



**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram Permanent
Representative of Pakistan to the UN on behalf of the
Organization of Islamic Cooperation “At the General Assembly
59th Plenary Meeting on the Use of Veto Item 63: Special Report
of the Security Council”**

(4 March, 2024)

Mr. President,

I have the honour to present this statement on behalf of members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in my capacity as the Acting Chair of the Group

Mr. President,

Let me express our appreciation to you for convening this meeting at the General Assembly on the current situation in Palestine, with particular reference to the Gaza Strip. This meeting is taking place owing to the unfortunate event of the use of the veto on 20 Feb 2024 by the United States of America being a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council during the Council's debate held under the agenda Item: The Situation in Middle East, including the Palestinian Question.

It is deeply regrettable that the Security Council has failed once again to assume its primary responsibilities under the United Nations Charter to halt the atrocities, perpetrated against the Palestinian people in Gaza by the Israeli Occupying Power of Palestine. This failure has no doubt reflected negatively on the primary role of the Security Council, the principal organ of United Nations with regard to maintaining international peace and security.

It is obvious that, since the launch of the aggression on Gaza and elsewhere in Palestine nearly over the past five months, the entire world has continued to follow, with growing despair, and anger, the monumental and unending sufferings imposed on the Palestinian people in Gaza. This situation has resulted in the colossal loss of lives and wanton destruction of homes, schools, hospitals and religious sites in Gaza, due to the incessant attacks by the Israeli occupying power on the territory.

The number of human casualties from the Israeli aggression on Gaza has grown further, due to the recent bombardment of the city of Deir El-Balah in Gaza. According to the OIC Observatory on Israeli Crimes and Violations against Palestinians, a total number of 690 deaths were recorded during the week from 20-26 February 2024, while over 1,057 persons sustained several injuries. It is on record that, since the beginning of the aggression on Gaza on 7 October 2023, the total

number of persons killed or massacred rose to 29,700, 70% of them were women and children. More than 12,500 were children.

I would like to add that we must strongly condemn the carnage wreaked by Israel's occupation forces of unarmed Palestinians, who were awaiting life-saving aid and food delivery in Gaza on 29 February. This is another manifestation of Israel's pervasive continuous violations of International humanitarian law.

Mr. President,

It is unfortunate that the various efforts deployed by the international community to end this catastrophic humanitarian disaster in the Gaza Strip have not yielded positive results so far. It is in this context that we welcomed your timely initiatives to resume the Tenth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly, which resulted in the adoption of the two resolutions of 26 October and 10 December 2023 respectively. These resolutions, among other provisions, called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, while demanding that all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians.

In the same vein, we had occasion to commend the historical initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General, when he invoked the provision of Article 99 of the United Nations Charter on 6 December 2023 by drawing the attention of the Security Council to the urgent need for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. This singular action was indeed a declaration of the dangers posed by the continued war in Gaza to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The foregoing calls for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza were not limited to the forums of the United Nations alone. We had cause to recall, before this Assembly, the Resolution of the Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit on Israeli Aggression against the Palestinian People, held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 11 November 2023, which called for "an urgent and concerted global action to resolve the lingering question of Palestine. In this regard, the Summit called "for the breaking of the siege on Gaza, the cessation of armed aggression by Israel, the condemnation of attacks and targeting of civilians, the attacks, demolition and destruction of hospitals, religious and cultural

sites, as they constitute acts of impunity and violation of international law, among other war crimes and atrocities”.

Mr. President,

Notwithstanding the foregoing efforts by the various actors within the United Nations as well as members of the international community, there are ominous signs of even greater dangers ahead. In view of UNRWA’s report on the impact of Israel’s recent calls to dismantle UNRWA and for donors to freeze their funding to the Agency, there is an imminent threat of mass starvation in Gaza Strip, due to inadequate food supplies and essential services for the teeming number of Palestinian in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Accordingly, the current UNGA session should take concrete measures to ensure the realization of the objectives and purposes of the United Nations. There is indeed a golden opportunity for the General Assembly to give expression to the dominant views of its member states, and the world public opinion at large, on the need for a decisive action to halt the bloodshed and carnage to which Gaza is being subjected. In this regard, we commend the position adopted by the Joint Arab-Islamic Summit for the consideration of this meeting. The member states of the United Nations should exert diplomatic, political and legal pressures on the Israeli Occupation Authorities to stop its crimes against humanity and deter further aggression.

Additionally, and in order to give effect to the relevant UN resolutions on the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination within a two-state solution, we call for the convening of an International Peace Conference on Palestine to be convened on the basis of the agreed principles under international law.

In conclusion, the international community should uphold its responsibility in halting the Israeli aggression on Gaza immediately. The world should support the Palestinian people to achieve their right to self-determination and establish their sovereign and independent state on their territory, occupied since 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with relevant UN Resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

I thank you.