

STATE OF PALESTINE

Child victim testimony (in Arabic): I found my leg cut off beside me. I was not able to move for a whole week. Now, we cannot play because of occupation. Due to occupation, I cannot play because my leg is cut off and my other leg and hand are broken, I cannot do anything because of occupation.

Minister's statement (in English):

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,

Today I stand before you with a heavy heart bearing witness to the unspeakable tragedy that has befallen my country, Palestine. Our people have suffered relentless brutality and the ravages of war, leaving a scar that is deep and profound. Among the many victims of this brutal war, it is our persons with disabilities community that has borne a disproportionate share of the suffering. In just seven months, the number of persons with disabilities in our nation has doubled. These numbers are not mere statistics. They represent mothers, fathers, children and elders whose lives have been irreversibly altered. They symbolize dreams shattered, futures darkened, and a cruel proof to the horrors of war.

Every person with a disability is a story of courage, of resilience in the face of overwhelming adversity and of an unwavering will to live and thrive despite unimaginable challenges. Our society must rise to meet the needs with compassion and urgency. We must ensure that they are not left to navigate this new reality alone. It is our moral duty to provide them with the support, the care and the opportunities they need to rebuild their lives.

This means accessible health care, inclusive education, meaningful employment, and the elimination of barriers that prevent full participation in society. But none of this will be possible without stopping the atrocity. Therefore, I urgently call for an immediate ceasefire. The suffering must end so that we can begin the healing process for everyone, especially for persons with disabilities, and start rebuilding our nation.

We call upon the international community to stand with us in solidarity. Your support is crucial in helping us rebuild a nation that is inclusive and just. Together, we can create a future where persons with disability is not a symbol of limitation, but of strength and potential. Let us transform our words into action. Our empathy into tangible support, and our shared humanity into a light of hope for those who have suffered for years, and especially during the last seven months. The time for change is now and with your help, support and action, we can make a world of difference.