



Check Against Delivery

Statement by
Ambassador Danny Danon
Permanent Representative

“Tenth emergency special session (resumed)”

General Assembly

New York

21 December 2017

Thank you, Mr. President.

It is shameful for the United Nations that I must stand before you today. It is shameful that this meeting is even taking place.

Jerusalem is the holiest place on earth for the Jewish people. It is the capital of the State of Israel. Period. It is a fact that simply cannot be disputed.

King David declared Jerusalem the city of the Jewish people 3000 years ago. The Jewish bible mentions Jerusalem 660 times. Our prayers recall Jerusalem's holy name over and over again. As our first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, said Jerusalem is, and I quote, "an inseparable part of the history of Israel, of the faith of Israel."

I am holding up here an original coin.

It's from around 67 A.D. It says in Hebrew, and I quote, "Freedom of Zion." It is clear evidence from the time of our second temple. It proves the ancient connection of Jews to Jerusalem.

Our bond to Jerusalem is unbreakable. It's been that way since ancient times. Whether its declarations by UNESCO, empty speeches in committees or resolutions of the General Assembly, no UN vote will ever drive us from Jerusalem.

These are the facts this body does not want to hear. These are the truths this body wishes to ignore. So today, I will tell you about another unbreakable bond: the unbreakable bond of hypocrisy between the Palestinians and the United Nations.

Some have cautioned that the United States' decision is one-sided and harmful to peace. The opposite is true. It is the one-sided steps of the Palestinians and the UN that have pushed away peace for years. With every anti-Israel resolution, with every attack on my people, the UN has perfected its double standard.

We are now sitting in an open emergency session of the General Assembly on this very topic.

This session has been open since 1997. It is the only open emergency session of the General Assembly.

We live in a world that is full of conflict and war.

But only when it comes to Israel, the one true democracy in the Middle East, does this Assembly remain in a constant open session. It is truly absurd.

How many times has Israel reached out its hand in peace since 1997? How many times have we offered the Palestinians to join us in dialogue? How many times have these calls for peace been rejected? All of us have lost count.

When Prime Minister Barak offered the Palestinians a state in 2000, we were met with suicide bombers on our buses and shootings in our streets.

In 2005, Prime Minister Sharon disengaged from Gaza. He removed every single Israeli home. Since then, we've been attacked again and again with rockets and missiles aimed at our civilians. Yet, this body is silent!

The United States simply stated a fact. They officially declared what has always been true. Jerusalem has been, and always will be, the capital of the State of Israel.

This vote is nothing more than a performance of delusion.

The Palestinians know this resolution is a sham. They know this resolution does absolutely nothing for the lives of the Palestinian people. They know it won't create jobs for their people. They know it won't provide better healthcare for the people of Ramallah or Gaza.

No! The Palestinian leadership is just wasting everyone's time. This resolution is nothing more than a distraction. All it will do is tell the Palestinians they can continue rejecting peace.

And if you vote for it, you are sanctioning that view.

I thank those brave countries that do not support this resolution. You are the defenders of peace. You are the leaders who prove that no UN resolution can rewrite history.

Because when a UN resolution designates East Jerusalem as illegal for Israel, in reality, it is designating the Western Wall, the foundation of our holiest site, as illegal for the Jewish people.

Mr. President,

For thousands of years, Jews had only partial access, or were even banned completely from the Western Wall. Other nations, kingdoms and empires that occupied Jerusalem over the centuries had no respect for freedom of religion. But when Israel was founded, we established a democracy. Our democracy is based on individual freedoms. One of those freedoms is the freedom of religion. And all these years later, our democracy, and our commitment to those freedoms, continue to thrive.

We know Jerusalem is sacred to billions around the world. Israel respects all religions, and encourages everyone to visit and pray in the Holy City. In Jerusalem, everyone can pray as they wish. That is a fact. It will remain that way. And it is that way because of Israel.

Mr. President,

There is a particular irony with today's resolution.

Countries that sponsored today's resolution accuse the United States and Israel of violating international law. Countries like Yemen, where terror groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS find fertile ground.

The irony continues. The majority of member states eagerly support this resolution. Despite who its sponsors are. It's a typical double-standard of the UN.

In every other scenario, this body preaches human rights and peace. But when it comes to Israel, you stop caring about human rights and peace. In fact, you completely ignore the horrific acts of terror that threaten Israeli citizens.

These past 2 weeks alone have seen 23 rocket attacks by Hamas into Israel. We heard nothing from the UN. The PA threatened violence and a day of rage. But the UN had no condemnation.

Mr. President,

Let me be clear: violence and terror must never be tolerated. If this body were really united for peace, it would pass a resolution condemning Palestinian violence.

When the United Nations adopts a resolution as absurd as this, it does more than eliminate peace. It welcomes hypocrisy.

But that's not all. This resolution encourages more violence and instability. For years, Palestinian leaders have pledged to keep fighting until Jerusalem was in their hands. They publicly denied the very existence of our temples in Jerusalem.

With this dangerous resolution, you have sanctioned the Palestinians to continue on this dangerous path. You give the Palestinian leadership exactly what it wants. You permit them to pursue violence in the name of Jerusalem, the City of Peace.

Mr. President,

Israel is an optimistic country. We returned home after thousands of years in exile. We made the desert bloom. And defended our country from countless attacks.

42 years ago, this body adopted a different shameful resolution. It equated Zionism with racism. It took 16 long years for that hateful resolution to be revoked.

I have no doubt that today's resolution will also end up in the trash bin of history. And I have no doubt that the day will come when the entire international community will finally come to recognize Jerusalem as the eternal capital of the State of Israel.

Thank you.