

Special Remarks on
Palestine Issue and Current Situation of Gaza

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Keeping in view the current situation in Gaza as well as the historical perspective of the Palestine issue, MUSLIM Institute feels that there is dire need of raising the voice over the issue. For the purpose the Institute has taken special remarks from few guests on Friday and Saturday 18th & 19th July 2014 in Islamabad which are given below.



Senator Raja Zafar Ul Haq

Secretary General, Motamar Al-Alam Al-Islami & Leader of the House, Senate of Pakistan

World is witnessing the barbaric attack by Israel over peaceful citizens of Gaza. The casualties have reached beyond 250 and most of them are women and children. On the other day I was watching a grab of TV where the former secretary of state Mrs Henry Clinton was being received by Israeli Prime Minister who before even shaking hands with her said that now you have come to ask us we are targeting civilians, we are not supposed to give any explanation to you not even ready to give any explanation to the American President and we are purposely targeting the civilian population and will continue doing this. And then he said welcome to Israel. This is the most obnoxious and arrogant attitude one can expect from a human being. I don't know how one can explain this but this attitude is not confined to people like Israeli Prime Minister only as similar conduct has been displayed by supporters of Israel also.



The United Nations before it was born had this issue but after that they didn't pay much attention to its resolutions. There was a time when Israel had one longing desire to have recognition from the Muslim neighbor countries. When they gave the recognition, quite good number of them even today being the members of the OIC, their recognition has not made any change for the better rather it has encouraged Israel to do whatever it wants to do to with Palestinians and is shedding their blood continuously. **Support from certain quarters from United States and from other European countries is also very sad. It encourages Israelis not to bother about any human values or the human rights.** The United Nations, European Union the Human Rights Council in Geneva they don't bother about anybody or organization. **It is one-sided genocide in which they have indulged in the past and they are indulging in the same even today.** The attitude of OIC or the Islamic countries around Israel is also unfortunate. People and rulers of these countries think differently on the issue and the gap between the thinking of leadership and the public is widening. The rulers by and large don't have the courage to even raise their voices. **I think the countries that had recognized Israel in the past, if they withdraw their Ambassadors and their diplomatic representation from Israel; I think that would have some effect on the attitude of Israel towards the Palestine issue. If they don't do it whether it is Arab League or OIC then we can't expect any change in the attitude of Israel and the daily killings of innocent people.**



The realization is very slow. The Prime Minister of Pakistan has made very forthright, very correct and very bold statement on this issue and it has been appreciated worldwide. The statement from Turkish government was also very encouraging but the Arab League meeting in Cairo is without any results. There are more statements from other countries too indicating growing resentment among public of many Muslim countries. How does it affect the future of these governments is very evident but I think the time has come when these governments, present leaderships of the Muslim countries have to be realistic. I don't expect that

they should take up arms against the perpetrators of the crime against humanity but at least they can show their resentment practically by withdrawing their diplomatic staff from Israel.



His Excellency Shafi Ahmad Muhammad

Ambassador of Sudan to Pakistan

Ramadan Mubarak for every Muslim everywhere. Let me express my grievance and sadness at this point because now for all the humanity and for the Muslim Ummah there is a barbarian aggression on innocent people in Palestine and particularly in Gaza from occupation authority Israel. This is not the first aggression and actually the aggression is every day in Gaza but this a broad one, a big one and extended to so many parts. This should be condemned by every peace loving person, this should be condemned by all the

Muslim Ummah and all the humanity. They must condemn this and rise against this barbarian aggression against innocent people in Gaza.

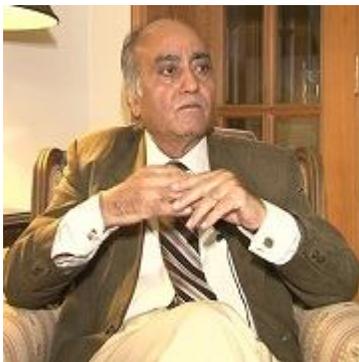
The international community should assume and fully discharge responsibility in Gaza and try by all ways and means to stop this barbarian aggression. The occupation of Palestine is illegitimate and now Israel is the occupying authority. Israel by all international rules and regulations is responsible for the killings of the people of Palestine because Israel is an occupying authority and the people of Gaza and Palestine are living distinct life in an occupied area in their own lands for so many decades. **The international community has to stand on their feet and to stop this barbarian aggression against innocent people.** Gaza is a very narrow strip congested with more than 1.5 million people and we can see that these attacks from space, from air, from sea, from ground actually they are targeting innocent children, innocent women, innocent men and destroying their life and their present and future. This is unacceptable and the heart of world should beat and stop Israel from treating Palestinian people in such an arrogant and ignorant way.

For the Muslim Ummah this is Ramadan we fast looking for the grace of Allah Subhanhu Ta'ala. Our brothers and sisters in Palestine they are also fasting. When Magrib calling for iftar we go for our dates, for our juice, for our hot and soft drinks but our brothers, sisters and children in Gaza are bombarded and their iftaris bullets and fire. We all Muslims have to move all our people, all our leaders and particularly our leaders as it is not acceptable for Muslim Ummah leaders just to issue few words condemning the aggression by Israel, no this is not the situation to be taken by the Muslim leaders. **Muslim leaders should have**

stronger position and tell Israel and those who are behind Israel, that we as Muslims are against this and we are going to take practical actions by cutting all the relations with these people who are supporting Israel, who are allowing Israel to do this. It is really very unfortunate so we shouldn't end up with just condemning and with just expression that we are sorry and we are sad. The Muslim



Ummah will have to go in peaceful demonstrations everywhere to push their leaders in order to take stronger position. Our media personnel, our scholars, everybody should play pro-active role in this regard because this is the battle of Ummah not the battle for Gaza or Palestine. This is our message to our brothers in Gaza. All of us pray for them that Allah Subhanhu Ta'ala support and protect them. All the Palestinians, all the leaders, all the elites, this is the time that they should unite. **Now the enemy does not differentiate between Hamas, Al Fatah, Jihad or others, all of them are treated as terrorists. Israel treats every Muslim as a terrorist, from our King to a common man, everyone is considered a terrorist. We all should realize that if Israel is able to crush Hamas and Palestinian people then the next turn would be of neighboring Muslim countries and this would go on in the entire region from Egypt to Saudi Arabia.** No one will be able to protect Masjid Al Aqsa whose portrait all Muslims keep so fondly. We have to know and to understand this lesson very well. Our brothers in Palestine, leaders, factions and others including Hamas, Al Fatah, Al Jihad and others they must unite their efforts, they must overcome their differences. This is a big battle and nothing should deflect Palestinians from this big battle with Israel and Zionism. Let them unite together and if Muslim Ummah is also united behind them, I think the whole humanity will unite behind the Palestinians and then the Israelis will be defeated not only militarily but morally which is very important.



Ambassador (R) Khalid Mehmood

Chairman Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), Pakistan

What is happening in Gaza these days is not new. Tragedy of Palestine started way back in 1948 when state of Israel was implanted in Arab heartland and original residents of Palestine were either subjugated or forced to flee and become refugees. Ever since, the Palestinian people are struggling to realize their right of self-determination. Many wars have been fought in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973. Unfortunately in each of these wars the Palestinians and Arab countries in general lost the ground and Israel occupied

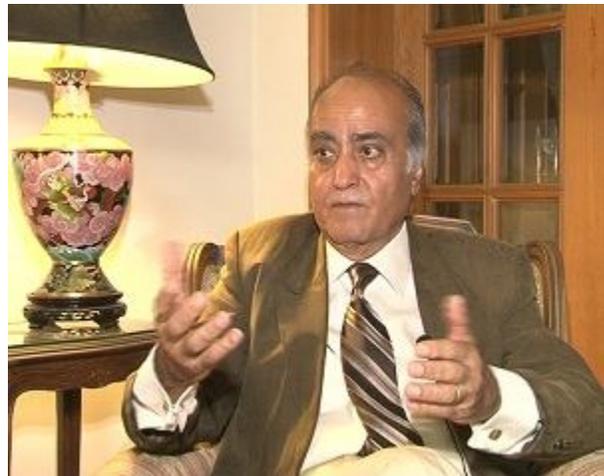
more and more land and more and more people came under its occupation and more and more Palestinian were rendered refugees. **It is real pity that Jews who always claim to be victim of persecution and dispersion they have inflicted the same pain on the people of Palestine and rendering them homeless, occupied people in occupied land.**

Regarding the world community, United Nation has clearly spelled out what needs to be done. It says that there should be withdrawal of Israeli forces back to the 1967 positions. Then the Palestinian refugees should return and those who don't want to return must be given compensation and lastly there should be security of borders. These are the Security Council resolutions and ever since these resolutions have been affirmed and reaffirmed but Israel refuses to abide by these resolutions and the struggle goes on. So this recurrent flare up is just a symptom of the real problem. **Real problem is occupation of Palestine by Israel, real problem is the denial of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people. The point in contention is that these people under occupation have been mistreated and are being oppressed. The human rights are being violated on daily basis and nothing is being done against Israel.** Why Israel is emboldened to do these things? It is clear that it has the support of USA and other major powers. **If there was some other country, doing even a fraction of what Israel is doing, the whole international community and the major powers would have pressurized that country and forced it comply with the UNSC resolutions.**

Coming to the point of what's happening now. After prolonged negotiation, West Bank and Gaza were given over to Palestinians not as a state but to run their affairs so there is some administration in West Bank and Gaza. Now Gaza has been blockaded, it does not have access to foreign goods or people cannot travel, it cannot import, it cannot export. In other words Gaza is like an open air prison. What should people do, they cannot sustain themselves, they cannot have the resources to pay even the salaries of people who are working. They cannot have access to outside world and in such conditions there is desperation and in desperation not the authorities but sometimes the individuals, who are suffering every day, indulge in some activity they should not but the retaliation, the response is massive. We cannot imagine that from 8 July this new operation started by Israel, first it was by air and now it is ground offensive also. More than 330 Palestinians have been killed and against them only two Israelis have been killed. And of the Palestinians, 70% people killed are civilians. In these circumstances, of course, the first requirement is that there should be ceasefire. This is easily said than done because if there is ceasefire then situation will be frozen it means that Palestinians in Gaza will continue to suffer the same difficulties which incite them to take some action vis-à-vis Israel. That's why Hamas says we will agree to ceasefire but our blockade should be lifted, our prisoners should be treated fairly, we should be allowed to have interaction with rest of the world and there should be free movement of Palestinians as even within Gaza they are not allowed to move. They should have access to the Jerusalem Masjid-e-Aqsa, they are not allowed to pray. These are the reasons why they are not agreeing to ceasefire. But the basic principle everyone agrees that there should be first ceasefire and hopefully if this blockade of Gaza is lifted then they might agree to this ceasefire.

Now another situation has changed. Previously under President Morsi, Egypt was a friend of Palestine and it was an ally of Palestine. So what Egypt said it had some force as last time when similar situation arose it was Morsi whose influence was used to calm the situation and to have the ceasefire. This time under President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, who doesn't have such type of friendly relations with Palestinians, this influence has been weakened so Egypt has asked for many times for ceasefire but it doesn't carry that much influence which was under Morsi.

About international community, of course, UN is dominated by five permanent members of the Security Council. No action can be taken by the UN through the UNSC until these members agree and everyone knows USA Britain and France will not agree to any action against Israel. At the most what they ask for is to have ceasefire and this they have repeated. I don't underestimate the importance of ceasefire but I am saying that it is not enough. So UN is not able to take enforcement action against Israel unless USA, UK, France, Russia and China agree for it. About the Islamic world we can treat it in two



sections. One is through OIC and other is individually. OIC as we all know is not an effective body but sometimes I think it is also wrongly blamed for everything. Of course there was a session in Jeddah of executive committee of OIC that did condemn Israeli aggression. They asked Israel to stop this, they looked to the UNSC to take some action, they asked the international community and Islamic world to rush reliefs to the people suffering there but it is all they can do. Because you can't expect from OIC more

than what you empowered OIC. Where is the army, where are the resources for all those things? Unless member states make OIC effective we can't expect effective action by the OIC and this is from limited influence they have to exercise. But individually I think the response of the Muslim countries has been little bit dismal. They have not spoken forthrightly on what is wrong and what atrocities are being committed against Palestinian people. Not only the armed people but civilian people women and children have been attacked by Israeli bombardment. Individually here I would say at least Pakistan government has not been silent as other most of the Muslim countries. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has condemned this invasion and military operation by Israel. He has condemned the atrocities being committed against the suffering people and expressed his solidarity with the Palestinians. Foreign Office has given statements. We are not member of executive committee of OIC which met, we were not there, but whenever there is its full conference Pakistan will play its role. Pakistan's record on Palestine question is very shining, it is and will be. In the UN Security Council or wherever this matter has been raised Pakistan has been leading the cause of the Palestinian people particularly in Jerusalem. **Jerusalem which is the first Qibla of Muslims, to preserve its demography, culture, Arab character particularly of East Jerusalem it was Pakistan which led the struggle and was able to have the resolution adopted by the UNSC which says that there should be no change in demographic, cultural, religious, Arab Islamic character of the east Jerusalem.** There is room for Pakistan to do more; we should be doing more for providing them relief and becoming part of diplomatic effort to exert pressure on Israel to stop its barbarity against innocent people at least in Gaza and West Bank.