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**STATEMENT  
BY**

**AMBASSADOR BASO SANGQU  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**AT THE  
RESUMED TENTH EMERGENCY SPECIAL SESSION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON  
ILLEGAL ISRAELI ACTIONS IN OCCUPIED EAST  
JERUSALEM AND THE REST OF THE OCCUPIED  
PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
NEW YORK  
15 JANUARY 2009**

**Check against delivery**

Mr. President,

We welcome the holding of this emergency meeting and are pleased at your initiative. We also wish to associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The violence over the last few weeks in Gaza and Southern Israel has grossly deteriorated and so many innocent civilians have been killed and injured that it makes it imperative for this Assembly, to collectively and publicly voice its condemnation of the attacks and demand that both sides immediately cease their military attacks.

Resolution 1860 (2009) adopted a week ago by the Security Council called for "an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza". It furthermore called for "the unimpeded provision and distribution throughout Gaza of humanitarian assistance, including of food, fuel and medical treatment". We are extremely disappointed that this resolution has not been implemented. We urge all parties to fully respect Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and to immediately implement its provisions. Should there be no compliance with the resolution, we would expect the Security Council to take the appropriate measures within its Charter based mandate to implement its decisions. We believe that the immediate next step for the Security Council is to strengthen Resolution 1860(2009) by demanding that a ceasefire, withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and easing the blockade by the opening of borders should be done simultaneously.

Mr. President,

The South African Government has expressed its view that Israeli airstrikes are a violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law. The South African Government has called on the Israeli Government to stop the military onslaught in Gaza and to immediately and unconditionally withdraw its forces.

These Israeli airstrikes also represent an excessive and disproportionate use of force by Israel. In excess of 1000 deaths, including approximately 350 children, and thousands more injured are unjustifiable. We join the Secretary-General in reiterating Israel's obligation to uphold international humanitarian and human rights law and condemn its excessive use of force leading to the killing and injuring of civilians. In this regard, we do not believe that Israel's right to self-defence entitles it to violate the rights of innocent civilians, particularly those civilians who have been living under forty years of illegal occupation. Israel cannot expect security for its people and political normalcy as long as it occupies Palestinian lands and continues its attempt to impose its permanent rule over the Palestinians by military force.

Mr President,

My delegation is particularly concerned about the devastating humanitarian consequences of the occupation, the siege and the continuing attacks into Gaza. This situation has been made worse by the escalating military attacks which have also targeted and killed United Nations humanitarian workers. Continuing attacks on the United Nations, its staff and other humanitarian agencies cannot be tolerated. We are concerned that due to these attacks, UNRWA had suspended its activities until the Israeli authorities guaranteed its safety and security. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has issued a statement citing examples where the Israeli military failed to meet its obligations under international humanitarian law by hindering access. We join the Secretary-General in calling for full and unhindered humanitarian access and to allow aid workers to work in safety to reach communities in need.

Mr. President,

Our President, President Motlanthe, has reiterated that violence and counter-violence will not advance the cause of both the Israelis and Palestinians and thus neither strength nor efforts must be spared by the Palestinians and the Israelis in an effort to find an amicable solution based on two—States with an independent Palestinian state co-existing side by side with an Israeli State, each existing within secure borders.

South Africa also calls upon the United Nations to stand together in condemning the escalation of violence. This body should demand an immediate ceasefire, the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and the immediate opening of the Gaza borders to end the inhumane siege. The International Community has a responsibility to use whatever means possible to stop the violence that is leading to the unacceptable humanitarian crisis in the region. To do less would again call into question the credibility of this Organisation in addressing the loss of innocent lives in the Middle East.

I thank you.