



Press Release

Department of Public Information · News Coverage Service · New York

HR/07/110
2 July 2007

EXPERT ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND COUNTER TERRORISM TO VISIT ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

2 July 2007

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Martin Scheinin, will visit Israel from 3 to 10 July at the invitation of the Government of Israel. The Special Rapporteur also plans to visit the Occupied Palestinian Territories during the official mission. The country visit comes at a time when the Special Rapporteur is troubled by a new cycle of violence but hopeful of future positive developments concerning increased security for all civilians.

The Special Rapporteur plans to meet with Israeli Government officials and with members of the Knesset and the judiciary. The Special Rapporteur also plans to conduct a number of field visits such as visiting the wall/barrier and towns in Israel and the West Bank, interviewing security detainees held in prison and observing trials of those suspected of offences related to terrorism or a threat to national security. The Special Rapporteur will also engage with non-governmental organizations, institutes, academics, lawyers and victims of terrorism.

The Special Rapporteur will gather first-hand information about Israel's laws, policies and practices in the area of counter-terrorism and how such measures affect the protection and promotion of human rights in the region. In particular, he will examine the impact of counter-terrorism operations on civil and political rights and also on other rights such as economic, social and cultural rights. Israel is a party to both Covenants and there is no justification to deviate from these international obligations. The Special Rapporteur acknowledges that States have a duty to protect their population and to take effective measures to combat terrorism. However, sustainable results can only be achieved by promoting and protecting human rights while countering terrorism. Otherwise there is no real security for the civilian population.

The Special Rapporteur plans to hold a press briefing on 10 July to inform the public about his preliminary observations. The Special Rapporteur will prepare a comprehensive report on his findings, including a list of recommendations to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

Mr. Scheinin accepted the appointment of Special Rapporteur by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on 7 August 2005. The mandate, established by Resolution 2005/80, has since been assumed by the Human Rights Council. In this capacity, the Special Rapporteur is mandated to develop a regular dialogue and to cooperate with all relevant actors, including Governments, to exchange information, make recommendations and to identify and promote best practices on measures to counter terrorism that respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. As Special Rapporteur, he is independent from any Government and serves in his individual capacity. To date, he has conducted missions to Turkey, South Africa and the United States of America.

Mr. Scheinin has previously served as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Committee (1997-2004). He is a Professor of Constitutional Law and International law and Director of the Human Rights Institute at Abo Akademi University in Turku, Finland.

For more information, please go to <http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/terrorism/rapporteur/srchr.htm>

For use of the information media; not an official record

HR07110E