



Press Release

Department of Public Information · News Coverage Service · New York

Security Council
4478th Meeting* (PM)

SC/7310
26 February 2002

**U.S. VISION FOR MIDDLE EAST IS 'VIABLE STATE OF PALESTINE
LIVING ALONGSIDE STATE OF ISRAEL', SECURITY COUNCIL TOLD**
Council Suspends Meeting; Scheduled to Resume Tomorrow Evening

A viable State of Palestine living alongside the State of Israel in peace and security was the United States' vision for addressing the situation in the Middle East, that country's representative told the Security Council this evening as it met to discuss the conflict in the region.

One of 30 speakers in the debate, the United States representative said the solution to the problem lay in addressing all three aspects of the problem: political, security and economic. The challenge was to move the parties to the kind of relationship that would lead to productive negotiations. The Palestinian Authority must help eliminate the danger posed by extremists. Israel too must meet its obligations. His Government was intent on encouraging the parties to implement the [Mitchell Committee recommendations](#), which would enable them to restore calm and rebuild enough confidence to restart a real political dialogue.

The Permanent Observer for Palestine said that since 28 September 2000, the Palestinian people had suffered flagrant violations of their human rights and had been subjected to systematic war crimes and State terrorism committed by the Israeli occupying forces. Mr. Sharon's condition of seven days of quiet before negotiations could start was imposed, while the occupation forces continued to commit extrajudicial killings and to assault the Palestinian people. That was being done with the aim of aborting any attempt to implement the Mitchell report recommendations.

A solution to the conflict had been defined in Madrid in 1991 and in the Oslo agreements. It was a solution based on ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, and on the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, to coexist in peace and security with the State of Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders. That was the vision accepted by the international community welcomed by the Palestinian side. What remained was acceptance by the Israeli side.

The representative of Israel said that even after more than a year of violence, his Government remained committed to the agreed terms of reference of the peace process, which required the sides to engage in direct face-to-face negotiations on the basis of Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) and [338 \(1973\)](#). The only path forward required an immediate, complete and unconditional cessation of violence as a crucial first step to restarting the peace process and rebuilding trust. Reaching a settlement of the conflict could not be done in an atmosphere of hatred and violence.

He said the only constructive action to be taken was for the international community to exert pressure on the Palestinian leadership to abandon their campaign of terror and embrace a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The tendency to approach the conflict by attempting to find some middle ground between terrorists and their victims must be resisted. For 17 months, the Palestinians had been intent on proving that violence worked. Israel was intent on proving it did not.

The representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union and associated States, said that in order to restore calm and return to negotiations, the Palestinian Authority must do everything possible to put an end to terrorism, dismantle all terrorist networks and arrest and prosecute the perpetrators of terrorist acts. The Israeli Government must withdraw its military forces, stop extrajudicial executions and lift the closures and all restrictions imposed on the Palestinian people and their leadership. A total freeze must be imposed on settlement activity. An impartial monitoring mechanism would serve the interests of both parties.

The representatives of Mauritius, France, Colombia, Russian Federation, Ireland, Norway, United Kingdom, Guinea, Bulgaria, Syria, Singapore, China, Cameroon, Mexico, South Africa, Jordan, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Brazil, Morocco, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Cuba and Canada also spoke.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Papa Louis Fall (Senegal), addressed the Council as well.

Today's meeting, which started at 5:15 p.m., was suspended at 9:45 p.m. The meeting is expected to resume tomorrow, Wednesday, 27 February, at 6 p.m.

Background

The Security Council met this afternoon to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, as was requested in a letter dated 20 February to the Council's President from the Permanent Representative of Yemen in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group and on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States ([document S/2002/184](#)).

The Council also had before it a letter dated 20 February from the Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the Council's President ([document A/ES-10/148-S/2002/182](#)), requesting the meeting. He wrote that, as the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, continued to seriously deteriorate with increasing death and destruction being wrought by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority, it was incumbent upon the international community to address the crisis situation. Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable for all the human rights violations, war crimes and State terrorism it was committing against the Palestinian people.

The Council met on 21 February on the subject to hear a statement from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan (see [Press Release SC/7304](#)).

Statements

MARWAN JILANI, Permanent Observer for Palestine, said the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory continued to dramatically decline, and the toll of death and destruction continued to rise as a result of assaults by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority. It was, therefore, incumbent upon the international community to address the crisis. Since 28 September 2000, the Palestinian people had suffered flagrant violations of their human rights and had been subjected to systematic war crimes and State terrorism committed by the Israeli occupying forces.

He said more than 900 Palestinians had been killed. The Israeli occupying forces had also committed extrajudicial killings, destroyed homes and other infrastructure, confiscated land for settlement activities and destroyed numerous economic facilities. The Israeli Government had ordered the tightening of the military siege and restrictions on the freedom of movement of all Palestinian persons and goods, while continuing the military siege of President Arafat and the whole Palestinian population.

He considered the statement delivered by the Secretary-General an important prelude to the discussion. He had said that there was no alternative to a political solution through the negotiation process. Mr. Sharon had never concealed his opposition to a final settlement and had imposed the condition of seven days of quiet. That condition had been imposed while the occupation forces continued committing extrajudicial killings and assaulting the Palestinian people. That was being done with the aim of aborting any attempt to implement the Mitchell report recommendations. He placed blame on those who accepted Sharon's conditions, which had led to the continuing decline of the situation to the current dangerous level.

There was a growing conviction on both sides that the requisite for solving the conflict was the solution defined in Madrid in 1991 and in the Oslo agreements. That solution was one based on ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, and on the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, to coexist in peace and security with the State of Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders. That was the vision accepted by the international community and declared by United States President Bush and welcomed by the Palestinian side. What remained was for it to be accepted by the Israeli side. It was imperative that the Council clearly promoted that international consensus.

MOHAMED IQBAL LATONA ([Mauritius](#)) said he fully shared the Secretary-General's assessment that the key problems remained occupation, security, economic deprivation and suffering -- all interrelated issues. No peace would be achieved if one side was not only reluctant to give up anything, but also wanted to take all that it could. There had been a growing international consensus since last year, that a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could only come by with the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the creation of a State of Palestine, which would live in peace with the State of Israel, with both States enjoying secure and recognized borders.

He said that growing consensus constituted a very important step in the search for peace in the Middle East, and the Security Council had a very important role to play in that regard. Mauritius fully supported the establishment of a Palestinian State and believed that its creation was the only way forward for a lasting peace in the Middle East. The recent proposals by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia should be carefully and seriously studied. The Security Council must ensure the implementation of its own resolutions on the Middle East. The time for action was now, before the peace process was completely shattered.

JEAN-DAVID LEVITTE ([France](#)), aligning himself with the statement to be made by Spain on behalf of the European Union, said the new escalation of violence between Israelis and Palestinians was extremely serious. Both sides were losing. The international community and the Council agreed that there was no military solution to the conflict and that the parties needed assistance from the international community to emerge from the trap of violence. For the latter, political will on the part of the Israelis and Palestinians was needed to resume direct dialogue.

He said the struggle against terrorism must be accompanied by an energetic search for a political solution. There could be no lasting ceasefire unless a political perspective was opened up again. For Israel, that meant recognition of peace and security within internationally recognized borders. For Palestinians, it meant the establishment of a viable, independent and democratic State, as well as the end of the occupation of their territories. A peace process could only evolve between partners. Israel had its part to play in ending provocations such as ending extrajudicial execution and lifting restrictions. President Arafat must have complete freedom of movement. A process of dialogue must be restarted in the region as a whole on the basis of resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of land for peace.

In the Palestinian territories, elections must be organized and focused on the theme of peace. A Palestinian State must be recognized as a point of departure for the negotiating process. Recent initiatives by peace supporters at the Israeli and Palestinian side should be supported. Everybody's efforts and ideas were needed and useful. Egypt and Jordan were involved in constructive diplomatic efforts. The involvement of Saudi Arabia, whose Crown Prince had suggested interesting ideas, was welcome. The involvement of the United States was essential, he said.

ALFONSO VALDIVIESO (Colombia) said he wondered what the right way was to end the spiral of violence in the region. A large part of the solution depended on the two sides concerned. The international community, including the Security Council, could have an impact in bringing the parties to the negotiating table. The parties themselves had a fundamental role to play in that effort. He called for a return to real political dialogue to achieve lasting peace. Any strategy to erode the authority of the President of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, could only benefit the extremists. Yet, Mr. Arafat must do more to end the violence. He observed that there was no magic wand for resolving the situation, but there were various formulas that had been put forward for that purpose, including the Mitchell report.

The international community had responsibilities in the matter which it must fulfil, he said. The United Nations had a role which it must play, and the Security Council must coordinate the role of other international bodies, bearing in mind its resolution 242 concerning land for peace. Colombia welcomed other initiatives aimed at resolving the Israeli-Palestinian problem, including that of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and others. Colombia encouraged them and all other players involved in the search for a lasting solution to the conflict.

SERGEY LAVROV (Russian Federation) said there could be no solution to the conflict through military action. The way out of the deadlock was the adoption by both parties of measures to immediately implement the Mitchell recommendations. On the Palestinian side, that would involve arresting terrorists, among other things. Israel should stop the destruction of Palestinian Authority structures, end the isolation of President Arafat, and end the extrajudicial executions, among others.

In the interest of eradicating terrorism and peace and security, there had to be cooperation between the Israelis and Palestinians, he said. International efforts to overcome the crisis had to be stepped up. He was pleased to note there was a growing understanding of the need among Israelis and Palestinians to overcome the impasse. At present, his country was hosting a delegation of the Palestinian Coalition for Peace. The resolve of participating Israelis and Palestinians was worthy of support. A settlement had to be based on resolutions 242 and 338, the principle of land for peace, and other agreements. The common goal was to achieve peace and the enjoyment of the rights of the Palestinians, including the right to an independent State.

RICHARD RYAN (Ireland) said the Israeli and Palestinian people had suffered enough, and it was past time for the Israeli Government and the Palestinian National Authority to take steps to bring the suffering to an end. The Palestinian Authority must act vigorously and effectively to bring an end to terrorism, he said. The Israeli Government must likewise accept that the excessive use of force, extrajudicial killings, attacks on the institutions and infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority, and collective punishments, including house demolitions, economic closures and the impoverishment of Palestinians, were not only wrong and deeply unjust in themselves, but could never bring about the peace and security desired by the Israeli people. He also drew attention to the corrosive effect that continued settlement activity had had, and continued to have, on the peace process.

The sustained and concerted involvement of the international community was required to restore the necessary partnership required in the peace process. It was imperative for the Security Council and the wider international community to work in a concerted manner with the parties towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peaceful settlement. The Council had a role which it must exercise with care and balance in the interests of helping the peace process. Ireland welcomed new ideas being put forward, including proposals by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. Progress on the political and security fronts, as well as on the economic front, must proceed in parallel. All agreed that a reduction in violence was the urgent priority.

JOHN D. NEGROPONTE (United States) said his country was deeply troubled by the recent events in the Middle East and was working intensively to have the parties take a step back from confrontation and a step towards the kind of cooperation that would ease suffering and establish the basis for a political solution. There was no substitute for direct engagement. Over the past few days, Secretary of State Colin Powell had spoken with Chairman Arafat, Prime Minister Sharon, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and other key actors.

The solution to the problem lay in addressing all three aspects of the problem: political, security and economic. The vision for addressing the situation had been stated at the highest level by his Government: a viable State of Palestine living alongside the State of Israel in peace and security. He then noted the positive contribution of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah's comments made to the political horizon for the region. The road back to real negotiations must start with security, he stressed. There must also be the real prospect for political progress.

The challenge was to move the parties to the kind of relationship that would lead to productive negotiations, he said. The Palestinian Authority must help eliminate the danger posed by extremists. Israel too must meet its obligations. Actions by Israel against the Palestinian security apparatus charged with preventing violence and terror were counterproductive. He looked to both parties to help create an environment for moving forward. His Government was intent on encouraging the parties to implement the Mitchell Committee recommendations, which was the means by which they could restore calm and rebuild enough confidence to restart a real political dialogue. He noted his Government's efforts to address the deteriorating economic situation of Palestinians.

As a practical matter, Council action at this time would not resolve the problems between Palestinians and Israelis, he said. The United States was committed to helping the parties move forward.

OLE PETER KOLBY (Norway) said that the peace process in the Middle East was facing the most serious crisis ever. His country was extremely concerned about the dramatic escalation of violence in recent weeks. The present course of development was threatening all achievements made since the Declaration of Principles was signed in 1993. He strongly condemned the Palestinian terrorist attacks, including the use of Kassam rockets. The Palestinian Authority must fight Palestinian terrorism vigorously and dismantle the terrorist networks. He welcomed the arrest of the suspected murderers of Israeli Minister Ze'evi as an important step in that regard.

He said the security situation had improved after President Arafat's 16 December speech, but, regrettably, Israel had not taken advantage of

that positive momentum. The Israeli bombardment of Palestinian cities and institutions, which had led to death and destruction at an unprecedented scale since the start of the peace process, was unacceptable. Those military operations were "out of proportion" in relation to military, security and police needs. Both parties now must adopt forceful and immediate measures to stop the escalating violence. Among them, the Palestinian Authority must do its utmost to halt the terrorist attacks. Israel must stop its attacks on Palestinian infrastructure and incursions into area A, withdraw its armed forces, lift completely the house arrest of President Arafat, stop the targeted killings, and lift the closure and transfer of value added tax (VAT) owed to the Palestinians.

A serious political dialogue must be resumed immediately, and the Tenet plan and Mitchell recommendations must be implemented immediately and unconditionally, he continued. Humanitarian and development assistance to the Palestinians must be increased, and the international community and, indeed, the Council, must stand united in its demand that those measures be implemented. The Israeli and Palestinian leaders seemed locked in a battle with no exit strategies. That was untenable. The final responsibility to end the hostilities remained with the parties, themselves. At the same time, the Council must assist the parties in reaching that goal. The informal ideas presented by Saudi Arabia were very interesting, and he strongly encouraged their further exploration.

Sir JEREMY GREENSTOCK (United Kingdom) said the only effective solution to the conflict was through a return to dialogue and negotiation. The goal remained a two-State solution: a State of Israel and a viable Palestinian State, both secure within recognized borders. The recent remarks by the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia had given extra momentum to that objective. His vision of full normalization of relations between Israel and its Arab neighbours was welcome. An end to occupation could only be achieved by negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority leading to just, final and comprehensive settlement based on Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of land for peace.

He saw ample evidence that the parties alone could not now find their way back to the path of peace. He, therefore, welcomed and encouraged the sustained engagement of the Secretary-General and his Special Coordinator and the Governments of the United States, the European Union and the Russian Federation and those in the region who remained determined that peace could and must be achieved. If the Council was to act effectively, it must speak unanimously. It must play its proper role and enlarge on it. The international community must speak with one voice.

FRANÇOIS L. FALL (Guinea) said the situation in the region required resolution with foresight. Guinea expressed regret and deep concern about the continuing endless cycle of violence. It urged the two parties to give up confrontation and called for ceasefire. Israel must end its destruction of the infrastructure and its occupation of autonomous Palestinian areas, as well as the restrictions imposed on Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. The Hamas organization must also give up its suicide missions and attacks on the Israeli population.

He reaffirmed Guinea's belief in the role of the international community, particularly the Security Council, in the search for a viable resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a cessation of hostilities. The only way out lay in the rapid resumption of negotiations based on Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the implementation of the Tenet proposals and the Mitchell Committee recommendations. Otherwise, the situation would slip further, endangering international peace and security and the region as a whole. His delegation supported any new initiatives, such as that of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, that would lead to lasting and true peace between Israel and its Palestinian neighbours.

STEFAN TAFROV (Bulgaria) said his delegation associated itself with the statement that would be made by Spain for the European Union. He was deeply concerned by the escalation of violence in the Middle East — an unprecedented deterioration on the ground was being seen. The spiral of death must be halted. The conflict should be resolved through direct negotiations between the parties concerned, based on the relevant resolutions of the Council.

He called for an immediate cessation of all acts of terrorism and for an end to reprisals. He supported the Secretary-General's call to put an end to confrontation and return to the negotiating table. The parties must begin to implement the Mitchell and Tenet recommendations. That would help to reduce violence. A minimum of security was the only thing that could allow a political solution to be reached. His delegation called on the parties to follow the recommendations of the countries working tirelessly to reach a solution, attaching particular importance to the efforts being made by the European Union. He welcomed Israel's willingness to discuss ideas put forward by Saudi Arabia.

MIKHAIL WEHBE (Syria) said the grave deterioration in the occupied Palestinian territories and the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people in the past few days constituted a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, in particular, the Geneva Conventions, and a flouting of the relevant Council resolutions. Daily, numerous Palestinian people were killed and injured due to the policy of siege, starvation, and killing of children, elderly persons and women. In an atrocious manner, Israel had used the will of the international community to combat terrorism after 11 September by classifying resistance against occupation and defending land and dignity as terrorism, thereby contravening international law and ethics.

If Israeli officers rebelled against their Government's policies, what was the international community waiting for? he asked. In light of the escalation of assassination of Palestinian citizens and leaders, and the destruction of Palestinian infrastructure, the Council was called upon to denounce and condemn Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, and to call upon Israel to stop aggressive actions in the occupied territories and assassinations of Palestinian citizens and leaders. The Council must also call upon Israel to implement all relevant Council resolutions. The Council should emphasize the applicability of the fourth Geneva International Convention to the Palestinian people. He also emphasized the need for Israel to abide by the Madrid peace process, approved by the international community and based on resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of land for peace. Israel was trying to mark time and to avoid pulling out from all occupied territories, including East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan.

KISHORE MAHBUBANI (Singapore) condemned the attacks on civilians and on United Nations property. Singapore had consistently supported the efforts of the Secretary-General as a neutral and even-handed facilitator and welcomed the briefings provided by Secretariat officials to Council members. He noted that the two parties had accepted the Mitchell Committee's report but had, 10 months later, unfortunately, not implemented its recommendations. It was the parties who should bear the responsibility and, ultimately, find a way to resolve their problems.

Wondering what kind of external mechanisms would make a difference, he noted the informal proposals put forward by Saudi Arabia. What was needed was coordination by the Security Council of the various mechanisms that had been proposed by the Security Council. The focus now must be on the immediate priority of ending the cycle of violence. Political and economic measures were needed. There was no military solution to the conflict. A just and comprehensive solution on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 was needed.

WANG YINGFAN (China) said the continued escalation threatened to plunge the region into even greater violence. His delegation opposed the military blockade by Israel, but also all acts of violence against innocent civilians. It had been demonstrated that meeting violence with violence led nowhere — peace talks were the only way to reach a solution. Isolating Mr. Arafat was unwise and would backfire, he added.

The key to resolving the conflict lay in the termination of the occupation of the Palestinian territories, he said. The security of Israel should also be guaranteed. The Secretary-General had made a number of important points in his recent address to the Council, including the importance of a third-party role in addressing the conflict. He had also stressed the need to address security alongside economic issues. The Council and international community must increase its attention and input vis-à-vis the Middle East. He hoped that the Council would make efforts in a constructive spirit to address the situation.

MARTIN BELINGA-EBOUTOU (Cameroon) said the situation in the Middle East was of very serious concern. The peace process was imperilled. Everything seemed to be focusing on hate and violence, giving a tragic tone to today's discussions. He welcomed the presence of Israel and Palestine observer whose people were looking at the Council with hope. The people in the Middle East were expecting that the Council would put an end to intolerance and violence and get the peace process back on the rails.

Peace in the Middle East postulated the creation of a Palestinian State, and recognition of Israel and its right to live within secure and recognized borders. Peace involved the strict implementation by all parties of resolutions 242 and 338 and of the fundamental principle of land for peace. Peace could not be imposed by the use of arms. It was up to the Council to encourage both Palestinian and Israelis to resume the negotiation process in order to promote a just peace, which must be centred on various initiatives, including the one put forth by Saudi Arabia. It was up to the Council to help the two fraternal peoples, condemned to live together, to make peace.

ADOLFO AGUILAR ZINSER (Mexico), President of the Security Council, speaking in his national capacity, said United Nations Member States should not allow despair to overcome them in the search for a resolution of the conflict. It must not become insensitive to the situation. There was no military solution to the conflict, and there was need to end the spiral of violence and attacks against civilians. No international action or initiatives could replace the will of the parties to find a solution themselves. But the international community, particularly the Security Council, also had a clear responsibility in the matter. As the Secretary-General had said, there was need for imaginative solutions.

Tonight's debate was an opportunity to explore avenues to resolve the conflict, such as the Saudi initiative, he said. The United Nations must also explore mechanisms for confidence building, and the role of the Secretary-General's special representative in the region was relevant. Attending to the needs of the civilian population and promoting reconciliation could be useful. Mexico firmly believed the United Nations was part of the solution, but other international efforts should not be disregarded.

He called on the parties to implement previous recommendations made under the Tenet Plan and by the Mitchell Committee. They must begin negotiations immediately on a long-term peace. He reiterated the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination under Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. He also reiterated the right of all States in the region to live under secure and recognized borders and stressed the need for reconciliation. The international community had a responsibility to restore confidence and the reconstruction of the region.

AARON JACOB (Israel) said his country was committed to negotiating a peaceful settlement to the conflict in the Middle East. Even after more than a year of violence, it remained committed to the agreed terms of reference of the peace process, which required the sides to engage in direct face-to-face negotiations on the basis of Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It had also accepted the Mitchell and Tenet recommendations in their entirety.

He said Israel's far-reaching peace proposals had been rewarded with a deliberate campaign of violence and terrorism. For 17 months, Israel had faced an orchestrated campaign, incited and supported by the highest levels of the Palestinian leadership. Now, a new threat was emerging — last week, Turkish forces had detained three individuals linked to Al Qaeda who intended, had they not been arrested, to carry out a terrorist attack on an Israeli city.

The Palestinian leadership purported to condemn terrorism to the world, while legitimizing and supporting it at home, he said. The international community must make absolutely clear that there was no justification whatsoever for acts of terrorism. The only path forward required an immediate, complete and unconditional cessation of violence as a crucial first step to restarting the peace process and rebuilding trust. Reaching a settlement of the conflict could not be done in an atmosphere of hatred and violence. Israel could not be expected to sit down and negotiate with the same individuals who were supporting and engaging in terror. Nor could the Palestinians purport to negotiate peace while they prepared for future conflict. If the Palestinian leadership truly wanted to live peacefully side by side with Israel, it would not be fuelling hatred and condoning the murder of Israeli men, women and children on a daily basis.

He said the only constructive action to be taken was for the international community to exert pressure on the Palestinian leadership to abandon their campaign of terror and embrace a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The tendency to approach the conflict by attempting to find some middle ground between terrorists and their victims must be resisted. For 17 months, the Palestinians had been intent on proving that violence worked. Israel was intent on proving it did not and was committed to re-energizing the peace process. He urged the Council to support the position that violence was unacceptable and to refrain from endorsing any action that would detract from the immediate and crucial objective of ending violence so that the parties could return to the negotiating process.

INOCENCIO F. ARIAS (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union and Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey, Iceland and Liechtenstein, said the European Union strongly condemned the latest outbreak of terror and violence in the Middle East. Both parties needed to take urgent measures to restore calm and return to negotiations to solve a conflict which had no military solution. He appealed to the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to offer, with the assistance of the international community, a perspective different from the current perpetuation of violence.

The Palestinian Authority must do everything possible to put an end to terrorism, dismantle all terrorist networks and arrest and prosecute perpetrators of terrorist acts, he said. The Israeli Government must withdraw its military forces, stop extrajudicial executions and lift the closures and all restrictions imposed on the Palestinian people and its leadership. A total freeze must be imposed on settlement activity. There must be an end to action against the installations of the Palestinian Authority and to the destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure.

He said security was a priority, but should not be isolated from the need for a political and economic perspective for the Palestinian people. The European Union had issued a firm call to the parties to adopt all necessary measures to immediately and unconditionally implement the Tenet ceasefire Plan and the Mitchell report recommendations. Resolute and concerted action by the United Nations, the United States, the Russian Federation and the Arab countries was urgently needed to help the parties break the cycle of violence and commit themselves to political negotiations.

He reaffirmed that a just and lasting settlement must be based on the principles of the Madrid Conference, in particular, the principle of land for peace, and Council resolutions 242 and 338. An impartial monitoring mechanism would serve the interests of both parties. For Israelis and Palestinian to live side by side in peace and security, Israel's irrevocable right to live in peace and security within internationally recognized borders, the establishment of a viable and democratic Palestinian State, and an end to the occupation of the Palestinian territories had to be reaffirmed and fully recognized.

DUMISANI SHADRACK KUMALO (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said the Secretary-General had recently made a sobering assessment of the situation in the Middle East. His message could not have been more urgent -- there could be no military solution to the conflict. The escalation of violence in the region could not contribute to any resolution, as the events of the past 18 months had demonstrated. Israeli settlement activities, human rights abuses and poverty were among the root causes of violence in the region.

Many years ago, the principle of land for peace had been enshrined by the Council, he noted. Now, the institutions of the Palestinian Authority were subject to daily attacks. Such actions as the restriction placed on Mr. Arafat's movement could only make peace difficult to achieve. Israel and the Palestinians could not end the cycle of violence without international support. The presence of a credible multinational monitoring mechanism on the ground could help. His country had undertaken many efforts to secure peace in the Middle East, as mandated by the Non-Aligned Movement. Even in the midst of growing despair, hope remained. He appreciated the initiatives of other international organizations to seek a solution.

ZEID RA'AD ZEID AL-HUSSEIN (Jordan) said Israeli aggression continued, leading to a further deterioration of the situation in the region as a whole. Such aggression would not provide safety and security for the Israeli people and constituted a flagrant violation of signed agreements and international law and conventions. Peace and stability required the return of the two parties to the negotiating table as two equal partners. The Israeli war machine should be stopped, and the siege of Mr. Arafat should end. The start of negotiations on the final status was an urgent priority.

He welcomed the statement made by the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia and invited Israel to fully and immediately withdraw from the occupied territories and to implement relevant Council resolutions. He reiterated Jordan's solidarity with President Arafat and the Palestinian people in their struggle to obtain their just rights, including establishing an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

AHMED ABOUL GHEIT (Egypt) said peace in the Middle East could not be achieved without the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the full withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian territories. Permanent peace required recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their State with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Security Council faced the challenge of intervening in halting the violence by the Israeli occupying forces. All States in the region looked for permanent peace.

He announced an Egyptian proposal calling for full Israeli withdrawal from areas it had occupied since 1967; creation of a Palestine state; mutual recognition of the right to security of all States in the region through agreed arrangements; and the establishment of good neighbourly relations. Those proposals leading to a final settlement should be acceptable to the parties. All armed confrontation should be ended, and the parties should begin to implement the Tenet security plan, as well as the Mitchell Committee report. Egypt would continue its efforts to effectively contribute to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region, he said.

ABDALLAH BAALI (Algeria) said he was grateful to the Council for having realized the urgency of the situation in the Middle East. He noted the ferocity registered in recent weeks by the Israelis. It was clear that the military actions, the destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure, and the isolation of its leadership were part and parcel of a deliberate policy to disrupt the peace dynamic.

Political assassination and State terrorism had been promoted to State policy by Israel, despite the unanimous condemnation of the international community, he said. Israeli policy was aimed at discrediting the very concept of a viable Palestinian State. The Middle East was closer than it had ever been to regional conflict. The international community must cease to be a passive bystander and seize its responsibilities before the situation moved into total war. The intention of the Secretary-General to intensify his consultations with regional actors was heartening. The Council too had an indispensable role to play and must involve itself directly in an effort to reduce violence and reinitiate the peace process. Acceptable common ground, as determined in the Mitchell and Tenet recommendations, must be found. An impartial monitoring machinery must be set up on the ground.

NOUREDDINE MEJDOUB (Tunisia) said the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, must assume their full responsibility to force Israel to end its aggression and submit to the dictates of international and humanitarian law in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

The escalation by the Israeli Government started with the provocative visit by the Israeli Prime Minister to the Aqsa Mosque. He asked if it made sense to demand from Mr. Arafat, when he was under siege at his residence by heavy Israeli machinery, to stop the defensive reaction by the Palestinian people whose security apparatus was daily being demolished by Israel.

He appealed to the international community and the co-sponsors of the peace process to bring pressure to bear on Israel to join seriously, responsibly and without prevarication the peace process, to return to the negotiating table and to respect international legality and its instruments, particularly resolutions 242 and 338. He further called on Israel to withdraw from all territories under the control of the Palestinian authority and to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the establishment of an independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

There was no doubt the United States had an essential role in settling the conflict, and he welcomed recent new proposals from France and the Arab side to find a political settlement for the situation in the Middle East. But these ideas must be turned into practical and concrete initiatives. Breaking the vicious cycle of violence had today become a collective responsibility requiring a political solution. He appealed to the international

community to act with the emergency required by the gravity of the situation.

PAPA LOUIS FALL ([Senegal](#)), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that since the start of the intifadah, the occupying force, Israel, had undertaken immoderate reprisals, demolishing the Palestinian infrastructure, multiplying acts of territorial aggression and imposing house arrest on Mr. Arafat. Under the impotent gaze of the international community, the peace process seemed to be stymied once and for all, even doomed. Some had pointed out that the peace process had fallen by the wayside, and the Mitchell and Tenet plans had been buried under waves of Israeli bombings. Action must be taken swiftly to avert the risks of generalized conflict.

A number of people of good will, including the Secretary-General, had directed their efforts at resurrecting the peace process, he said. Peace was linked to the end of Israeli occupation and the creation of a viable Palestinian State. He enjoined the parties to abide by the relevant resolutions and Conventions and appealed to them to return the negotiating table. He exhorted the donor community to mobilize the necessary resources.

He recalled the forward-looking thinking of actors such as Saudi Arabia, the European Union and various African leaders. The Council and relevant parties must act to help translate the commitments undertaken by the parties into unequivocal acts. The peace process must be extracted from the infernal recurrent cycle of violence.

GELSON FONSECA ([Brazil](#)) said the Middle East crisis concerned the international community as a whole. That was a crucial moment and the appropriate place for the United Nations to express its deep regret for the death toll caused by the conflict, to reaffirm its hope that the peace process could be revitalized and to articulate specific proposals to that end. He fully agreed with the Secretary-General that "it was imperative for the Security Council and the wider international community to work in a concerted manner with the parties towards a just and comprehensive settlement of the conflict". The role of the Council must be strengthened in times of crisis.

The Council could, in clear terms, convey to both the Israeli and Palestinian leadership the international community's collective dismay with the fact that they were failing to live up to their commitments, he said. The belief in the possibility of a negotiated solution to the conflict must be kept alive. The Council must not fail to exert the right amount of pressure on both sides. He also encouraged the establishment of a monitoring mechanism to help the parties implement the Mitchell recommendations. There must be no artificial preconditions of any kind preventing the parties from taking the road back to the negotiating table. Resumption of the peace process could not remain hostage to extremist actions.

MOHAMED BENNOUNA ([Morocco](#)) condemned Israel's systematic campaign of attacks against the Palestinian people and their socio-economic infrastructures, as well as the assassination of their leaders and the siege of their cities. Those actions were against international law and the relevant Geneva Conventions. They had also caused immense feelings of despair among the Palestinian people. Morocco had contributed to international efforts to end the conflict. He emphasized that the Palestinian Authority was the only body that represented the Palestinian people and that any attempt to marginalize it would endanger the peace process. The settlement of the conflict could not be accomplished through the use of force and coercive methods. It would only be accomplished through negotiations. The question of the Middle East as a whole lay in the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel.

He said the region could be extricated from the cycle of violence by a settlement based on international legitimacy. The Jerusalem Commission recently met in Morocco, during which the King of Morocco urged the Security Council to try to force Israel to comply with international legitimacy. The Moroccan representative said the Council, more than ever before, must shoulder its responsibilities. It must send international observers to the area to monitor the situation. It must urge Israel to implement the Tenet security plan, as well as recommendations of the Mitchell Committee. Morocco was hopeful that violence could be halted. Israel must withdraw from the occupied Palestinian lands and the Syrian Golan in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

SHAMSHAD AHMAD ([Pakistan](#)) said the prospects for peace in the Middle East would remain bleak without the immediate cessation of all acts of violence, provocation and destruction. The peace process should be put back on track, and the violence must be ended. The Mitchell Committee recommendations should be implemented. A better environment must be created to ensure the safety of all civilians. The international community, particularly the guarantors of the peace process, must use their influence and good offices to ensure full compliance with the peace agreements and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The international community must encourage and facilitate a meaningful dialogue among the parties. The United Nations, which had always upheld the legitimate struggles of peoples for self-determination, must do so now in the case of the Palestinians. It had a responsibility to take the lead role in brokering peace based on Security Council resolutions. That was the least the Organization could do to justify the Nobel Peace Prize it shared with the Secretary-General in recognition of its Charter mandate to ensure world peace and security. The time had come for the Security Council to uphold its moral and legal obligations under the Charter. Those with responsibility for the maintenance of international peace must act now to revive the negotiating process and the hopes of peace in the Middle East.

IFTEKAR AHMED CHOWDHURY ([Bangladesh](#)) recalled that the Council had been created to address issues threatening regional and global security. He said the situation in the Middle East was all the sadder for the fact that there was broad agreement on the vision of the ultimate solution, the creation of a separate Palestine. The question was how to achieve it. Violence and terror did not advance the vision and that must stop. Then the first step was to clear the path of impediments, including the building of settlements. And finally, the new ideas emerging from Arab leadership must be fleshed out and given due notice, as was already being done.

To deliberate on those initiatives, he said, the appropriate forum would be the holding of continuous proximity talks between Palestinian and Israeli leaders in which the presidents of all the United Nations organs were involved. That would embrace the totality of the United Nations system, enabling it to address the issue in a comprehensive way. That would be a united and serious effort for peace, appropriate for the region that had given rise to the three great faiths of Islam, Christianity and Judaism, all three of which were linked in committing their adherents to peace. The peace was achievable if the requisite political courage was present.

BRUNO RODRIGUEZ PARRILLA ([Cuba](#)) said the escalation of violence had reached dangerous levels, as the Israeli forces had renewed their action against the Palestinian population. Attacks during the last few days had killed dozens of Palestinian civilians. Those attacks were also directed against structures of the Palestinian Authority, and Israel had put President Arafat under house arrest, which was an unacceptable situation. Moreover, United Nations structures had been damaged. The Council continued to avoid its responsibility. It had not even set up a protection force

to protect the Palestinian population and see to a ceasefire. The United States had vetoed a resolution on 14 December 2001, preventing the Council once again from fulfilling its responsibilities.

He said a lasting and just peace could only be achieved if Israel complied with all resolutions of the Council, including resolutions 242 and 338, and respected the Geneva Conventions. The United States must stop providing financial support and arms to Israel, which were used against civilians. It must also condemn State terrorism by Israel if it indeed wanted a global struggle against terrorism. He considered the struggle of the Palestinian people as legitimate, but condemned suicide bombings and other acts of violence against Israeli civilians.

PAUL HEINBECKER (Canada) said the inertia affecting the situation in the Middle East could not go on indefinitely. Unilateral measures to enhance security succeeded only in undermining it. He supported Israel's rights to live at peace and also recognized the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians for a viable State.

Genuine, enduring security for both parties could only be secured at the negotiating table, he said. He welcomed the ideas voiced recently by Saudi Arabia, which could point the way to a solution based on the relevant resolutions of the Council. Ending the violence was the highest priority. Courage and compromise on both sides was needed.

The meeting was suspended at 9:45 p.m.

*The 4477th meeting was closed.

* * * * *

For information media - not an official record