

---

Check Against Delivery

---

Statement by

Ambassador Danny Danon

Permanent Representative

Question of Palestine

United Nations, New York

23 November 2015

Mr. President,

Forty years ago, Israel's Ambassador, Chaim Herzog, stood here at this very podium, and stood up for truth and for high principle at the lowest point in the history of the United Nations.

He courageously denounced the shameful attempt to define the national aspirations of the Jewish people for a home as a form of racism, the very evil that Jews in countries around the world have suffered from for centuries.

As I stand here before you today, that infamous decision has been repealed, but an endless number of biased and backward measures have taken its place.

Over the years, this assembly has passed countless one-sided resolutions blaming Israel for any and all problems confronting the Palestinians.

There have been numerous special sessions on the conflict whose only achievements were to discard the truth and to distort reality.

The General Assembly has established an entire UN division dedicated to promoting the Palestinian narrative and denigrating Israel.

There is even a special day on the UN calendar just for the Palestinians, although, let's be honest – for those members states who constantly engage in demonization and delegitimization of Israel, every day here at the UN is a day of solidarity with the Palestinians.

It is unfortunate that the seventieth session has joined the pitiful UN tradition of passing more than twenty empty anti-Israel resolutions, which deepen the conflict, distance us from real dialogue, and diminish the prospects of peace.

We don't need these resolutions, because we already had the resolution we needed.

Before all the endless documents and declarations, this assembly adopted a resolution to partition the British Mandate into a Jewish state, and an Arab state.

We accepted partition and established a state for the sake of self-determination, the Arabs rejected it and launched a war for the sake of annihilation.

Despite all the years of distortion and disinformation, through all the mist and the mystifications, there is one simple truth about the root cause of the conflict that remains clear and unimpeachable.

If the Arab states and the Arabs of mandatory Palestine had accepted the existence of a Jewish state alongside a state of their own,

Israelis and Palestinians would have been spared decades of needless conflict, of unnecessary pain and suffering, and of the devastating loss of life on both sides.

But instead of saying yes to living side by side with Israel in peace, the Palestinians said no- no to peace, and no to the existence of a Jewish state.

The echoes of that 'no' continue to this very day.

Mr. President,

The resolutions before this Assembly deliberately ignore the root cause of the conflict- the unwillingness of the Palestinians- even today- to accept a Jewish state in any part of the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

As we are here today to debate the, quote, "Question of Palestine", let me ask this Chamber:

Why did the Palestinians reject peace offers which would have granted them a state- not once, not twice, but three times?

Why did they launch violent waves of terror every time they had the opportunity for statehood?

After Israel signed the Oslo accords and recognized the PLO, shooting, stabbings, and suicide bombing took the lives of nearly three hundred Israelis.

Following Arafat's rejection of a state for the Palestinians at the Camp David Summit in the year 2000, the Palestinian leadership ignited a five year intifada in which more than one thousand Israelis were killed.

Since Israel withdrew all of its security forces and evacuated all Israeli communities from Gaza in 2005, more than eleven thousand rockets have rained down on Israeli cities.

Let's stop avoiding the real, pressing question of Palestine, and ask ourselves:

If the Palestinian leaders really want peace, why do they refuse to sit in the same room with the Israeli Prime Minister?

If the Palestinian leaders truly want a home for the Palestinian people, why do they reject the very idea of a home for the Jewish people?

If the Palestinian leaders are concerned for the protection of their own people, why do they encourage and incite them to terror and violence?

Mr. President,

Looking for answers to any of these questions in the resolutions being discussed here today is harder than finding a needle in a haystack.

Instead, it is business as usual at the UN – more hollow decisions and more barren gestures.

Let no one be fooled. No amount of biased resolutions and empty symbols will bring the change that the people of the region so desperately need.

You can raise a Palestinian flag here in the UN, but as long as the Palestinians fail to raise a generation committed to peace and reconciliation, there will be no end to the violence.

As long as those in this chamber do not demand that Palestinian leaders make the difficult decisions needed for peace, no rhetoric and no theatrics will improve the lives of the Palestinian people.

For Israelis and Palestinians alike, for whom this conflict is a daily reality, it is clear that the ones spending their time issuing endless resolutions and new plans are detached from what's actually happening on the ground.

Mr. President,

Since September, Israelis have endured a wave of terror.

Hundreds of innocent Israeli men, women, and children have been brutally stabbed in the streets, intentionally run over at bus stops, and deliberately shot at on their way to work; all for the crime of being Jews living in Israel.

Here, in front of this assembly, I would like to read out the names of those innocent victims murdered in cold blood:

Alexander Levlovich, age sixty four

Naama Henkin, age thirty

Eitam Henkin, age thirty one

Aharon Banita-Bennett, twenty one

Nehemia Lavi, forty one

Alon Govberg, fifty one

Chaim Haviv, seventy eight

Yeshayahu Krishevsky, fifty nine

Richard Lakin, seventy six

Omri Levy, nineteen

Avraham Asher Hasno, fifty four

Simcha Hodedtov , twenty eight

Benjamin Yakubovich, nineteen

Ya'akov Litman, forty

Netanel Litman, eighteen

Reuven Aviram, fifty one

Aharon Yesayev, thirty two

Yaakov Don, forty nine

Ezra Schwartz, eighteen

Shadi Arafa, twenty eight

Hadar Buchris, twenty one

Ziv Mizrahi, twenty

Look at the faces of the innocent victims of Palestinian terror.

This is a shameful day for the United Nations.

Instead of issuing a clear and categorical statement denouncing all acts of terror, this institution has granted legitimacy to Palestinian terror.

The heinous murder of a twenty innocent Israelis, just because they are Israelis, is no different than the cruel massacre of innocents in France.

Terror is terror is terror, and it must be fought against, not justified.

Terror has no borders and we must fight it wherever we find it, whether it is Hamas in Gaza, Palestinian terror in the streets of Israel, or ISIS attacks in the streets of Europe.

These terrorist attacks and killings are a direct result of the ongoing instigation to violence by the Palestinian leadership.

Palestinian officials continue to use inflammatory rhetoric and dangerous incitement, intensifying this wave of terror against Israeli citizens.

If the UN wants to play a constructive role, it must get a grip on reality, and hold the Palestinians accountable.

Demand that the Palestinians leaders cease their incitement to violence.

Insist that President Abbas finally respond to Prime Minister Netanyahu's repeated calls to negotiate.

And make it clear that peace will only come once the Palestinians accept that Israel is the home of the Jewish people.

Mr. President,

This assembly may have repealed the disgraceful resolution that equates Zionism with racism.

However, forty years later, many in this institution still display hatred and hostility toward Israel, the home of the Jewish People.

The credibility of this institution depends on its integrity, and its impartiality.

The delegitimization of Israel here at the UN undermines the very values and ideals this institution was intended to uphold.

The actions you take here today demonstrate just how far this institution has strayed from those founding ideals.

When the world's most oppressive and murderous regimes sit on committees dedicated to preserving human rights, it is no surprise that so few look to the UN for moral leadership.

Israel is the very embodiment of these values – democracy, justice, and human rights.

We in Israel don't measure ourselves by the unjust standards of this institution.

Rather, the moral worth of this institution will be measured by how it views Israel, the most successful new democratic state of the last century.

If you truly want to understand how unique Israel is in the region, all you need to do is ask yourself.

If you are a woman or if you are gay,

If you are looking for a heart transplant or seeking to decode the human genome

If you are Jewish, or Muslim or Christian, hoping to practice your faith openly and proudly

Is there anywhere else in the Middle East, from Khartoum to Kabul, or from Tunis to Tehran, where would you rather go:

This is the Israel that I know, and this is the Israel that I am proud to represent.

Mr. President,

We look forward to the day when the Palestinians finally recognize the right of the Jewish people to a State in Israel.

We look forward to the moment that Palestinian leaders follow the path of President Sadat of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan, who bravely grasped Israel's extended hand for peace.

Their example is testament to the fact that peace can only be achieved through direct negotiations.

We look forward to a time when the Palestinians focus on building their *own* institutions, instead of attacking Israel in *this one*.

When that day comes, the Palestinians will find an eager partner for peace.