

# ISRAEL

65<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**Statement by  
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Fourth Committee  
Agenda Item 52

“Report of the Special Committee to Investigate  
Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights  
of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs  
of the Occupied Territories”

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Allow me to begin by reaffirming the importance that Israel places on the preservation of human rights. As a vibrant and open democracy, Israel enjoys an independent and highly professional judiciary, active civil society, and free press. Despite constant threats from terrorists who seek to deny Israel's citizens their most fundamental of rights, my country upholds and pursues human rights as a sacrosanct ideal, recognizing that they are at the core of the values on which our state is built.

Unfortunately, the report of the Special Committee that we consider today does not seek to advance the values of human rights. Instead, it advances a cynical political agenda with the goal of vilifying Israel and the right of its citizens to live in peace and security, denying them the very rights it purports to cherish for others.

Mr. Chairman,

The report before us offers another one-sided narrative. While offering wide-ranging and harsh criticism of Israel, this report does not mention the simple fact that more than 8800 rockets have been launched from the Gaza Strip against Israeli towns and villages since 2001. Unbelievably, the nine years of Hamas rocket and mortar attacks against Israeli men, women, and children did not deserve this Committee's attention.

In the same manner, the report completely ignores the current military build-up by the Hamas terrorist organization, which cynically places its military installations near and inside civilian buildings, including in close proximity to UN facilities, endangering both civilians and international organizations in the region.

The report does not mention that for more than four years, Hamas has held our kidnapped soldier, Gilad Shalit, and deprived him of his most basic human rights, including any visit from the Red Cross.

Explanations that such discussion about Hamas or human rights violations committed by other Palestinian groups does not fall within the mandate of this report are convenient, but completely excuse this Committee of its basic obligation to pursue impartial and objective fact-finding. Without providing any context about Hamas' destructive role in the region, how could this report offer anything resembling an accurate picture of the situation on the ground in Gaza and elsewhere?

It is clear that this Committee's work predetermines its conclusions and findings. As such, Israel refuses, and will continue to refuse, to cooperate with a body that prejudges its culpability.

Mr. Chairman,

We have witnessed many positive developments in the West Bank and in Gaza over the past year. These developments have been acknowledged by the Quartet and other

relevant bodies that seek to promote peace instead of the predictable narrative of this Committee.

Despite continued terrorist attacks emanating from the Gaza Strip, Israel made the significant decision on June 17<sup>th</sup> to liberalize the system through which civilian goods enter the area and to expand the inflow of materials for projects under the supervision of international organizations. Currently, the only goods that remain restricted are arms, weapons and war materiel, and certain items that have dual use applications.

Since this decision, the number of trucks entering Gaza has doubled to approximately 250 per day. These trucks have delivered more than 25 million liters of fuel; 14 thousand tons of cooking gas; and 365 thousand tons of aid to the Gaza Strip since June 17<sup>th</sup>. Furthermore, over the last four months Israel has approved 31 new international development projects in the Gaza Strip. Earlier this year, we saw the completion of a number of new development projects, including a new sewage treatment facility in Tel Sultan; new housing units in Khan Younis; and new summer camp facilities that are administered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Israel is engaged with a number of UN agencies, international organizations, and partner countries to move forward development projects in the Gaza Strip, while ensuring that our security needs are met.

In addition to expanding the flow of goods entering Gaza, Israel has undertaken many steps to promote and substantially improve the West Bank economy, including the removal of hundreds of roadblocks and checkpoints. These are significant steps that should not be taken lightly. In a few cases, including this year, we saw cases in which Israelis were killed in places where checkpoints were removed.

Israel's measures in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are having a significant impact. In the first 6 months of 2010 alone, real GDP growth amounted to 9% in the West Bank and 16% in Gaza according to the IMF.

Mr. Chairman,

It is absurd to hear condemnation and criticism of Israel's judiciary system and human rights record from several countries in our region and beyond, the very countries where the majority of human rights activists are in prison, where there is no freedom of press, and where there is no independent judiciary. For these countries to lecture Israel about the way to conduct ourselves in regards to human rights is cynical — and reflects on the nature of this committee's work.

Let me ask a few questions to some of these delegates who have so vehemently criticized Israel during debate on this agenda item.

Which of your countries enjoys an independent judiciary system and an internationally respected Supreme Court like we have in Israel?

Have any of your countries conducted, even once, a true investigation into your state's human rights practices like we do in Israel regularly?

Which of your countries allow human rights organizations to practice freely within your boundaries, to travel abroad, and to speak out, as we do in Israel? Do human rights organizations have these freedoms in Syria or other countries that use this fora to bash Israel?

It is sufficient to read the reports of international human rights organizations to understand that instead of trying to improve their own practices, all of these countries would prefer to attack Israel.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by saying that Israel is committed to reaching a permanent peace agreement with the Palestinians that will permit our two peoples to live in peace, security, and dignity.

I call on my Arab neighbors to join Israel in taking concrete, courageous steps to pursue peace, instead of engaging in futile rhetoric, like the exercise that we witness in this Committee time and time again. To this end, we hope that the Palestinians will rejoin Israel in direct negotiations without delay.