



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. Itzhak Levanon
Ambassador, Permanent Representative**

**Before the Vote on Resolution L.5
3rd Regular Session Human Rights Council**

27 November 06

Mr. President,

Given the breadth and depth of work this Council must attend to in the next two days, it seems a shame to waste any of the Council's attention and efforts on a politicized resolution that is, once again, tabled purely to draw attention away from its sponsor's own deplorable human rights record. Everyone in this room knows the truth about how Israel came into possession of the Golan Heights; however, the truth always bears repeating, and the truth is this: Israel came into possession of the Golan Heights in 1967 as it defended itself against a war initiated by Syria, known as the Six Days War. Under Syrian possession, the Golan Heights were used to launch constant attacks against Israeli civilians and generate tension and instability in the region. The description we just heard from the Syrian Representative gives the impression that the Golan Heights today is a place of desolation, abandonment and infringement of human rights. Unfortunately, it appears that the Syrian Representative has not visited the area recently, as his description is very far removed from reality.

Today, the Golan Heights is more peaceful than ever, stable and thriving. The economy is booming, fields are blossoming, and everyone is enjoying the benefits of democracy. In fact, residents of the Golan Heights today are exporting locally-grown apples to Syria itself, showing the vitality of the region. You are all invited to visit the Golan personally and make your own firsthand impressions.

Nevertheless, in Israel's unending quest to establish lasting peace in the Middle East, we have periodically proposed negotiations without pre-conditions with the Syrians, proposals which always end in failure because of Syrian intransigence.

However, Mr. President,

We are pleased to respond to Syria's resolution today because it gives us the opportunity to call the Council's attention to the real problem in the region, which is Syria's on-going efforts to foment discord and violence in the Middle East. Syria's malevolent influence continues to be displayed through its open support of recognized terrorist organizations. As this Council is very aware, one such terrorist group that candidly enjoys Damascus' support is Hezbollah, a violent, radical organization that attacked Israeli sovereign territory this past summer. Another such radical terrorist group is Hamas, whose leader enjoys Syrian protection and assistance in Damascus.

Yet, Mr. President,

Syria doesn't limit its malicious actions to the financing and material support of terrorists; Syria's leadership also seeks to impose its extremist and authoritarian views on its neighbors by undermining their democratically elected governments, using anti-human rights methodology. These events cannot be seen as isolated incidents, Mr. President, and must instead be viewed in the larger context of Syria's continued malicious actions in our region.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates:

Instead of spearheading counterproductive one-sided resolutions such as the one on which you are about to vote, Syria should spend its efforts working towards peace and stability in the region, towards a real chance for harmonious growth and development in the Middle East. Syria can and should make the courageous decision to contribute constructively to these causes by denouncing terrorism and pledging itself to democracy. I therefore urge you all to vote against the resolution tabled today, the sole purpose of which is to perpetuate tension instead of diffusing it.

Thank you.