

**United Nations Human Rights Council
12th Special Session
15 October 2009**

EU Statement

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The EU is ready to seriously consider the report of the UN Fact Finding Mission in the context of this Council but with a focus on the resumption of the dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians.

The European Union is deeply concerned over the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The EU again urges the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel to enter into serious peace negotiations as soon as possible, respecting previous agreements and international law. We reiterate the need for a political solution, with an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian state, comprising the West Bank and Gaza, living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel.

We call upon both parties to fully adhere to international humanitarian and human rights law. All parties have responsibilities to prevent investigate and remedy violations. All allegations of human rights violations and of violations of international humanitarian law must be thoroughly investigated and those responsible must be held accountable.

Mr President,

A durable solution to the Gaza crisis has to be achieved through the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1860. The EU remains gravely concerned at the humanitarian situation in Gaza and calls for the sustained, immediate and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza. The European Union calls for a complete stop to all violence, including a sustained halt of rocket attacks at Israel. We reiterate our call for the release now of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

Mr President,

The European Union remains deeply concerned by the continued settlement activities, house demolitions and evictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including in East Jerusalem. We urge the Government of Israel to end settlement activities immediately, including so called natural growth, and to dismantle all outposts erected since March 2001. The EU reiterates that the settlements are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace.

The EU has expressed serious concern about the incidents around the Al-Aqsa mosque. We have urged all parties to refrain from provocative actions that may further exacerbate the situation. If there is to be genuine peace, a way must be found to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states.

Such a solution should take into account the legitimate concerns of both sides and should include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the holy places by the people of all religions and nationalities.

Mr President,

The report by the UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict includes allegations regarding grave violations of international humanitarian law, including deliberate attacks on civilians. It is a serious report and the EU is committed to assess it and its recommendations seriously. The EU takes note of the recommendations of the mission and invites the parties to the conflict to implement those recommendations addressed to them. The EU deeply deplores the loss of life during the Gaza conflict, particularly the civilian casualties.

The EU has consistently reminded all parties to the conflict of their obligations under international law. An overarching human rights priority for the EU is to combat impunity. The EU urges the parties to launch appropriate, credible and independent investigations into possible violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in accordance with international standards, noting that the mission's report contains recommendations in response to allegations of serious violations by all parties to the conflict.

In our view, the Council should ensure appropriate follow up with a view to assess that appropriate investigations have been conducted by both sides.

Thank you, Mr President.
