
Security Council demands end to Israeli measures in and around Ramallah

24 September – With the United States abstaining on a resolution that was negotiated through Monday night and adopted in the early hours this morning, the Security Council demanded that Israel immediately cease measures in and around Ramallah, including the destruction of Palestinian civilian and security infrastructure.

The Council also demanded the "expeditious withdrawal of the Israeli occupying forces from Palestinian cities towards the return to the positions held prior to September 2000." In addition, it reiterated past calls for a complete halt to all acts of violence, "including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction." In another provision of the resolution, which was submitted by Bulgaria, France, Norway, Ireland and the United Kingdom, the Council called on the Palestinian Authority to meet its expressed commitment to bring to justice those responsible for terrorist acts.

The Security Council also threw its full backing behind efforts of the diplomatic Quartet – the United Nations, European Union, Russian Federation and United States – which just last week outlined a roadmap for achieving a final settlement of the conflict in three years. The Council called upon the Israeli Government, the Palestinian Authority and all States in the region to cooperate with those efforts. In that context, the Council also recognized the continuing importance of the initiative endorsed at the Arab League Beirut Summit held in March.

Explaining his country's decision to abstain in the voting, James B. Cunningham of the United States said the resolution failed to explicitly condemn terrorists or those who gave them safe haven. Noting that those responsible for killing civilians obstructed both the Quartet's peace efforts and Palestinian reforms, he named in particular Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade. The resolution had started the process of taking a clear stand against terrorists, but did not go far enough, he said, adding that it lacked the clarity of a draft submitted by the United States.

The meeting, which spanned over 16 hours of both formal and closed-door sessions, heard from more than 40 participants, including UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, during the public debate.