



**Women's International League for Peace and Freedom**  
Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté  
Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO, Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF.

## **Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

### **Introduction**

The United Nations and a group of civil society organizations held a special meeting on November 29<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and observe the resolution 32/40B adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 1977. At the meeting were present representatives of Secretary General of the United Nations, Under-Secretary General – Director-General and representatives of governments and states. WILPF presented a statement on Palestine by Madeleine Rees, Secretary General of WILPF, read out by Beatrice Fihn by WILPF.

Mr. Director-General, distinguished delegates,

I'm delivering this statement on behalf of Ms. Madeleine Rees, Secretary General of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom who unfortunately was unable to join us today.

This is the 33rd time, we gather to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people. For the 33rd time! Why?

The debates on the Rights of the Palestinians, the obligations of the state of Israel and the role of the international community are legion. There have been no fewer than eight Security Council Resolutions (242, 338, 448, 799, 1322, 1397, 1515, 1860) and four General Assembly Resolutions (181, 194, ES-10/15, ES-10/8) concerning the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

These resolutions constitute the framework for constructing a just and peaceful future for Israel and for Palestine. But they remain un-implemented. The numerous peace talks, negotiations, plans and proposals have led nowhere. Einstein once said, "You can't solve a problem with the same mind that created it." It is time to find that new mind.

The parties to this seemingly intractable situation are part of the international community and are bound by the international legal systems that regulate the conduct between states, in particular international humanitarian and human rights

laws. The failure by the government of the State of Israel, and by the governments of the Occupied Territories to comply with the obligations in relation to this framework has been identified in numerous reports and resolutions, we mention in particular the most recent: the Human Rights Council mandated enquiry under the leadership of Richard Goldstone.

While finding potential crimes against humanity, the report also found that the blockade and the military operations by Israel had aggravated poverty in Palestine, which particularly affect women. It was stated that the current situation is a crisis of human dignity. As is obvious by its subsequent conduct, Israel has not responded in good faith, on the contrary Israel has tightened its stranglehold on the Palestinian population further and without commensurate response from the international community. The approach, which privileges political considerations over obligation, weakens engagement and undermines the international rule of law.

It is time for change. At the 2005 World Summit Outcome the concept of the Responsibility to Protect was endorsed, an emerging legal doctrine but one which has resonance in relation to the situation under consideration. **(Resolution of the General Assembly 60/1 2005)**

The former High Commissioner Louise Arbor, set out her view of what this doctrine means: ***“the protection duty encompasses a continuum of prevention, reaction, commitment to rebuild and to punish, spanning from early warning, to diplomatic pressure, to coercive measures, to conflict resolution and post conflict reconstruction assistance as well as accountability for perpetrators”.*** (Trinity College Dublin November 23 2007)

In her view, the doctrine is rooted in human rights and international humanitarian law and ***“embraces the victims point of view and interests....It does so by configuring a permanent duty to protect individuals against abusive behaviour...Absent that states ability or willingness to discharge its obligations, the onus of protection falls on the broader international community...Protection encompasses as continuum of prevention, reaction, commitment to re build, spanning from early warning to accountability for perpetrators and international aid.”***

In essence the responsibility is one of, “due diligence” with the capacity of one State to influence another, resting predominantly on: geographical distance, the strength of political links as well as “links of other kinds” such as military and financial. Logically this would include trading links.

The duty to act arises when the State has actual or constructive knowledge of human rights violations or violations of IHL. There can be no denial of actual or constructive knowledge in relation to the situation of the Palestinian people. It should be clear that states which have political influence, military and financial links to Israel are obligated to use all available methods to prevent, react and hold accountable, the Israeli government for violations of international human rights and humanitarian laws, and where necessary, those who breach law should be brought

to justice. They must do so and the HRC is a forum in which this should be applied. Under this doctrine, States that export arms and weapons technologies are, without actions to prevent their use in the commission of violations of international humanitarian law or human rights law, or without appropriate response, should be considered as complicit. Those states that have strong financial or economic ties with Israel are obligated to utilize that influence to prevent and hold accountable or could also be considered complicit. States that have veto power in the Security Council should be bound not to use their veto prerogative when matters of grave humanitarian concern are at issue. (ICISS Report of the International commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty)

Put very simply, the ability of Israel to continue its occupation, the blockade and its military interventions would be severely curtailed without the acts, or omissions, of other states. It is crucial that the international community and bodies of the United Nations take coherent, practical steps to urge Israel to fulfill its international human rights obligations and implement all UN resolutions pertaining to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We are deeply concerned as to Israel's high level of militarization. This is inextricably linked to the reported human rights violations and the failure of peace processes. In 2009, Israel's military expenditures reached a total of \$US 14,309 billion. This militarization occurs with the consent of other states. The United States is the primary source of Israel's weapons arsenal. Figures for military expenditures for Israel include military aid from the USA, which in 2008 was \$2.38 billion. U.S military aid accounts for more than twenty percent of Israel's total defence budget. It is time to re think the peace broker if that broker is so absolutely invested in one party to the conflict. But it is also necessary to re think security.

Military security is a chimera, the evidence is Palestine. It is necessary to re think who should be at the table. SCR 1325 makes that abundantly clear and yet it has been ignored. Where are the women when it comes to discussing peace in the region? Their absence has been noted in the reports already mentioned. Women's and peace-minded organizations are committed to the implementation of SCR1325. They're engaged with internal discussions and have actively looked for space to work on transmitting the ideas of 1325 to Gaza women. They've run awareness campaigns on 1325, held protests at UNSCO, presented petitions demanding action in line with 1325, connected 1325 to the annual 16 Days of Action to end violence against women campaign, offered training for women on 1325, documented human rights violations by both Hamas and the Israelis, and established collective work through the WASAL and AMAL Coalition.

It is time to use different minds to the ones who created the problem. It is time to stop subverting law to politics. It is time to involve civil society and particularly women. It is time to take responsibility for implementing the UN resolutions on the question of Palestine. It is time to take responsibility for the protection of the Palestinian people. It is time to apply Security Council resolution 1325 in the way it should be.

In conclusion, we know it is within all our means to bring peace, restore human

dignity and create a different narrative for the women, men and children of Palestine, it is time to implement and deliver, and enough with resolutions and statements.