the most senior officials in the occupying regime's government – one Minister even threatened to use Israel's undeclared and unmonitored nuclear arsenal against our people in Gaza.

The ultimate target of this 75 years old war against our people is clear for all to see. It is to forcibly displace the Palestinian People from their land, through its various and well-



documented egregious violations of international law, including the illegal use of white phosphorous as a weapon against civilians, Israel is attempting to rewrite the rules of war, and normalize unthinkable atrocities. This must not be allowed to happen. It is an intolerable, objectionable, and grave threat to international peace and security.

Millions of lives are at stake. The credibility of the universal code of laws is on the line, not just in Palestine, but the world over. Under the completely false and unacceptable pretext of self-defense, Israel is using all types of weapons, in contravention of international law, against the civilian population. Let me be very clear, as a belligerent prolonged occupier, Israel does not have the right to commit genocidal violence against the people it occupies in the name of self-defense.

The details of this ongoing slaughter and the horror unfolding in Gaza are pertinent to our discussion and the work of this esteemed Organization. In this connection, I would like to point your attention to the fact that Israel, the illegal occupier, has used several times use of white phosphorous and other chemical toxins against densely populated neighborhoods in the districts of northern Gaza and Gaza City, as well as in Southern Lebanon. This illegal use of chemical weapons has been independently verified and documented by various organizations, and the charred remains of homes and victims stand as shocking evidence of this barbaric practice.

As States Parties to the CWC, we are obligated to prevent the horror, pain, and suffering of chemical warfare as well as the illegal use of weapons like white phosphorous against civilians, and hold perpetrators to account. We need to do that without selectivity, without applying double standards, because we come to choose certain issues and certain situations to speak about but yet ignore others. Thus, the State of Palestine calls on the OPCW to closely monitor the situation and to initiate a thorough investigation into the situation in Palestine and Israel's widespread and illegal use of white phosphorous against civilians and civilian objects. We appreciate the efforts of the Director general as has been explained in the report presented in the morning, but we also look forward for the Technical Secretariat to take all necessary measures in this regard and in accordance with the CWC. This egregious offense must be confronted and stopped. These grave violations of the CWC perhaps explain Israel's adamant refusal to ratify the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

As a Signatory to the Convention. Israel is benefitting from the OPCW's activities that assist States Parties in the implementation of the Convention, and in developing their national capacities. Yet it clearly has shown that the Israeli occupation has no intention of abiding by the Convention's provisions and principles. Israel has not ratified the Convention because it does not want to be held accountable. This cynical duplicity is grave and runs counter to the



principles of the Convention, which must compel States Parties to reassess the status of the occupying power at the OPCW.

Giving the repeated use of White phosphorus as a weapon against civilian population, Palestine will also seek to list White phosphorus as a prohibited weapon against civilians. We also remind States that provide the occupying power with these weapons, with their responsibilities to cease doing so, giving its conduct, and we remind that states must honor their responsibilities under the International Law including CWC, International humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law.

We remind that States complicit in the commission of International crimes also bear the responsibility for them and must face accountability.

Mr. Chairperson,

The efforts of the Organization to achieve significant progress in international cooperation, capacity-building activities in implementation of Article VII, need continuous support. Within this framework, the implementation of Article XI of the Convention requires urgent discussion and the development of an executive strategy and action plan that allows for systematic assessment of needs and periodic evaluation of programs as well as the full implementation of the components of the agreed framework for the implementation of Article XI.

Mr. Chairperson,

The State of Palestine highly values the work of the OPCW, therefore, we call on all parties to work together, closely, preserve the nature of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons work, by preserving the spirit of our traditional practice of consensus in decision-making, and to avoid politicization and polarization, which would undermine the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the unity of our Organization.

Cooperation and dialogue is the best method to achieve the aspirations of this organization and its convention.

Since its accession to the Convention, the State of Palestine continues to fulfill its obligations under the articles of the Convention and establish a set of procedures, practices, and relevant measures for national implementation with the appreciated support of the Technical Secretariat.

Allow me to conclude, Mr. Chairperson, by calling on all States, to renew our commitment to combatting the horrors of chemical warfare and the illegal use of toxins against civilians, including through domestic measures that stop the transfer of such weapons to irresponsible states, like Israel, which is accused of grave international crimes. We owe it to humanity to

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make sure that chemicals and toxins are not used in warfare and that civilians, like the Palestinian people, do not fall victim to their merciless short and long-term effects. This is an obligation we must not fail in upholding.

• I ask that this statement be designated an official document of this conference session and posted on both Catalyst and public website.

Thank you