

I. International

A Unified Hand Raised for Justice

Global Majority Demands Statehood for Palestine

by Gretchen Small and Kevin Gribbroek

State of Palestine membership at the United Nations may have been delayed, as often in regrettable periods of injustices, but as the arc of the moral universe which may be long but bends towards justice, the United Nations membership for the State of Palestine cannot be denied.

—H.E. Dr. Michael Imran Kanu, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations

April 26—On April 18, a special session of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was convened, titled, “UN Security Council Open Debate on the Middle East and the Palestinian Question.” The purpose of the session was to debate and subsequently vote on a straightforward, simply-worded draft resolution, proposed by Algeria, in coordination with the League of Arab Nations, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Non-Aligned Movement, on the issue of Palestinian membership in the United Nations. Based on a Sept. 23, 2011 [application](#) for Palestine’s admission to membership in the UN, the draft resolution states:

The Security Council,

Having examined the application of the State of Palestine for admission to the United Nations (S/2011/592),

Recommends to the General Assembly that the State of Palestine be admitted to membership in the United Nations.

After hours of debate, involving 41 speakers representing nations or international bodies, the UNSC, reflecting the will of the Global Majority, resoundingly raised its hand in favor of justice, with

an overwhelming vote for official UN recognition of Palestine as a member state. Voting for the resolution were: Algeria, China, Russia, France, Slovenia, Malta, Guyana, Ecuador, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. Two nations, the UK and Switzerland, abstained. Tragically, as has been the case so many times before, the lone vote—or veto—against statehood came from the United States. As a permanent



UN Photo/Manuel Elias

Robert A. Wood, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States to the UN, votes against the admission of Palestine to membership in the United Nations, at the UN Security Council meeting on April 18.

member of the Security Council, this effectively killed the resolution—for now. Needing only nine votes to pass, had the resolution not been vetoed, it would have gone to the UN General Assembly for final adjudication, needing a two-thirds majority to be passed. Given that Palestine is already recognized by 140 of the 193 UN

member states, Palestine would have been guaranteed statehood.

‘The Middle East Is on a Precipice’

After the meeting was called to order by the Foreign Minister of Malta, Ian Borg, whose nation currently holds the rotating Presidency of the Security Council, UN Secretary-General António Guterres set the tone for the proceedings, beginning his remarks as follows:

The Middle East is on a precipice. Recent days have seen a perilous escalation—in words and deeds. One miscalculation, one miscommunication, one mistake, could lead to the unthinkable—a full-scale regional conflict that would be devastating for all involved—and for the rest of the world. This moment of maximum peril must be a time for maximum restraint.

That warning was echoed by many of the 40 speakers who followed. Great anger against the United States was clear, even though few mentioned the U.S. by name. They did not need to. Many speakers denounced the refusal of some to let the mechanisms of the multilateral system function, decrying that the UN Security Council and the International Court of Justice resolutions and orders are being ignored. Multiple speakers spoke of “man-made famine” and the “unconscionable” destruction in Gaza; the necessity of funding and defending UNRWA; and the extreme danger of a regional war because of the refusal to allow justice for the Palestinian people.

At least three nations—China, Palestine, and Spain—have called for convening an international peace conference for the region. China’s representative proposed that such a conference is needed to develop a timeline and road map for the realization of the two-state solution.

Spain’s Foreign Minister, José Manuel Albares, pushed hard for such a conference, in both his address to the UNSC and in a media stakeout at the close of that session. He said that the European Union, the League of Arab States, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as 80 countries, have backed this proposal to advance the achievement of a two-state solution. He also declared Spain’s intention of joining 140 other countries that have already recognized Palestine as an independent state.

The EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process, Sven Koopmans, proposed an intermediate step to get to an international peace conference, since not all the parties are agreed that it should be held. He encouraged the “friends and allies” of the parties to call for a preparatory conference, where, starting from the endpoint of the needed final



UN Photo/Loey Felipe

Saudi Permanent Representative to the UN, Abdulaziz Alwasil.

peace agreement on a two-state solution, the conference would “reverse engineer” a path to get there. Nations would therefore contribute ideas on how to provide for Israel’s security, the requirements for a stable State of Palestine, and how to integrate both nations into the region, politically and economically, through cooperation on security, water, energy and climate change.

Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira, after expressing Brazil’s grave concern over the breakdown of international law and its full support for Palestine’s recognition as a fully sovereign nation in the United Nations, concluded his remarks by introducing a crucial concept otherwise missing from the debate: economic development. He proposed:

Large-scale investment in economic development and infrastructure will be essential to ensure that Palestine achieves the long-term prosperity and stability its resilient people deserve. Sustainable development and economic

empowerment are pillars of any lasting peace settlement.

The Saudi Ambassador to the UN, Abdulaziz Alwasil, spoke as a representative of the Arab League. Of note, he said that the Arab League nations will view with gratitude those nations who take the honorable position and vote for Palestinian statehood, but they “will not forget” those who vote against this resolution.

The United States Strikes Back

Indeed, history as a whole will never forget the treachery of the United States, which once again sabotaged a viable pathway to peace. Tens of thousands more innocent Palestinian civilians—the majority women and children—now face immediate death at the hands of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the fascist, racist forces which dominate policy in his governing coalition. In his remarks during the debate, the Faust-like U.S. Alternate Representative to the UN, [Robert Wood](#), in a mangled display of sophistry which would have made Thrasymachus himself cringe, sought to shift the debate away from the cause of justice for the Palestinian people, by demanding the UNSC instead condemn “Iran and its military partners” as the sole reason the region stands at the precipice of all-out war.

That gambit failed utterly. Speaker after speaker before and after Wood decried the Israeli government’s refusal to implement the provisions ordered by the International Court of Justice, and to stop what the Court ruled was plausibly “genocide” against the people of Gaza. Many also rebuked the United States’ declaration, also in defiance of international law, that the recently-passed UNSC Resolution 2728 mandating a ceasefire was “non-binding.”

In the face of the horror being inflicted on Gaza, the shameless hypocrisy of Wood’s instruction that the nations of the world must ensure “that Iran both complies with the Council’s resolutions and ceases its violations of international law,” his pronouncement that “ Hamas is the sole obstacle to a ceasefire in Gaza, the sole obstacle,” only fueled the profound moral anger sweeping the globe at a United States which is betraying its own anticolonial heritage and all of humanity.

After his veto of the resolution, Wood explained

that it is the view of the Biden administration that:

[T]he most expeditious path toward statehood for the Palestinian people is through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority with the support of the United States and other partners. We believe this approach can tangibly advance Palestinian goals in a meaningful and enduring way.

In other words, the Palestinians are to achieve peace through negotiations with a regime that has made clear its unwavering intention to expel, or better yet exterminate, every last Palestinian—a people considered by leaders of that regime to be “animals.”

Indeed, in his remarks in the open debate, Israel’s UN Ambassador, Gilad Erdan, hyperventilated that any Palestinian state would be a terrorist state and shamelessly lied that the Palestinians have rejected every peace plan ever proposed. Erdan threatened that if the UNSC passed the resolution recommending the Palestinian Authority be granted full membership status, this Security Council should be known as “the Terror Council.” The UN is committed to “multi-terrorism” rather than multilateralism, and, in its current form, “has no future,” he charged, citing today’s meeting as “the catalyst of the UN’s collapse.”

Thus, Erdan told the Security Council after the U.S. representative vetoed Palestine’s recognition as a full member of the United Nations:

I wish to begin by thanking the United States, and President Biden in particular, for standing up for truth and morality in the face of hypocrisy and politics.

‘The Inexorable Course of History’

By its veto of Palestine’s statehood, the U.S. continues to isolate itself from the Global Majority, and, like Israel, is becoming more and more a pariah in the eyes of civilized nations. In her remarks to the International Peace Coalition meeting of April 12, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder and leader of the Schiller Institute, characterized this position of unconditional support for Israel by the U.S.—as well as by the EU—as a tragedy, because this



UN Photo/Mark Garten

Vassily Nebenzia, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN.

isolation not only prevents the creation of a new, just economic system—taking into account the needs of all nations—but “creates the seed of a geopolitical catastrophe,” possibly leading to nuclear war. But, optimistically, she also expressed her belief that this can be changed, given that “we have the overwhelming majority of the people of the world at our side.”

In concurrence with Mrs. LaRouche, Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN, said after the April 18 vote: “Today’s use of the veto by the U.S. delegation was a fruitless attempt to stop the inexorable course of History.” Ambassador Fu Cong, Permanent Representative of China to the UN, in his remarks said:



UN Photo/Manuel Elias

Riyad H. Mansour (left), Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine at the UN, greets UN Secretary General António Guterres ahead of the April 18 Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East.

Leaders of the Global Majority Speak Out on the Question of Palestine

The following are selected excerpts taken from speakers representing nations that participated in the April 18 “UN Security Council Open Debate on the Middle East and the Palestinian Question,” and the subsequent vote session. The video link for the first session of the debate is [here](#), the second session is [here](#), and the Vote on Admission of New Members is [here](#).

The wheel of history is rolling forward. The trend of the times is irresistible. We are convinced that the day will come when the State of Palestine will enjoy the same rights as other member states.

And, as a testament to that “inexorable course of History,” Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the UN, reflecting the dignity and determination of the Palestinian people, passionately stated:

The fact that this resolution did not pass will not break our will, and it will not defeat our determination. We will not stop in our effort. The State of Palestine is inevitable. It is real. Perhaps they see it as far away, but we see it as near, and we are the faithful.

Mauro Vieira, Foreign Minister of Brazil:

As we convene once again to address the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we must confront the escalating violence in Gaza and beyond, as well as the humanitarian catastrophe that continues to unfold unabated in the Gaza Strip.

We must heed the call by President Luiz

Inácio Lula da Silva and refuse to remain indifferent in the face of human tragedy. Such suffering can never be accepted as normal....

Time has come for the international community to finally welcome the fully sovereign and independent State of Palestine as a new member of the United Nations.

As for the ongoing hostilities in Gaza, time has long passed for the international community to stop further suffering of civilians. As we are held accountable by young generations to fulfill the main promise enshrined in the UN Charter of sparing more innocent lives from the scourge of war, our focus should be to move towards healing the wounds and rebuilding the future.

We have laid the normative basis for the consolidation of the territorial sovereignty of the State of Palestine through various decisions of the United Nations that outlaw occupation and annexation. We should now discuss ways to ensure the implementation of such norms through the engagement of the United Nations.

Large-scale investment in economic development and infrastructure will be essential to ensure that Palestine achieves the long-term prosperity and stability its resilient people deserve. Sustainable development and economic empowerment are pillars of any lasting peace settlement....

Vassily Nebenzia, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN:

Today, the overwhelming majority of the world community supports Palestine's application for full membership in the world Organization. The suffering of peaceful Palestinians resonates in the hearts and souls of millions of people around the world. In the countries that supply arms to West Jerusalem, the voices of those who want to ban such supplies are growing louder.

Today's use of the veto by the U.S. delegation was a fruitless attempt to stop the inexorable course of history. The results of the vote, when Washington found itself almost completely isolated, speak for themselves. Indulging in the most reckless actions of its ally, unwillingness to seek just solutions within the existing international legal framework is a

direct way to the abyss of war that could engulf the entire region.

Fu Cong, Permanent Representative of China to the UN:

Today is a sad day. Because of the veto by the United States, the application by Palestine for full membership at the UN has been rejected, and the decades-long dream of the Palestinian people ruthlessly dashed. China finds the decision by the US most disappointing.

An independent State of Palestine has been a long-cherished dream of generations of Palestinian people. Its full membership at the UN is a crucial step in that historical direction. As early as 2011, Palestine submitted an application. Because of some countries' opposition, the Council's action at that time was put on hold. Thirteen years is long enough. Yet we still hear some complaints asserting that there is not enough time and there is no need to rush into actions. These claims are disingenuous. The admission of Palestine as a full member of the UN is more urgent now than ever before....

Palestine's survival space as a state has been constantly squeezed, and the foundation of the two-state solution has been continuously eroded. The relevant countries have ignored this and adopted an attitude of acquiescence or even connivance. And now they are questioning Palestine's capacity to govern. This is gangster logic that confuses right and wrong.

Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Permanent Representative of Guyana to the UN:

This Council has had hundreds of meetings to discuss the Palestinian question since it was first seized of the matter in 1947. For Guyana, at its core, the Palestinian question is a question of justice. Thus far justice has been delayed, and therefore justice has been denied to the people of Palestine for more than seven decades. This injustice was born in violence and has continued to be manifested in further cycles of violence—with perhaps the worst manifestation beginning on 7 October 2023 and continuing as we meet here today. It has also been manifested in repres-

sion of a kind that has put a stranglehold on the Palestinian nation, and seriously imperiled its right to exist. The international community and this Council have consistently rejected these designs on the Palestinian people, reiterating their inalienable rights, including their right to live in freedom and dignity in a state of their own....

Mr. President, dear colleagues,

As this Council prepares to consider the State of Palestine's membership of the United Nations, Guyana sees a perverse paradox. We have on the one hand, a situation where one of the two states—Palestine—who notwithstanding the horrors they continue to face under decades of occupation, continues to believe in the United Nations, and is therefore here once again seeking membership. On the other hand, we have the other state—a full member of the UN since 1949—who is relentless in denigrating and denouncing the United Nations, including today, being the most ardent opposer to the State of Palestine's application for membership. Guyana will not let such a perverse paradox derail our support for Palestine as a UN member.

José Manuel Albares, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Kingdom of Spain:

The establishment of a Palestinian State alongside the State of Israel is undoubtedly a matter of justice, but also the only viable option for peace. Spain has therefore decided to join the 139 countries that have already done so and it will recognize the Palestinian State, and is supporting its entry into the United Nations in this Security Council today. Spain will recognize the Palestinian State because the Palestinian people cannot be condemned to being refugees, because this is the way to peace in the Middle East, because this is good for Israel's security.

Spain will recognize the Palestinian State because Palestinians have the right to a future with

hope just as the Israeli people have the right to a future with peace and security, and after so many decades of pain we know that there cannot be one without the other: Security in Israel and regional peace are intertwined with the hope for the Palestinian people to have a State. Both have the right to this, exactly the same right.

Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the UN, after the vote:

Our right to self-determination has never once been subject to bargaining or negotiation. Our right to self-determination is a natural right, a historic right, a legal right; a right to live in our homeland. Palestine, as an independent state that is free and that is sovereign, our right to self-determination, is inalienable. It is not tied to a time or a time-frame. Our right is eternal, permanent, and continuous. It cannot be delayed, it cannot be suspended, and it has no statute of limitations....

Despite the gravity of the suffering, of the tragedy of the destruction, of this displacement, our Palestinian people have never lost their Humanity. Our Palestinian people now are searching for the remnants of life. And you will not find a people who have a stronger desire to live an ordinary life like our people in Gaza: Gaza of Pride; Gaza of Glory. Our Palestinian people, wherever they are, want life. They cling onto life just like the other peoples on this planet. The Palestinians are a people who aspire to freedom, to a dignified life, to a peaceful existence. The people of Palestine will not disappear. The people of Palestine will not be buried. The Palestinian people have never been unnecessary. You either do us justice, or you do injustice.

We love life, to live in freedom and dignity in our national homeland. We will not disappear. Either you deal with us as friends, and give us our rights—or give us our rights. Thank you very much.