



Mission permanente d'Israël
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies
et des Organisations Internationales à Genève

משלחת ישראל
ליד משרד האומות המאוחדות
והארגונים הבינלאומיים בג'נבה

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Itzhak Levanon
Permanent Representative

6th Regular Session
Human Rights Council

Regarding the 60th Anniversary of the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

10 December 2007

Madame High Commissioner,

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has its roots in the horrors of the Holocaust. As

Eleanor Roosevelt said in her address to the General Assembly on 9 December 1948:

“The realization that the flagrant violation of human rights by Nazi and Fascist countries sowed the seeds of the last world war has supplied the impetus for the work which brings us to the moment of achievement here today.”

The world's revulsion at the Holocaust provoked the international community into action, to establish a mechanism which would emphasize universal respect for human rights. The legacy of those who survived inspired the nascent United Nations to codify specific rights on the common basis that we are all human, so that future generations could not be stripped of their dignity and humanity simply on the basis of their religion, gender or ethnicity. Foremost among these is the inherent right to life.

Madame High Commissioner,

The United Nations had the foresight to realize, even at that early stage, that in order for the Universal Declaration to be effectively implemented, all rights need to be delicately balanced against one another. The Universal Declaration indeed recognized that human rights are not absolute, and that one should not embrace the cause of human rights only to use it as a tool to infringe upon the rights of others. Of paramount importance in this regards is **Article 30**, which states that:

"Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, person or group any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein."

Madame High Commissioner,

By calling attention to Article 30, I remind the family of nations that those who resort to violent acts, such as intentional terrorism, as a means of advancing their agenda are subverting the Universal Declaration for their own political gains. Regardless of any grievance, or alleged cause, acts of terrorism stand in direct contravention to the very ideals and essence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Madame High Commissioner,

Human Rights education is key to any recognition and respect of fundamental rights and freedoms. Such education can similarly be used to overcome prejudices and incitement to hatred and intolerance. For this reason, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is part of school curriculum in Israel.

Madame High Commissioner,

Sixty years later, the notion of human rights is still striving to reach universal implementation. As all member states of the United Nations attempt to fulfill their obligations to promote and protect human rights, the United Nations also struggles to equitably evaluate each member state on the basis of the same universal criteria. Israel hopes that these goals and declaration of intent will be translated from word to deed, and that the U.N. will ensure that no politicization, singling-out, or selectivity will taint the noble values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.