

14/06/11 AM

Statement by the Delegation of the United States of America
Interactive Dialogue on the report by UN High Commissioner Pillay
Established pursuant to Resolution 15/1
Human Rights Council 17th Session
Geneva, June 2011

9

Thank you, Mr. President.

We deeply regret the tragic loss of life and injuries suffered among those involved in the incident aboard the Gaza-bound ships last spring. We have repeatedly underscored the importance of a credible, impartial, and transparent investigation into the tragic events of May 31, 2010. We are committed to working with partners, including our longstanding friends Israel and Turkey, to ensure a full and appropriate response to the incident and the circumstances that led to it.

Resolution 14/1 passed judgment on the facts before they were determined and handed the fact-finding mission a flawed mandate, something the mission itself acknowledged in its report.

The UN Secretary General with the support of both Turkey and Israel established of a panel of inquiry to receive and review the reports of Israel's Turkel Commission and Turkey's National Commission of Inquiry into the tragic incident. We continue to regard this panel as the primary method for the international community to review the incident. We note that the work of the panel is ongoing and that the proceedings have been conducted in a positive and collegial manner.

The United States remains concerned by conditions in Gaza, but notes that the humanitarian situation has significantly improved over the last year, including a marked increase in the range and scope of goods and materials moving into Gaza, an increase in international project activity, and the gradual expansion of exports. The United States continues to work with Israel, the Palestinian Authority, donors, and the international community to ensure that the needs of the people of Gaza are being met. Mechanisms are in place to transfer humanitarian assistance to Gaza, and they should be used for the benefit of ordinary Gazans. We urge all those wishing to deliver goods to do so through established channels so their cargo can be inspected and transferred via land crossings into Gaza—to ensure that Israel's legitimate security needs are addressed even as the Palestinians' humanitarian needs are met. We join the Secretary-General in his call on all Governments

concerned to use their influence to discourage future flotillas, which are inherently provocative and risk dangerous escalation.

We commend the steps taken to expand access to goods in Gaza. We will continue to engage the Government of Israel to further expand the scope and type of goods allowed into Gaza to address the full range of the population's humanitarian and recovery needs, and to increase the ability of Gazans to export their produce and products. We will also continue to work closely with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, along with international NGOs and the UN, to provide adequate access for humanitarian goods, including reconstruction materials, through the border crossings, even as we bear in mind the Government of Israel's legitimate security concerns.

The tragic flotilla incident underscores the need to move ahead quickly with negotiations that can lead to a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, including two states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security.

Thank you, Mr. President

