



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

Check Against Delivery

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To the United Nations, Geneva

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Mr. President,

Only two short weeks have gone by since we last met. In the real world, absolutely nothing has changed to justify calling all of the respected members of this body back to this hall. Every person here knows that today's meeting is not about human rights but an abuse of the integrity and procedures of this organization to make a point to a domestic Palestinian audience.

One might think that the Human Rights Council would seek to build a modicum of credibility by holding fast to the idea that it should be the home for honorable discussions on Human Rights. It should say that such special meetings, like the one called for today, should only be called in the case of a true emergency, where the words from this hall could have a healing power. But here we are today, for another opportunity for the favorite and most infamous subject of some within this Council, Israel bashing. There is a call to pass this on to other fora, to any place where politics, buried under the flag of human rights, can be waged against one state, against Israel.

In regards to the question of the situation in Jerusalem, as Prime Minister Netanyahu emphasized earlier this week: "Extremist elements tried to undermine quiet and peaceful life in Jerusalem. An extremist minority disseminated lies to the effect that (Israel) intend(s) to dig, or was actually digging, under the Temple Mount. ... (T)his is an outright lie."

In recent weeks, as has been the custom in the 42 years that Israel has controlled the Old City of Jerusalem, access to the Holy sites of all faiths has remained unfettered. A number of provocations and inciting statements, called for violence, totally fabricated any Israeli step or intent.

These violent incitements began, on 27 September, without any connection to recent events in this hall, contrary to claims made by some. Individuals gathered and threw rocks and other projectiles from the area around the mosques on the Temple Mount, and a number of locations in East Jerusalem. All of this was met by extreme restraint by Israeli police and officials. Regular contact, consultations and updates were held with officials from Egypt and Jordan in order to ensure calm.

Visits to the Holy sites by Muslim pilgrims and tourists have been taking place and will continue peacefully and in cooperation. During the recent holy month of Ramadan, over 100,000 Muslims visited the Mosques on the Temple Mount each Friday, all without incident. The Mosques remain freely accessible for Muslims, including Palestinians, without any interaction with Israeli security officials.

Internal Palestinian debates about domestic strife have somehow been fed by artificially emphasizing an extremist agenda regarding Jerusalem. And packaging this panic and hysteria here in Geneva, with a reintroduction of the Goldstone Report, also for domestic political purposes, offers a hollow victory for those that want to sow conflict in our region. The moderate forces are weakened, not aided, by these resolutions and conflicts.

Earlier this week in Jenin, Mahmud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority made just this point, saying that Hamas is using the Goldstone Report and its ramifications to fight any chance for progress in the peace process and even to cause division within the Palestinian community. Mr. Abbas said that "Hamas used the report to sabotage the reconciliation."

In that same speech, in Jenin, President Abbas, stated that during the events of Gaza last winter, [quote] "the Hamas movement hid in basements. The leaders of Hamas ran away in ambulances to Sinai and left our people to bleed."

The Goldstone Fact-finding mission devoted an entire chapter to the allegations of misuse of ambulances and, unsurprisingly, rejected concerns regarding Hamas misuse. Paragraph 485 of the report definitively determines [quote]: "(o)n the basis of the investigations it has conducted, the Mission did not find any evidence to support the allegations... that ambulances were used to transport combatants or for other military purposes".

This biased and flawed report accuses Israel of war crimes for having taken action to fight against Hamas – war criminals who openly call for our destruction, fired thousands of rockets against us and endangered their own population by hiding and fighting from within densely populated areas.

Israel has given a substantive and clear explanation to anyone who was interested in listening, its criticisms with the fact-finding mission. We explained carefully why we believed the Report was wrong both in spirit and in law. Israel openly shared its dilemmas as a democracy fighting against terror along its border, in the most complex of situations, against terrorists who intentionally put their own people at risk. We offered detailed explanations about our security, legal and political policies and concerns. Mistakes that were made are being investigated by Israel's relevant authorities, as has always been the case within Israel's democratic system. Israel's courts remain open to all, including

Palestinians and NGO's who seek redress. Regrettably, the report saw no problems with the actions of Hamas terrorists, using mosques, homes and hospitals for military purposes, even offering explanations why such action could somehow be excusable.

We still do not understand how a report that completely ignored the concept of Israel's inherent right of self defense, Hamas' smuggling of weapons and Israel's genuine humanitarian efforts during the conflict could be seen as anything but biased and irrelevant. It was fascinating, and telling, to hear Justice Goldstone himself tell a journalist about the distinct limits of his report, saying [quote] "if this was a court of law, there would have been nothing proven."

The supporters of the resolution have no interest in Israel's actions to limit negative effects to civilians, its domestic investigations, the workings of its legal system or the fact that there is no likelihood that this body, or any other, will truly look into allegations of Palestinian crimes. The sponsors of the resolution are not even asking for the smallest amount of introspection from the Palestinian side who are calling on the Council to "endorse" a report that stated that their own people committed war crimes.

There are members that want this Council, as well as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to be so preoccupied that there will be no time to investigate human rights in their countries. They are among the "auspicious" group that supported the call that dragged us back here. None of those states could ever imagine any dialogue on human rights or democracy or complementarity in their countries. So they shift the discussion to Israel. Today's session has nothing to do with

human rights but everything to do with Palestinian politics and abuse of the integrity of this body.

Mr. President,

The resolution, as proposed, will be a reward for terror and will send a clear message to terrorists everywhere. They will clearly hear that this new form of warfare, as used by Hamas in Gaza, will offer immunity as countries will be prevented from waging effective responses. This strategy will be repeated in other places, against other countries fighting terror.

And finally, and perhaps most sadly, action taken here today will set back hopes for peace. Any chance for a real dialogue and better and more secure future for our region demands confidence. It would not be special sessions or abusing the agendas of esteemed international organizations, but dialogue, that would offer clear benefits and a mutual building of trust that would strengthen the position of the leaders of the Palestinian Authority. Dialogue, not threats, would also build the confidence of the Israeli public for supporting the peace process. The only beneficiaries of today's proposal would be Hamas and their allies who only seek division and conflict and an end to any hope for peace.

Mr. President, members of the Council, the political weapon proposed here today has nothing to do with human rights. Nothing. And when you next wonder why this body does not receive the respect it would like, remember this moment and you will have your answer.