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HRN welcomes the admission of Palestine as a non-member observer “State” by the UN General Assembly, and objects to Israel’s retaliatory measures and its opposition to Palestine’s accession to the ICC.

November 29th, NEW YORK – The UN General Assembly (GA) adopted a resolution A/RES/67/19 by majority vote, which gives Palestine the status of non-member observer “state”.

The Tokyo-based international Human Rights NGO Human Rights Now (HRN) supports the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and thus welcomes the GA resolution. Furthermore, although cruel human rights violations are expanding in Palestine and the perpetrators still live in an environment of complete impunity, we consider this GA resolution to be a valuable first step in the establishment of the Rule of Law.

It is however regrettable that some UN member states that have voted in favour of A/RES/67/19 still oppose Palestine’s accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). For instance, although the Japanese government has approved A/RES/67/19, it has also publicly declared that “*we ask for prudence with respect to conduct, such as accession to international organizations, an action which might negatively affect the prospect for the resumption of [peace] negotiations.*”¹ Leading European states have also adopted a similar position.

The ICC is a permanent tribunal that prosecutes the most serious international crimes and human rights violations. The ICC is an essential mechanism for the international society to build a peace through putting an end to impunity for human rights violations and upholding the Rule of Law. Any movement that opposes accession to such mechanism run counter the realization of peace and the Rule of Law. It is all the more unacceptable that Palestine has to endure these oppositions when it is currently putting up with daily human rights violations and injustice. Countries that have adopted this negative attitude towards Palestine must immediately cease this shameful behaviour.

As retaliation to A/RES/67/19, Israel has announced on November 30, the day following the adoption of the resolution, that it will build 3000 new housing units for Jewish settlers in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and has forcefully maintained this position despite criticisms from the international community. This action is unacceptable since this is a war crime described in Article 49(6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention: “the Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”

As a further retaliatory measure, on December 2, Israel has announced that it would stop transferring tax payments the Palestinian Authority (Israel is collecting taxes on behalf of the PA). As the Palestinian Authority will no longer be able to pay its staff its salary and so on, it is clear that Israel’s decision will plunge the Palestinian economy into chaos.

Responding to the A/RES/67/19 in such a retaliatory and punishing manner towards the Palestinian people is unacceptable.

HRN objects to Israel’s retaliation and urges Israel to put an end to all such conducts.

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¹ http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/palestine/kokuren121130.html