



Israel's agenda for the 62nd UN General Assembly

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Israel's agenda at the United Nations is a function of those subjects with which Israel is dealing in the areas of peace and security, economic and environmental development and human rights. However, its agenda no less stems from Israel's desire to be, just like all the other Member States of the United Nations, integrated into the global agenda as an equal among equals, contributing its knowledge and resources. Israel is interested in separating itself from its image in the United Nations as a one-issue country (the Arab-Israel conflict). Instead, it seeks to act within the multilateral diplomatic arena of the United Nations and international organizations, as a state that contributes to the work of the organization, both within the framework of deliberations in the General Assembly and also in the activities of the organization, the Secretariat, and the specialized agencies.

Israel is doing this primarily by creating its own positive agenda vis-à-vis the UN, and by determining those many areas in which Israel has a relative advantage and through which it can contribute to the work of the organization. Such activity is perhaps even ultimately more important than engagement with the traditional political agenda which was fostered by the Arabs and the Palestinians during the 1970s and 1980s, a result of which many one-sided resolutions have since been adopted annually.

Israel will in 2007 pay its share in financing the UN, by paying its membership dues on time and unconditionally, thus being one of only a few dozen countries that do so. Israel's share in funding the organization and in funding the major agencies, whose operations are financed by the membership dues, is 0.419 percent of the budget, some 9 million dollars. Israel's share in funding the separate budget of peacekeeping forces will be this year about 35 million dollars. Israel is in the 27th place among Member States in terms of the level of its dues assessment, and this fact also strengthens our demand for equality in rights in the organization.

Full Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701

A main issue with which Israel will be engaged at the UN, principally at the Security Council, will be the full implementation of the Security Council's resolutions dealing with Lebanon, in particular [Resolution 1559](#) (2004) and [Resolution 1701](#) (2006).

Resolution 1701 was adopted by the Security Council towards the end of the [war in Lebanon](#) on August 11, 2006. The resolution and subsequent Security Council presidential statements called for the cessation of hostilities in Lebanon and the immediate and unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldiers, established a new [UNIFIL force](#), and

determined the need for security and political measures in Lebanon, among them establishing an area free of weapons south of the Litani River, disarming Hezbollah, and forbidding the introduction of arms into Lebanon, except for those needed by the Lebanese army and UNIFIL.

When analyzing the situation regarding implementation of this resolution, one can point to clear accomplishments on the ground, alongside failures and the lack of implementation when it comes to central portions of the resolution. On the positive side, we see measures such as the deployment of 15,000 Lebanese army troops with the assistance of UNIFIL throughout the area down to the Blue Line in the south of the country. Generally, we view in a positive manner also the broadened activity of UNIFIL (some 13,500 troops) in its Area of Operation between the Litani and the Blue Line, in keeping with the limited mandate decided upon in Resolution 1701. UNIFIL's operations today are different from its operations previously, and we see a considerable effort on its part to fulfill its mandate, although there are still many operations that it could carry out, within the context of its present mandate, in order to prevent Hezbollah activity and the transfer of arms into southern Lebanon.

Israel commends the countries that have contributed troops to UNIFIL and also its commander, the Italian Major General Claudio Graziano. On the plus side, one can say that there are limitations on the movement and activity of Hezbollah between the Litani and the Blue Line, due to the massive presence of the Lebanese army and UNIFIL on the ground. However, there is a massive penetration of arms, originating from Syria and Iran, into Lebanon, especially into the area north of the Litani and to a degree also south of it; this constitutes a significant and grave violation of Resolution 1701 as well as [Resolution 1747](#), the latter forbidding the export of weapons by Iran.

Worthy of mention is the fact that the UN Secretary-General and the Security Council adopted, for the first time publicly, the findings regarding the violations of the arms embargo which they received from Israel and another country, and subsequently established a special survey team to look into the arms smuggling along the border between Syria and Lebanon. The team submitted to the Secretary-General in June 2007 its recommendations for improving the supervision along the border in order to prevent arms smuggling.

An essential element from Israel's point of view that has not been carried out as required by Resolution 1701 is the release of our abducted soldiers. Not only have our soldiers not been released immediately and unconditionally in keeping with the resolution, but no sign whatsoever has been given to Israel regarding their fate, and they have not been allowed to meet with representatives of the International Red Cross. This is in sharp contrast with the situation of members of Hezbollah and other Lebanese detainees held by Israel who receive visits by the IRC and are allowed to send letters to their families.

Another central component in the implementation of Resolution 1701 is the disarmament of all armed militias (principally Hezbollah) in Lebanon. No one expected that the resolution would bring about a process whereby Hezbollah would relinquish its arms to the United Nations, but the resolution does state that the area between the Litani and the Blue Line is an area to be free of all weapons, except for those of the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL. Among the information given by Israel to the UN, there is clear evidence that Hezbollah is continuing to keep in operation its "nature reserves" in southern Lebanon, closed areas where stockpiles of missiles are hidden underground and ready to be launched against Israel, and is also operating in built-up areas where UNIFIL and the Lebanese army do not sufficiently operate.

Israel maintains, by means of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), direct communications on a daily basis with the commanders and officers of UNIFIL. Moreover, once every few weeks, joint trilateral meetings are held between the Lebanese army, the IDF and UNIFIL in order to discuss and clarify security issues that are on the agenda.

Iran

The Iranian issue, in all of its different aspects, will continue to be dealt with by Israel during the coming year. Israel is taking many diplomatic measures through various channels regarding the adoption of resolutions in the Security Council (following Resolutions 1737

and 1747), in order to strengthen the existing relevant instruments for sanctions against Iran due to its well documented program to obtain a [nuclear arms capability](#). The Security Council made a direct connection between the implementation of Resolutions 1701 and 1747, thereby pointing a finger of accusation against Iran for smuggling arms into Lebanon.

The State of Israel will not tolerate the statements made by Iran's President Ahmedinajad [denying the Holocaust](#) and calling for the destruction of Israel.

The Situation in the Gaza Strip

The internal security situation in the Palestinian Authority, and especially in the Gaza Strip, including the [continuing launching of missiles against Israel](#) and the Palestinian violation of the ceasefire which the Palestinians themselves declared following Israel's disengagement from Gaza is a matter of major concern. This is seen not only in terms of the situation in Israel and its response, but only in the reports on the situation in the Middle East which the UN Secretary-General submits to the Security Council on a monthly basis.

Israel reiterates and emphasizes its irrefutable right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, as well as the restraint that it is demonstrating, especially in view of the sensitivity of Israel and the international community to the life of civilians and the need to protect the lives of civilians who are not involved in terrorism. However, we no less emphasize the fundamental right of our citizens to life and the need for the international community to condemn the launching of missiles by Palestinians against innocent Israeli civilians.

Israel is acting to cooperate fully with the United Nations agencies on the ground to help provide humanitarian assistance to the residents of the Gaza Strip and to facilitate access and the entry of goods into the area in spite of the problem of terrorism.

Annual Resolutions Regarding the Middle East

This year, too, Israel diplomacy at the UN will engage in defending Israel's policies in the none-too-few deliberations dealing with the various issues which pertain to the conflict and which at the end are annually raised in one-sided anti-Israel draft resolutions.

Palestinian Organs in the UN

Of the 21 resolutions which deal with "The Situation in the Middle East," "The Question of Palestine," UNWRA, nature resources, human rights, the Golan Heights, and Jerusalem, five are resolutions which have budgetary ramifications and which renew the mandates for 5 Palestinian organs, most of which have been acting within the framework of the UN since the 1970s. Israel and a few other friendly states oppose the renewal of these mandates. Three of them do not even enjoy the support of a significant majority, considering the reservations and abstentions of the EU states and others concerning these organs.

The Palestinian organs are, among others:

- The Division for Palestinian Rights (in the Secretariat's Department for Political Affairs);
- The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People;
- The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories;
- Information Activities on the Question of Palestine in the Department for Public Information (DPI);
- The Office of Register of Damages UNORD (in Vienna).

The budget for the Palestinian organs mentioned above amounts to approximately 12.5 million dollars every two years. Israel strongly opposes the existence of these organs, for their sole purpose is to promote the Palestinian narrative while totally ignoring the Israeli narrative of the conflict. Israel, therefore, does not participate in funding these organs, and neither does the United States. We believe that the voting by Member States for these

annual resolutions in general, and for the Palestinian organs in particular, actually harms the Palestinian interests no less than it harms Israeli interests. The states that support these resolutions do so primarily due to considerations of "coalition discipline" in the General Assembly, rather than actual support for the Palestinian cause. They generate among the Palestinians an illusion that the General Assembly and the international community will solve most of their problems. But the Palestinians should realize that only through direct negotiations with Israel and by committing themselves to a sincere effort to solve the conflict will they be able to improve their economic and political situation.

Israel will continue to propose that, in order to promote the interest that has been expressed by the Member States to improve the work of the General Assembly and make it more efficient, the number of the resolutions referred to above will be reduced. This could be done by giving preference to the method of adopting omnibus resolutions which consist of various parts, as was the case until 1996. In this manner, the General Assembly could deliberate and vote on 5-6 resolutions instead of about 20.

Combating Global Terrorism

The topic of global counter-terrorism has engaged the United Nations for several years, although a turning point was reached and impetus was given following the terrorist attack of 9/11. The UN has thus far adopted 13 conventions dealing with various aspects of counter-terrorism (such as funding, nuclear terrorism, etc.), although attempts to reach agreement on a general convention regarding the fight against terrorism have so far not succeeded, primarily due to the failure to agree on a definition of terrorism and its scope.

The Security Council has in recent years adopted important resolutions and has established organs for combating terrorism. Among the key ones:

- The Committee for Monitoring Sanctions against Persons and Organizations Connected to Al-Qaida and the Taliban;
- Resolution 1373 which deals with the need to criminalize terrorist acts, including funding, sponsorship, etc. A group of experts was established to oversee the implementation of the resolution.
- Resolution 1540 which deals with non-conventional terrorism.

A significant step for combating terrorism was taken by the international community in September 2006 when the General Assembly adopted by consensus the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. This strategy promotes a series of measures that the Member States need to advance, alongside the utmost coordination between UN agencies. The strategy established a secretarial organ under the Secretary-General to deal with counter-terrorism. Hopefully, the strategy will be carried out in an integrative manner on the international, regional and especially national level.

Israel is closely following this issue and is cooperating with the organs that were established by the United Nations for combating terrorism. Among the steps taken by Israel is the submitting of reports to the organization and the holding of meetings on the subject with representatives of the UN Secretariat.

The Human Rights Council

Last year the General Assembly established the Human Rights Council which replaced the former Commission on Human Rights, in order to upgrade the UN's handling of this issue - a subject which is gaining increasing importance and attention on the global scale, especially among the western nations - to the level of a Council, alongside the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Moreover, it was established with the primary intention of establishing a body which would be free of the politicization that had plagued the former Commission and which had found special expression in the negative singling out of Israel. In reality, however, the international community has established a problematic organ, which does not meet expectations and is essentially more of the same. This view is shared by all western nations as well as by many developing nations.

Israel shared its concerns with the international community and especially the European

Member States before the Council's procedures were finally adopted. Now we are witnessing a situation whereby the Council has held three of the first emergency sessions in its history on the subject of alleged human rights violations by Israel, and only the fourth session dealt with Darfur and this only after uncompromising pressure was brought to bear by the western countries. Furthermore, the Council has thus far adopted already 11 anti-Israel resolutions.

Israel believes that this situation, whereby the new Council focuses on matters pertaining to Israel instead of dealing with the many and much graver violations of human rights committed by other countries, some of them members of the Council itself, is totally unacceptable. Even graver is the fact that the Council has adopted a permanent agenda which again contains, just like the old Commission, a separate agenda item dealing exclusively with alleged human rights violations by Israel in the territories; this item exists alongside the one item which covers human rights violations in all the rest of the world.

One of the tools that serve the human rights mechanism of the United Nations is special rapporteurs. One of them is the Special Rapporteur on the Territories, John Dogard (from South Africa) whose mandate is biased in that it examines only the violation of human rights in the territories committed supposedly by Israel, while totally ignoring those committed by Palestinians. Notwithstanding all the above, it should be born in mind that Israel's policy on human rights is one of maximum openness. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that Israel received the rapporteurs concerning housing, "arbitrary killings", displaced persons, and health, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights herself, Louise Arbor, during and following the Second Lebanon War.

Israel's Integration into the UN Development Agenda

Israel is making an effort to be part of UN development activities, among other things through MASHAV (Israel's Center for International Cooperation) projects in conjunction with UN organs and agencies. Moreover, we are holding for the very first time this year awareness-building seminars, in which UN agencies will be presenting their activities to Israelis. Israel intends also to participate this year in programs for developing up-to-date technologies in agriculture for food security.

The UN Secretary-General, the Secretariat, and UN Reform

The new UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon (of the Republic of Korea who entered into office as Secretary-General on 1 January 2007 for a five-year term), made his first visit to Israel and the region in March 2007. That visit was considered to be highly successful and established a new, significant and good relationship with him and his team of closest advisors. The Secretary-General has since then met on a number of occasions with the Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and has also held frequent telephone conversations with her.

Israel commends the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, and former Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for their support and efforts to resolve the case of the abducted Israeli soldiers.

One of the central reforms that have begun in the organization is connected to the need to unify UN offices and its agencies in countries around the world under one roof. The reform, called System Wide Coherence or, in brief, One UN, is one of the most important to ever take place, for currently frictions exist between the many UN offices and agencies operating in various countries. There is a need to subordinate offices and agencies in each country to one director to bring about significant savings in expenses as well as greater efficiency. Israel supports this reform and is closely following the study of its application in Israel's case.

One reform that is encountering difficulties in moving forward is that of Mandate Review. During the 60 years of the UN's existence, the General Assembly created over 9,000 mandates: bodies, organizations, units, Secretary-General reports, etc. The General

Assembly decided, upon the recommendation of the previous Secretary-General, to review the need for all these mandates. Israel is participating in this slow review, and it is a member of the review group in the area of drugs and crime.

Reform of the Security Council: The efforts of countries with an interest in promoting a reform of the Security Council are continuing. Israel recognizes the fact that far-reaching changes have occurred in the geopolitical arena since the establishment of the UN. However, Israel also believes that a larger Security Council would be cumbersome and would make it more difficult for the Council to operate properly.

Israelis in the UN Secretariat and in Peacekeeping Forces

We are continuing in our efforts to increase the number of Israelis who are working in the UN Secretariat and agencies. As is the case every year, this year as well the UN, at our invitation, held exams for entrance into the organization (for accepting workers are the junior level of P-2). About 150 candidates took part in those exams. In the exams that were held in previous years more than 500 people took part, and 14 Israelis passed them and they are now awaiting their placement in the organization.

This year for the first time ever an [awareness and employment seminar](#) took place in Tel Aviv, and we are planning another seminar for October. The purpose of that gathering was to raise the awareness among Israelis of the UN agencies in providing humanitarian and development assistance in the developing countries, with emphasis being given to Africa and increasing the number of Israelis who are employed by these agencies. Israel has a great interest in cooperating with the assistance activities of the UN organizations in the developing countries, especially in Africa, and we are sure that Israelis have much to offer in this field.

There are currently 12 Israelis working in the UN Secretariat (out of an allotment of 18); there are nine Israelis working in the organizations that provide assistance and which participated in the first seminar (three in UNICEF, one in WFP, one in UNDP, three in FAO); there are no Israelis in UNFPA. The WFP employs 10,000 people, of whom only one is Israeli.

Alongside the above, efforts are continuing for Israel to join the group of countries that contribute troops and officers to UN peacekeeping operations. This year five Israel Defense Forces officers participated in courses to train military observers, and we hope that police officers will also soon take part in peacekeeping missions. By doing so Israel will join the 108 Member States who contribute to what is such an important part of the UN agenda - peacekeeping around the world.

WEOG

Israel is a member for election purposes in the Western European and Others Group, and through it has been elected to various organs and committees in the UN. Israel is currently represented in many UN committees, and has been elected to represent WEOG in various bureaus (as Vice Chairman and Chairman), but Israel is still denied the possibility to participate in most of the informal Western consultation groups.

Conclusion

This year we are advancing an additional stage in Israel's integration into the UN agenda, through membership in the UN committees and bodies and even in the bureau as deputy chairmen (e.g. in the Committee for Sustainable Development) and even as Chairman, for the first time ever, in the committee which reviews and approves the UN work plan. This year we will act to bring Israelis into the organization and to increase UN procurements from Israel. All this will take place alongside Israel's continuing diplomatic activities at the UN in response to Arab initiatives to exploit the UN as a forum for anti-Israeli activity.