



Press Release

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UNPRECEDENTED POLITICAL WILL REQUIRED TO REORIENT UNITED NATIONS AND ACHIEVE DEVELOPMENT TARGETS, SPEAKERS TELL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Background

The General Assembly met today to continue its consideration of the Secretary-General's annual report on the work of the Organization (document [A/58/1](#)), as well as his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration (document [A/58/323](#)). For summaries of the two reports, see Press Release [GA/10167](#) issued on 6 October.

Statements

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WANG GUANGYA ([China](#)) ... urged Israel and Palestine to stop violence and resume talks as early as possible. ...

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ABDOU AL-MOULANAKKARI ([Syria](#)) ...

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Finally, welcoming the [Secretary-General](#)'s denunciation of the Israeli air strike against Syrian territory, he drew attention to recent acts of Israeli aggression and the unprecedented nature of the continued suffering of the Palestinian people. Many Syrians had also suffered from the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights.

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ALI HACHANI ([Tunisia](#)) said that while the Millennium Declaration had traced the path to be followed collectively, to ensure that peace and security reigned in a world where fear had been banished, the democratization of the Security Council would be indispensable in addressing the political realities and new challenges of the twenty-first century. Among the areas in which the Council's activities should be strengthened were the reconstruction of Iraq, the conflict in the Middle East and the stabilization of Africa. ...

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Rights of Reply

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The representative of [Israel](#) said that some delegates had abused the present debate in the Assembly to further their own narrow agendas. They had expressed concern over counter-terrorism measures taken in self-defence by Israel, but had failed to express any concern over the countless innocent lives that had been lost as a result of terrorist acts. Such a policy spoke to the double standards that plagued the Assembly. The fact that 19 innocent lives had been lost in a restaurant in Haifa, in addition to hundreds of others in other attacks, had not moved those delegates to speak or act. They only did so when action had been taken against a terrorist training facility.

The Government of Syria was a dictatorship, he said. As a known sponsor of terrorism, it should be the last to speak of justice and law. Yet, the delegate from Syria liked to preach about his country's support for the resistance. How did an attack in Haifa, perpetrated by those Syria supported, serve as an act of legitimate resistance? One could also ask how Syria had dealt with resistance in its own experience, at Hamas, for example. In order to revive the peace process and give the "[Road Map](#)" a chance to succeed, it was essential that State sponsors of terror not be absolved from their responsibilities under international law. That would only push the day of peace further into the future.

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The representative of Syria said he was not surprised by Israel's statement, which had condemned Syria and ignored its own action. That merely reaffirmed Israel's continued practice of condemning others who held differing views. Israel's so-called concern for peace was somewhat hard to believe, since its current Government appeared to have no problem killing men, women and children and seizing property. Israel knew nothing but war and importing war to its neighbours. Syria, on the other hand, had taken every opportunity to promote peace in the region.

While the international community was in the midst of discussing peace in the Middle East, he said that Israel was now attempting to erase any progress that had been made toward that end. The people of Syria had the ultimate faith in their Government, and the notion that a nation such as Israel, which killed and bombed civilians, would condemn Syria's Government was nothing but pure ignorance. He added that Israel's claim that Syria was responsible for 19 Israeli deaths over the weekend was merely an attempt to find justification, and to take international attention away from a Government that was facing serious internal crisis. In addition, Israel should allow some 500,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria to return to their homeland.

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Responding to Syria, the representative of Israel said Syria had chosen to turn the important debate into a series of attacks against Israel. And now, the representative of Syria said he was surprised that Israel had responded. If that response had not been so sad it would have been amusing. Indeed, "wolves in sheep's clothing" were always amusing. He went on to give a detailed account of what he described as Syria's involvement with terrorist groups. He said Syria's harbouring, training and financing of terrorists and terrorist organizations such as the Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah were well known. Agents of those organizations were known to be housed at Syrian military bases. Syria was known to promote the bombing of homes, shopping malls and other public places within Israel. Israel's retaliation had only been after exercising extreme restraint.

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The representative of Syria made reference to several articles from the Israeli press and their depiction of a favourable reaction to the air strike against his country. He also recalled that several prominent Israeli rabbis had described the current Prime Minister of Israel as an ugly impersonation of Zionism.

The "real Jews", he continued, had not experienced peace and tranquillity since before the establishment of the Zionist State. The mentality of the Israeli Government had been revealed as truly terrorist; it was guilty of occupation and aggression, and had violated many international resolutions. Moreover, it should be noted that, in spite of Israel's claims that Syria harboured terror, Syria had been the foremost victim of terrorism in the 1980s.

Furthermore, he continued, Hezbollah was a Lebanese entity. It received no instructions from Syria. There were information and humanitarian offices in Syria that provided support to the needy Palestinian people, that was all. Those people should be allowed to return to their homeland.

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