

Palestine

Excellency,

Many thanks to Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Professor Christine Chinkin for their recent fact-finding mission to Beit Hanoun in compliance with HRC resolution S-3/1 of 15 November 2006. The delay in carrying out the mission is, as we all know, due to the non-cooperation of Israel, the occupying power, with the mission and its persistent disregard for resolutions of the Human Rights Council and international law. We commend both of you for your courage to fulfil your mandate and travel to Beit Hanoun despite the visible security risk. We commend also your report for its fine quality. We would like to inform you that a draft resolution has been tabled welcoming your report and recommends to the General Assembly its consideration with the participation of the members of the mission. The report should be widely circulated and brought to the attention of both the International Court of Justice as well as the International Criminal Court.

The Israeli shelling of civilians in Beit Hanoun while asleep in their homes and targeting of those fleeing is a war crime and its perpetrators must be brought before international justice. Moreover the victims and their survivors are entitled to reparations. The implementation of the noble articles of international human and humanitarian laws is no longer based on justice but unfortunately on power. Power without justice is a tyranny and justice should supersede power.

The Palestinian people tormented by persecution and humiliation mirror the past suffering of Jews in Europe. Yet we observe no Israeli remorse let alone the intention to dismantle the occupation and its regime of land grab, subjugation and repression. Even the Roman Empire vanished and this occupation which transformed Gaza into a large concentration camp and the West Bank into isolated ghettos cannot be sustained.

What is needed is an Israeli visionary leadership that abandons the path of collision and replaces it by a genuine determination to put an end to the occupation and thereby transforms Israelis and Palestinians from foes into peaceful neighbours and promotes the values of equality and mutual respect. Israelis and Palestinians have no alternative to living in peace in the holy land as neither party will vanish or emerge as a victor in this protracted conflict which bodes no well to future generations.

The Palestinian people have been deprived of their national rights for six decades and Israel, the occupying power, has been systematically violating their human and humanitarian rights. Yet, we dream of a peace rainbow to decorate our sky. A rainbow is formed by rain and sunshine. We have had more than our share of rain and still hope for sunshine in our lives.