

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 12TH SESSION - ITEM 7  
STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF B'NAI'B'RITH INTERNATIONAL AND THE  
COORDINATING BOARD OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

by K. Netter

Mr Chairman:

As we return time and time again to the Arab-Israeli conflict, this Council prefers to take a backward look to the hostilities that occurred in the Gaza Strip during last December and January and to pre-programme a transfer of discussion thereon to the Security Council, which is called upon to deal with current situations endangering world peace. The positive efforts currently deployed by the United States to bring the two sides together to negotiate an agreement on the fundamental issues that have escaped a meeting of the minds, are hardly ever discussed in this Council under item 7. It is worth remembering that a similar effort by the United States during the Camp David and *Taba* discussions in 2000 and early 2001 nearly achieved the desired breakthrough on the basis of major territorial concessions offered by the Israeli Government of the time. Similarly unnoticed in this Council is the improvement of the security situation on the West Bank, which in turn has visibly improved the economic performance of that area to the point that the IMF predicts a rate of growth of 7 percent this year despite the world economic crisis, a projection that many other countries would envy.

Turning to the report of the High Commissioner (A/HRC/12/37), we note with some concern that the tone of the report appears to reflect the bias prevalent in this Council regarding item 7, rather than maintaining a position of even-handedness, as it behooves of the UN Secretariat. Thus, while reference is made to the rocket and mortar attacks directed at Israel, no cause and effect relationship is established between these attacks and the hostilities of last winter. By the same token, the massive increase of the rocket and missile attacks between the end of the cease-fire on 19 December 2008 and the opening of hostilities eight days later is simply ignored. Several instances occur where the report replies to the Israeli viewpoint by citing contrary views of NGOs without giving its own assessment. In fact, not once is the Israeli position left without contradiction.

Mr Chairman, I would like to seize this opportunity to express our appreciation for the fair-mindedness displayed by your predecessor, H.E. Martin Uhomoibhi of Nigeria, when he attempted to broaden the one-sided mandate issued by this Council to the Goldstone Mission. We look forward to further African contributions to re-direct the Council's discussions and resolutions under this item into more positive and even-handed channels.

Thank you, Mr Chairman