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E.MA UN General Assembly Resolution simulation 2014: UN GA Simulation on Gaza

Dr. Reynold commenced with a presentation on Palestine's tragic history, tracing it back to November 2nd, 1917 with Balfour's promise (Great Britain) to grant the land to the Zionists as means of establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, to Al-Nakba (Arabic for 'catastrophe'; the name Palestinians give to their forced expulsion from their country by Zionists in 1947-48) with the Jewish migration from all across the world toward Palestine, to the actual Israeli occupation in 1967, and the 1st and 2nd intifada (Arabic for 'uprising') in 1987 and 2000.

This presentation served as an introduction for many students who might not be quite familiar with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and provided them with an insight to the issue from a historical, political, and professional perspective, taking into account Dr. Reynold's expertise and his publications on occupation, colonialism, apartheid, and International Law, particularly in relevance to the occupied Palestinian territories.

The simulation was an activity aiming at familiarising E.MA students with some of the UN General Assembly mechanisms and decision-making. It was a means of training them on the process whereby students represented Member States, unions, or organisations and spoke on their behalf. The opening word was for the Arabic League which supposedly called for this urgent meeting to discuss the situation in Gaza and pass on a resolution to stop the routine escalations of military force and bombardments of the Gaza strip by the Israeli forces in July 2014, or what Israel calls 'Operation Protective Edge'. Other parties who

spoke on behalf of the countries/organisations they represented were the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation, the European Union, the WEOG and Allies, the G77 and Allies, USA, Israel, NGOs, and finally the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Recalling previous Security Council resolutions (242 & 446) and appalled by the failure of the SC to act upon recommendations of the 2009 UN Fact Finding Mission on Gaza (the 'Goldstone Report'); deploring the gross and systematic violation of human rights in Gaza in 2014, including widespread killing of civilians, the wanton destruction of property and concerted targeting of essential infrastructure such as hospitals and UN schools serving as shelters, the intensification of collective punishment and denial of the right of civilians to leave conflict zone; welcoming Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/S/21-1 of July 2014 and mindful of the primary responsibility of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security under its Charter, the General Assembly's Draft Resolution A/68/L.365 was approved with a majority of votes. This resolution demanded first and foremost an immediate end to the blockade of the Gaza Strip and urged the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law.

All in all, it was a fruitful activity and a rich experience for the E.MA students on whom high hopes are held to make some remarkable changes in the near future-- those students who strive to improve the world and make it a better place by ensuring that human rights are respected and implemented everywhere! Many thanks to Dr. Reynolds for his introductory lecture and his guidance provided to students throughout the simulation's preparations.

(Article written by Zahraa Awada-Badawi, E.MA 2014/2015)

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