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Letter dated 28 February 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to draw your attention to the most recent terrorist attack perpetrated against the citizens of Israel. As you know, there have been recent positive developments in the region, and those responsible for this latest attack are cynically working to eliminate the promise that they hold.

On 25 February 2005, at 11.20 p.m. local time, a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up on the busy Tel Aviv Promenade, just as youths were going out for the night. Five people were killed, all of them waiting to enter a nightclub — Yitzhak Buzaglo, Aryeh Nagar, Ronen Reuvenov, Odelia Hobera and Yael Orbach, who carried with her invitations for her wedding to distribute to her friends. Over 50 more were injured, many of them teenagers. The notorious terrorist organization Islamic Jihad announced responsibility for the attack from its headquarters in Damascus, Syria. This organization, which operates in Palestinian Authority territory, and enjoys safe haven and support from the Syrian regime, is responsible for literally tens of terrorist attacks, that have claimed hundreds of innocent lives and wounded thousands more.

At this promising but sensitive time, it is incumbent on the Palestinian leadership, if it is serious about peace, to reject those forces who seek to destroy any hopes of peace, and to act to eliminate terrorist organizations, as it is obligated and equipped to do. Talk of ceasefires is not enough. There are no shortcuts: the terrorist infrastructure must be systematically and decisively dismantled. The very first clauses of the road map (S/2003/529, annex) make this obligation abundantly clear by calling upon the Palestinian leadership to "declare an unequivocal end to violence and terrorism and undertake visible efforts on the ground to arrest, disrupt, and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks on Israelis anywhere", and to engage in "sustained, targeted, and effective operations aimed at confronting all those engaged in terror and dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure".

Until this happens, Palestinian terrorist groups represent a ticking time bomb for the peace process, posing a direct threat not only to the innocent Israelis that they target but to the rekindled hopes of both peoples.

Despite the toll in Israeli lives claimed by this most recent attack, Israel continues to exercise restraint and hopes that the new Palestinian leadership will finally meet its obligations and adopt a policy of zero tolerance for terrorism. Israel is engaging in a serious effort to renew the peace process, and has proved ready to live up to its own obligations, but it will not and cannot tolerate an absence of genuine and uncompromising Palestinian efforts to fully eradicate the Palestinian terrorist campaign. No Government can negotiate by day, and have its citizens murdered by night.

Further, those States, such as Syria and Iran, that countenance and support terrorist organizations like Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hizbollah are irresponsibly and deliberately attempting to demolish the region's fragile hopes for peace. The international community must ensure an immediate end to this dangerous and destructive behaviour. For too long, these regimes have enjoyed impunity regarding the terrorism that they notoriously foster, support and glorify. The failure to hold these regimes fully accountable for their embrace of terrorism is a direct threat to peace, to the legitimate aspirations of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, and to the stability of the region as a whole.

As is common knowledge, the Syrian regime, in violation of its most fundamental legal obligations, including those stipulated in Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1566 (2004), continues to offer safe harbour and support to groups that are notorious for their acts of deliberate murder against innocent civilians. Islamic Jihad is only one such organization. Despite repeated calls from the international community, Syria continues to consider itself exempt from the fight against terrorism.

Israel calls upon the international community to reaffirm its absolute rejection of terrorist tactics, and to accept nothing less than the complete dismantling of terrorist organizations, as well as unyielding efforts by all States in the region to prevent terrorism and bring its perpetrators and supporters to justice, in accordance with international law and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1373 (2001), as well as the road map.

I submit the present letter in follow-up to numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism launched in September 2000, which document the crimes for which the terrorists and their supporters must be held fully accountable.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 148 and 36, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ambassador Daniel **Carmon**
Deputy Permanent Representative
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