

**Joint Statement IBSA
General Debate Item 7
10.06.2013**

Mister President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the IBSA Forum, comprising India, Brazil and South Africa.

We take note of the annual report of the Special Rapporteur Richard Falk and regret the lack of cooperation by the Israeli government.

The findings of the Special Rapporteur in relation to the general human rights situation in the Gaza Strip are alarming. The economic and social condition of its population, particularly with regard to food security, is cause of great distress.

We condemn all forms of violence, deeply regret the loss of lives and express concern with the disproportionate use of force and the destruction of infrastructure by Israeli forces.

Our countries also remain concerned at the growing number of persons held under administrative detention by Israel. Several Palestinians continue to resort to hunger strikes as a form of peaceful protest. We encourage Israel to engage in dialogue with the protesters, including to ensure their right to health.

As stated in the report presented today, at the expense of international human rights law and humanitarian law, Israel continues to consistently and systematically expand settlements through subsidies, expropriation, house demolitions, granting permits for homes in settlements and exploiting Palestinian natural resources.

We reiterate our call on Israel to stop settlement activities. But freezing settlement construction is not enough. Settlements must be dismantled and the occupation must end. This is not a concession to be made in the course of negotiations, but rather an obligation as per International Law and various resolutions of the Human Rights Council and the Security Council.

Mister President, India, Brazil and South Africa reiterate their call on Israel to lift the blockade on Gaza and, pending such measure, further facilitate the movement of persons and goods to and from Gaza, including material for reconstruction.

Occupation remains as the main cause of human rights violations in Palestine. Existing conflicts remain political in nature and cannot be solved by force.

The granting of Observer State status to Palestine by the General Assembly, with overwhelming support, made it clear that there is no alternative to the two-State solution in the quest for peace in the Middle East.

Finally, Mister President, allow me to remind that India, Brazil and South Africa remain committed to a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and

firmly support international efforts aimed at the establishment of building an economically viable, geographically contiguous and democratic Palestinian State.

As stated in the Tshwane Declaration, on the occasion of the Fifth Summit of IBSA Heads of State and Government (October 2011):

"The Leaders welcomed the Palestinian request for full membership at the United Nations, which they support as a key step towards the full realization of the two-state solution and expect a positive response by UNSC to the Palestinian request.

The Leaders called for the urgent resumption of effective and result-oriented negotiations aimed at giving birth to a sovereign, democratic, independent, united and viable Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, coexisting peacefully alongside Israel, within secure borders."