

Réunion : Comité pour l'exercice des droits inaliénables du peuple palestinien

Date : 29 novembre 2012

Durée : 6'40'' (132 mots/minute)

Orateur : Roger Waters, créateur du groupe Pink Floyd, au nom de la société civile internationale

Difficulté : ***

Éléments à fournir :

Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice	Avis consultatif de la Cour internationale de justice
International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid	Convention internationale sur l'élimination et la répression du crime d'apartheid
Fourth Russell Tribunal	4 ^{ème} Session du Tribunal Russell sur la Palestine
Operation Cast Lead	Opération Plomb durci

FOR TRAINING PURPOSES ONLY

Mr Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for receiving me at this moment of solidarity and crisis.

I am a musician, not a diplomat, and so I shall not waste this precious opportunity on the niceties of protocol.

However, I will say that you must all be suffering from listening fatigue, to a certain extent, so while I have been sitting there listening as well, I have been editing my rather long speech down to a rather shorter speech, but I believe the full text will be available to anybody who cares to read it at the end of this meeting.

I appear before you as a representative of the fourth Russell Tribunal on Palestine. And in that capacity, I am representing global civil society.

By way of preamble, I should say my remarks here today are not personal or driven by prejudice or malice. I am looking only to shed some light on the predicament of a beleaguered people.

The Russell Tribunal on Palestine was created to shed such light, to seek accountability for the violations of international law, and the lack of United Nations resolve that prevent the Palestinian people from achieving their inalienable rights, especially the right to self-determination.

One particular stimulus to our convening was the disturbing failure of the international community to implement and enforce the clear judgment of the International Court of Justice in 2004 contained in its Advisory Opinion on the Israeli Wall, as requested by the UN.

We met here in New York City six weeks ago, on the 6th and 7th of October, having previously sent out invitations to all interested parties, and after listening to exhaustive testimony from many expert witnesses and after careful deliberation, we arrived at the following judgments.

We found that the State of Israel is guilty of a number of international crimes.

One, apartheid. The UN's International Covenant on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid defines said crime as inhuman acts, by any government, that are committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons, and systematically oppressing them.

This finding by the Tribunal was endorsed earlier in the year by the HRC Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Geneva after submissions by the Tribunal, made both orally and in writing.

Two, ethnic cleansing. In this case, said crime includes the systematic eviction of much of the native Palestinian population by force since 1947-48.

Three, collective punishment of the civilian population, explicitly prohibited by the Geneva Convention, article 33. Israel has violated its obligation as occupying power throughout the occupied Palestinian Territory, including the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. Its most serious violations have occurred recently in Gaza with the blockade and virtual imprisonment of the entire population, the indiscriminate killing of Palestinians during the Israeli offensive, "Operation Cast Lead", in 2008 and 2009, and now the devastation brought by the recent attack, "Operation Pillar of Defense".

As I speak, I can hear the tut, tutting of governmental and media tongues, trotting out the well worn mantra of the apologists, that " Hamas started it with their rocket attacks. Israel is only defending itself".

Let us examine that argument.

Did Hamas start "it"? When did "it" start?

How we understand history is shaped by when we start the clock. If we start the clock at a moment when rockets are fired from Gaza into Israel on a certain afternoon, that is one history. If we start the clock earlier that morning, when a 13 year old Palestinian boy was shot dead by Israeli soldiers as he played soccer on a Gaza field, history starts to look a little different. If we go back further, we see that since "Operation Cast Lead", according to the Israeli Human Rights Organization B'Tselem, 271 Palestinians were killed by Israeli attacks, and during the same period, not a single Israeli was killed.

A good case can be made that it started in 1967 with the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank.

This crisis in Gaza is a crisis rooted in occupation. Israel and its allies will contend that Gaza is no longer occupied. Really? The withdrawal of soldiers and settlers in 2005 changed the nature, not the existence of occupation. Israel still controls Gaza's airspace, coastal waters, borders, land, economy and lives. Gaza is still occupied. The people of Gaza, the 1.6 million Palestinians, half of them children under the age of 16, live in an open-air prison. That is the reality that underlies the current crisis. And until we, not only understand that, but until you, Excellencies, your Governments, your General Assembly, take responsibility to end that occupation, we cannot even hope that the current crisis is over.

In October, on the last occasion jurists from the Russell Tribunal addressed this Committee, we were assured that our representations and reports would be advanced on the floor of the General Assembly for general debate. If things go well today, we may hope to hold you, Excellencies, to that assurance.