



Press Release

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SECURITY COUNCIL FAILS TO ADOPT DRAFT RESOLUTION ON OBSERVER MISSION FOR OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

**No Votes Against, but Those in Favour Fall Short of Required Nine;
Statements Deplore Violence, Applaud Resumed Dialogue between Parties**

The Security Council tonight failed to adopt a draft resolution to establish a United Nations force of military and police observers in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The vote on the draft was eight in favour to none against, with seven abstentions. It was not adopted because it did not receive the required nine affirmative votes.

Voting in favour of the draft were Bangladesh, China, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mali, Namibia, Tunisia and Ukraine. Abstaining were Argentina, Canada, France, Netherlands, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and the United States.

By the terms of the draft, which was sponsored by the non-aligned countries, the observer force would have helped in the implementation of the Sharm El-Sheikh agreements, the cessation of violence and enhancing the safety and security of Palestinian civilians.

The representative of Namibia, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Ukraine, said the Non-Aligned Movement had proposed an observer force to protect civilians and have a stabilizing effect on the region. The countries had endeavoured to engage all the members on the subject and had changed the draft several times to accommodate the views of others. He did not agree with the argument that the Council should wait for bilateral peace efforts to run their course, and for the agreement of both sides to be taken into account. Action by the Council was not subject to the negotiations, he said. By establishing an observer force, the Council could substantially contribute to stability.

The representative of the Russian Federation said it had not been an easy decision to abstain, but the only way for the Council to take action to establish an observer force was with the consent of both parties. Ensuring an international presence could be done only under conditions on which the two parties could agree.

A number of speakers, deploring the ongoing violence, said that while an observer force may, at some stage, be useful, it was not timely in view of the negotiations currently being resumed.

The representative of Israel told the Council, "We are sitting here today debating the merits of sending an international force to protect the Palestinians from their own choice to engage in violence." The Israeli Government, he added, was not opposed to some form of international presence, provided it was established within the context of a comprehensive bilateral agreement. The dispatch of a United Nations force had the potential to actually escalate the violence, and further destabilize the region. What was needed from the Council was not intervention, but support for the parties and the efforts to achieve peace, which would get under way this week in Washington. An international force would not increase the Palestinians' determination to make peace; rather, it would decrease their willingness to do so.

The Permanent Observer for Palestine said the Council had shown itself incapable of taking, or not quite ready to take, even a minimum measure to establish an observer force, with a view to providing protection for Palestinian civilians, in spite of the horrific human losses. The resumption of talks in Washington should not preclude what was taking place in the Council. What had happened would not absolve the Council of its responsibilities. It had once more assured the Palestinians they could not rely on the Council for justice. He could not determine the consequences of the failure of the Council to fulfil its duties, nor could he foretell the price that would be paid by Palestinian citizens by that failure.

Statements were also made by the representatives of Argentina, Canada, China, France, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mali, Netherlands, Ukraine, United Kingdom and the United States.

The meeting, which began at 8:15 p.m., was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Council Work Programme

The Security Council met tonight to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

The Council had before it the following draft resolution (document [S/2000/1171](#)), sponsored by Bangladesh, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mali, Namibia and Tunisia:

“The Security Council,

“Reaffirming its [resolution 1322 \(2000\)](#) of 7 October 2000, and calling for its speedy and full implementation,

“Expressing grave concern at the continuation of the tragic and violent events that have taken place since 28 September 2000 and have led to many deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinians,

“Stressing the need for measures to ensure impartial protection of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation,

“1. Calls for the immediate cessation of violation and excessive use of force;

“2. Expresses support for the understandings reached at the Summit convened at Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, and urges all parties concerned to implement these understandings honestly and without delay;

“3. Expresses its determinations to establish a United Nations Force of military and police observers to be dispatched throughout the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, with the aim of contributing to the implementation of the Sharm El-Sheikh agreements, the cessation of violence and enhancing the safety and security of Palestinian civilians;

“4. Requests the Secretary-General to consult both sides on the composition, modalities of deployment and functioning of such a Force, including arrangements enabling it to:

(a) observe the situation throughout its area of operation, where it should be able to move freely and reach a location of tension and instability;

(b) liaise, whenever necessary, between the Israeli army and the Palestinian Authority;

(c) draw upon, whenever necessary, existing United Nations resources in the area;

(d) report periodically on its activities, as well as in specific cases, to the Secretary-General;

“5. Requests the Secretary-General to complete the consultation and to report to the Council on the Force no later than 8 January 2001;

“6. Expresses its support for the Middle East peace process and the efforts to reach a final settlement between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, and urges the two sides to cooperate in these efforts;

“7. Decides to remain seized of the matter.”

The Council also had before it a letter dated 11 December from the Permanent Observer for Palestine to the President of the Council (document [S/2000/1173](#)). The Permanent Observer reiterates a call to the Council to expedite consideration of providing protection to the Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation, and to take action on a draft resolution presented to it by the members of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus who are members of the Council.

The Permanent Observer states that the "bloody Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian people has continued for over two months with a rising number of casualties". He says the Israeli occupying forces continue to use live ammunition and heavy weaponry, including tanks, against the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Attached to the letter is an annex containing the names of those killed by Israeli security forces in the territory between 4 and 10 December.

Statements

YEHUDA LANCERY ([Israel](#)) said there was a deliberate choice by the Palestinians to pursue the intifada, as well as the welcome resumption of dialogue. The current confrontation continued to be nurtured in various ways as a strategic choice on their part. Even a cursory

consideration of the facts suggested that that conflict clearly served the interest of the Palestinian leadership rather than the interests of Israel. The Palestinians' cause was the beneficiary of front-page coverage, while Israel had been unjustly portrayed as the militaristic aggressor.

He said that according to the Minister of Communications for the Palestinians, Mr. Arafat had launched the intifada as the culminating stage of "Palestinian steadfastness" in the negotiations, and was not merely a protest of the visit by Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount. Despite that and other evidence, he went on, the Palestinian leadership had been remarkably successful in obscuring that fact. The current crisis was also due to the failure of the Palestinian leadership to cultivate mutual understanding and tolerance among the Palestinian people.

Rather than educate for peace, he said, they had consistently and systematically fostered a "culture of hatred and rejection". Such a failure could not be rectified by a resolution of the Security Council, but only by the Palestinians themselves.

With the exception of some rare voices in the Council, there had been no official mention in the United Nations of the incitement to violence in the official media, the desecration of Jewish holy sites and a host of other Palestinian violations. "Instead", he continued, "we are sitting here today debating the merits of sending an international force to protect the Palestinians from their own choice to engage in violence." The Israeli Government, he added, was not opposed to some form of international presence, provided it was established within the context of a comprehensive bilateral agreement.

He said the dispatch of a United Nations force had the potential to actually escalate the violence and further destabilize the region. International intervention appeared wholly unnecessary. Chairman Arafat had the ability to protect the lives of his people. He must relinquish the path of confrontation, disarm his illegal militias, and control Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists. He must assume his responsibility as the leader of the Palestinian people, committed to seek an honourable peace, to uphold the foundation of the peace process, and to foster a culture of peace between the two peoples.

What was needed from the Council, he said, was not intervention, but support for the parties and the efforts to achieve peace, which would get under way this week in Washington. An international force would not increase the Palestinians' determination to make peace; rather, it would decrease their willingness to do so. The draft resolution was a recipe for long-term instability in the region, and he strongly urged members of the Council not to support it.

MARTIN ANDJABA ([Namibia](#)), who said he was speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Ukraine, said the violence had continued and the Council had not taken any action to address the situation. The Non-Aligned Movement had proposed an observer force to protect civilians and have a stabilizing effect on the region. Peace would benefit both the Palestinians and the Israelis. The non-aligned countries had endeavoured to engage all the members on the subject. They had changed the draft several times in order to accommodate the views of others. Instead of deciding to establish a United Nations observer force, operative paragraph 3 now expressed only the Council's determination to establish such a force.

He said he did not agree with the argument that the Council should wait for bilateral peace efforts to run their course, and for the agreement of both sides to be taken into account. Action by the Council was not subject to the negotiations. By establishing an observer force, the Council could substantially contribute to stability. While cooperation was needed, the agreement of both sides was not necessary for Council action. The Council had its own role. The non-aligned members and Ukraine would vote in favour of the draft.

JEAN-DAVID LEVITTE ([France](#)) said his country had proposed that a mission of observers be sent to Palestine to end the violence and to protect civilians. Once again, it condemned the use of excessive force. France, with the United Kingdom, had pleaded for an agreement to create such a mission. The Secretary-General had engaged in contacts with the parties last Friday and would continue his contacts. In Nice, the European Council had spoken along the same lines.

The bilateral dialogue had resumed in Washington, he said. In that context, he wondered about the desirability of adopting the draft tonight. He said he had no difficulties with the substance of the text, but felt that in light of the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General and the resumption of bilateral negotiations, the moment was not the most suitable. While his delegation would, therefore, abstain, it was not in any way giving up on the possibility of sending observers. They were more necessary than ever.

HASMY AGAM ([Malaysia](#)) said he would vote for the draft because the Council must act to stop the killing of Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories. The Israelis continued to use excessive force. The Council could not continue to watch on the sidelines and do nothing. It was quick to act in other situations, and must now do so to provide a modicum of protection for the Palestinians. Not to do so would be a dereliction of its duties in the protection of international peace and security.

He said those who did not agree with the draft had proposed no alternative concrete language. That indicated a lack of seriousness on the part of some Council members. His Government had made a strong plea for a United Nations protection force, and had hoped that the Council would act to establish such a force. He regretted that despite modifications to the original text which had been put forth by the Non-Aligned Movement, there had been no engagement by those who were opposed, other than to say that the time was not opportune.

Continuing, he said that such a force was unacceptable to Israel, except in the context of a bilateral agreement with Palestine, whenever that might take place. If the Council was serious about taking action, now was the time to do it.

ALPHONS HAMER ([Netherlands](#)) said he agreed with the principal objectives of the draft resolution. A United Nations presence could be useful in the region, because the parties themselves were not capable at the moment of ending the violence. The Netherlands, however, would abstain in the vote, because adoption of the draft might hinder ongoing efforts to achieve a successful resumption of the peace talks. He was disappointed that the Council was being forced to vote on the resolution at this moment.

WANG YINFAN ([China](#)) expressed concern over the continued Israeli blockade which, he said, subjected the Palestinians to numerous

untold hardships in their daily life. He reiterated his Government's opposition to violence of any kind and called on both sides to heed reason and prevent the situation from worsening.

Referring to the Council's efforts to defuse the situation, he said the Council should implement its responsibilities under the Charter. It was not only in the interest of the people of the region but vast majority of the members. He hoped the United Nations observers could be deployed as soon as possible. China was ready to contribute to ending the violence and to bringing peace to the Middle East.

VALERI KUCHYNSKI (Ukraine) said he would vote in favour of the draft, because the ongoing confrontation had brought the Middle East to the most dangerous situation in decades. The presence of the United Nations was critically important to prevent a sliding into war. Council action was indispensable to address the situation appropriately. A United Nations force could be a viable resource to stop the senseless bloodshed. The draft resolution would contribute to continuing diplomatic efforts to stop the violence and the excessive use of force by Israel. Its main thrust was aligned with the present positive signs, such as the resumption of peace talks in Washington.

He said the practical implementation would require additional time. As a troop contributor, Ukraine fully recognized that the deployment and functioning of a United Nations force would be impossible without the cooperation of Israel. It was, therefore, important that the Secretary-General consulted with the parties to secure full cooperation. The vote of Ukraine did not prejudice the principle that consent of conflicting parties was necessary for the deployment of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

MOCTAR OUANE (Mali) said his Government associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the non-aligned caucus. He would vote in favour of the draft resolution because the Council must take a decision when faced with the tragic events in the occupied territories. The protection of Palestinian civilians must be secured.

His Government continued to support the peace process as a whole, and he hoped that the upcoming negotiations would bring about a peaceful solution. He regretted that the draft before the Council had not achieved consensus, in spite of the flexibility shown by the non-aligned caucus.

ARNOLDO M. LISTRE (Argentina) said his delegation supported the ideas presented by France. A force should be set up to observe the developments of the tragic events, and then inform the Secretary-General and the Council about the developments. It should promote the de-escalation of the conflict and the end of the violence.

However, he continued, a mission would require the consensus of the parties. Unfortunately, consensus was not achieved. He said he had reservations as to the timeliness of the resolution, when negotiations to a peace settlement seemed to be in the offing.

He said Argentina would be abstaining, but he wished to voice its solidarity with the suffering of the Palestinian people. He appealed to the two parties to be flexible and conciliatory. There could be no winners in this conflict by the use of force; both sides must recognize the inalienable rights of Palestinians, including the right to an independent State, and the security of Israel within its borders.

Action on Draft

The draft resolution received eight votes in favour to none against, with seven abstentions (Argentina, Canada, France, Netherlands, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States). It was not adopted because it did not receive the required nine affirmative votes.

M. PATRICIA DURRANT (Jamaica) said she was deeply disappointed that the draft had not received the necessary votes for its adoption. The observer force could have served as a deterrence to further violence and would have supported Council resolution 1322 (2000), which deplored provocation in Jerusalem. She regretted the continuation of the violence and the deteriorating humanitarian situation, but said she was pleased with the prospect of continued negotiations in Washington.

She noted that the draft would have requested the Secretary-General to consult with both sides; only then would further action have been taken. She said she would continue to support the efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace.

Sir JEREMY GREENSTOCK (United Kingdom) said the level of violence in the region was disturbing. The United Kingdom believed an observer mission could be of benefit to both parties. The presence of objective witnesses could help to calm the violence. It was too early to give up on that aim.

In practice, however, passage of the draft resolution would be fruitless at the moment, and he had, therefore, abstained. It was important, he said, to concentrate efforts on supporting the direct dialogue between the parties. The resumption of talks in Washington demonstrated the importance both parties attached to finding a resolution to the problems. Prospects for peace remained the primary criterion.

PAUL HEINBECKER (Canada) said he was concerned by the cycle of violence in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, but experience had taught the lessons of the need for missions to have a viable mandate. The current draft did not meet that test. If the Council were to press ahead now, the eventual force would be jeopardized. For that reason, Canada had abstained. He was encouraged, however, by the resumption of talks under the aegis of the United States.

JAMES B. CUNNINGHAM (United States) said the Council had acted wisely. The resolution had failed because it did not have sufficient support. Had there been a chance of its passing, the United States would have exercised the veto. He said now was the time to support renewal of negotiations, not for actions that did not have the consent of the parties. Talks would begin tomorrow in Washington, D.C., and the United States would work hard to support the dialogue.

The President of the Council, SERGEY LAVROV, speaking as representative of the Russian Federation, said his Government condemned

the violence and had made the greatest efforts to help bring it to an end. The Russian Federation had had been in constant contact with both sides, and with the leaders of other countries and the Secretary-General. It would continue those efforts to help overcome the crises.

The negotiations beginning in Washington would constitute a stage in the resumption of the dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, and would provide an opportunity to move ahead and to protect Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and Gaza, an objective to which he fully subscribed. He stressed that it would be attained only if there was agreement on the part of both Palestine and Israel. It was important not to take steps that would complicate efforts under way and which would not provide protection to Palestinian civilians.

He said it had not been an easy decision for the Russian Federation to abstain, but he was convinced that the Council could act only with the consent of both parties. An international presence required conditions on which the two parties could agree. The Council would continue to reach towards that objective, and to find a solution on the basis of agreement by the two parties.

NASSER AL-KIDWA, Permanent Observer for Palestine, said it was a sad day for the Council. He said that on behalf of the Palestinian people he wished to thank the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement, members of the Council, and Ukraine and China for voting in favour of the draft resolution, together with its co-sponsors. They had shown high sense of responsibility towards the events in the occupied territories, where the bloody Israeli campaign continued and as a result of which more than 300 Palestinians had been killed and more than 10,000 had been injured, one third of them children under 18. The destruction of property and the siege continued.

He said the Palestinian people and Arab countries, as well as the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, had requested adequate protection of Palestinians through an observer force of the United Nations. Attempts had been made to deal with all parties to reach an agreement:

President Arafat had met with the Council; the representative of the Non-Aligned Movement had spoken to the Council more than once; the Council had held an open meeting on the situation and had held various consultations. During all of that, the Israeli campaign had continued and the need for adequate international protection through an observer force of the United Nations had become greater.

The co-sponsors of the draft had shown a great deal of flexibility, among other things, accepting a two-phased approach and postponing action on the text. But it had not changed the situation. Therefore, in the absence of any other practical options, he had asked for the draft to be submitted to a vote, regardless of the outcome, in order to confront the Council with its responsibility.

The clear result, he said, was that the Council was incapable of taking, or not quite ready to take, even a minimum measure to establish the observer force with a view to providing protection for Palestinian civilians, in spite of the horrific human losses and the continuation of the siege.

Some said their positions were related to the resumption of the talks in Washington. That was an incorrect view. What was taking place in Washington should not preclude what was taking place in the Council. The Council's right decision could only help those talks.

He said the Israeli representative had told the Council that, in principle, Israel did not object to a foreign presence. According to that statement, the Council should do nothing without Israel's approval. There was even one explanation for what the Council had done; that was the position of the United States, which was openly and surprisingly linked to the posture of Israel, the occupying force.

Today's events, he said, would not absolve the Council of its responsibilities, and had once more assured the Palestinians they could not rely on the Council for justice. He could not determine the consequences of the failure of the Council to fulfil its duties, nor could he foretell the price that would be paid by Palestinian citizens by that failure. He could only expect things to be bad, but he still hoped that justice and peace would ultimately prevail.

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