



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

Statement by H.E. Aharon Leshno Yaar
Permanent Representative of Israel
To the United Nations, Geneva

Statement before Vote
Item 7
Human Rights Council

25 March 2010

Thank you Mr. President,

The draft resolution which is now being considered will do nothing to bring Israelis and Palestinians closer together. It offers no real hope for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Despite the claims of the Palestinians, even they do not really believe that this resolution will actually help their people step towards a better future and peaceful co-existence with the State of Israel.

Like the item 7 resolutions adopted by this Council yesterday, the agenda behind this resolution is so biased and one-sided -- so defamatory -- that it crosses far over the line of being "only" anti-Israeli.

You don't need me to give you examples: there is no condemnation in any of the texts of the ongoing rocket attacks from Gaza. Not even one mention of Hamas. No call to free Gilad Shalit. There is no call on the sides, the Quartet, or even the UN to do anything about resuming dialogue.

The idea in OP9 through OP12 - forming a new Committee of Independent Experts - a new group to write a new round of Goldstone-esque reports - will certainly be a new sinkhole to spend the UN's limited resources. Either there will be PBI implications or budgets from the Office of the High Commissioner will be directed away from more worthy projects. It clearly contradicts and duplicates last month's General Assembly resolution that asked the Secretary General by the General Assembly to report on investigations by the end of July as the Committee of Experts will shoot out another report, less than two months later, in September.

This new Committee's reports will further confuse the landscape of the law, in mixing international human rights law with the laws of armed conflict. No such assessment committee has been formed by this Council before and will serve as a dangerous precedent for others that face dilemmas like those of Israel. As for the alleged assessing and monitoring job to be done, only one side has shown introspection regarding its legal processes over the past 14 months since the end of the conflict in Gaza. Only Israel has shared with its public and the international community its considerations and challenges, its ideals, dilemmas and structures in regard to its international law responsibilities. And, without any connection to the cynical maneuvering by the Palestinians, only Israel remains committed to continuing its process of investigating and sharing its findings.

And finally, it is interesting to also note that while the Goldstone Report creatively suggested such a committee, it actually recommended that it be considered and formed by the Security Council. The Palestinians, however, lost interest in the details of Judge Goldstone's proposal and instead decided to move the Committee of Experts to this Council where they were sure they had the votes.

Mr. President,

Watching the manner in which this Council operated this week, it is useful, in my opinion, to remember the thoughtful words of the former Secretary General Kofi Annan: "Palestinians and their supporters will never be fully effective if they focus solely on Israel's transgressions, without conceding any justice or legitimacy to Israel's own concerns and without being willing to admit that Israel's opponents have committed appalling and inexcusable crimes."

Secretary General Annan also advised all of us about the consequences of such resolutions. He tellingly asked: "Has any of this had an effect on Israel's policies, other than to strengthen the belief in Israel and among many of its supporters that this great organization is too one-sided to be allowed a significant role in the Middle East Peace Process?"

He further stated -- and this is especially interesting -- that "some of the rhetoric used in connection with the issue implies a refusal to concede the very legitimacy of Israel's existence, let alone the validity of its security concerns. We must never forget that Jews have good historical reasons for taking seriously any threat to Israel's existence [...]"

Mr. President,

During negotiations to form this Human Rights Council, Israel spoke up, noting its fear that the new body might become more politicized than its failed predecessor. Those of you who truly care about strengthening human rights, developing a true multilateral dialogue and have an interest in promoting the values that this Council was intended to protect, may find that you too will not be insulated from the problems that are currently focused directly towards Israel.

Mr. President,

Throughout Jewish history, in times much more challenging, even than today, my people have reminded ourselves of the miracle of our freedom, by remembering and reliving our experience of slavery. We did this in order to appreciate once again the spirit of freedom. Every spring, Jews throughout history have taught our sons and daughters about the pain of oppression and the hope of redemption.

This coming Monday night, Jews will mark Passover. We will remind ourselves of our moral obligations, as free people. Obligations to protect the weak, the widow, the stranger, because, as the Bible taught us "You yourselves were strangers in the Land of Egypt". And throughout history, through today, Jews have learned this lesson -- and have been at the forefront of the battle for human rights and freedom from oppression. This is true around the world and in Israel. Israel will continue to ask itself, and others difficult questions, remembering our slavery and showing our freedom in our compassion for those who remain enslaved.

I wish you all to share this spirit of freedom and responsibility.

Thank you very much.