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GAZA VIOLENCE, MOUNTING DEATH TOLL, PROVOKE GRAVE CONCERN IN SECURITY COUNCIL

WITH MORE THAN 40 SPEAKERS DEMANDING HALT TO ISRAELI MILITARY OPERATIONS

Calling Gaza 'Launching Pad for Terrorist Attacks', Israel Says National Rights Require National Responsibility

In a day-long meeting of the Security Council today, called jointly by the Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement in light of intensifying Israeli military operations in Gaza, fuelled yesterday by the deaths of at least 18 civilians in Beit Hanoun, more than 40 speakers expressed grave concern at the mounting humanitarian toll, with many demanding an immediate ceasefire and deployment of United Nations observers.

"The incident that occurred in Beit Hanoun on Wednesday is shocking," Angela Kane, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, said as she opened the meeting. "Men, women and children, who posed no threat, were killed as they slept in their home."

She stressed that it was not the first time that an Israeli military operation had resulted in a high number of civilian casualties. For that reason, she reiterated Secretary-General Kofi Annan's call to the Israeli Government to cease its military operations in Gaza without delay, and for both parties to desist from violence and return to negotiations.

In addition, the United Nations hoped the full investigation promised by Israel would be an opportunity to re-evaluate that Government's strategy in Gaza, she said. Clearly, that approach was not producing the desired goal of stopping rocket attacks, which the Organization also condemned.

The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations said yesterday's barrage of Israeli tank fire was a massacre that had left blood and body parts scattered across a residential neighbourhood. Urging that the perpetrators be held accountable under international law, he declared: "This is State terrorism."

He refused to accept what he called the "repulsive statements" by Israeli officials expressing regrets for the incident, saying that was not enough – the perpetrators must be brought to justice. He called for a strong condemnation of ongoing Israeli aggression, the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and a ceasefire monitored by a United Nations observer force.

Israel's representative stressed his country's sadness following what he called a "heartbreaking" occurrence that would never have happened, however, if Palestinian terror had not continued to assault Israelis and if Qassam rockets had stopped sailing out of Gaza into Israel.

He said that, after Israel had left Gaza over a year ago, instead of becoming a place where Palestinians strove to improve their lives, it had become a launching pad for terrorist attacks and a cog in the terror machine of puppet masters, with more than 1,000 rockets fired, weapons still smuggled and Corporal Gilad Shalit still missing, as Hamas officials continued to threaten the existence of his country.

Meanwhile, Israel was asked repeatedly to show restraint, he said. But, he asked, "when is it okay to say 'no more'? Is it after 1000 rockets? After 2000 rockets?" Calling for a renewed commitment to the two-State solution to the crisis, he urged that Palestinian leaders, including moderates, be held accountable for the activity in their territory, saying that national rights required national responsibility.

In the debate that followed, delegations expressed their sympathy for the families of the dead in Beit Hanoun, calling for restraint on the part of the parties and a return to negotiations. For that purpose, some speakers called for consideration of an urgent meeting of the Middle East diplomatic Quartet.

Many also called for the deployment of a United Nations observer mission to monitor a ceasefire in Gaza. "While the blood of innocents continued to be shed unabated, the temperature of the peace process rises and falls, in accordance with the political climate prevailing in certain capitals," said Qatar's representative, on behalf of the Arab League. He had circulated a draft resolution condemning the Beit Hanoun attack and calling for such a United Nations deployment.

While deeply regretting yesterday's loss of life, the representative of the United States said there must be an honest and even-handed discussion of recent events in Gaza, where the Hamas-led Government had continued to play a role in perpetuating violence. He expressed hope that the Israeli investigation would lead to measures aimed at avoiding the repetition of similar incidents, though he defended Israel's right to protect itself.

Other Council members speaking today were Ghana, France, Slovakia, United Republic of Tanzania, Congo, Greece, Denmark, United Kingdom, Russian Federation, China, Argentina, Japan and Peru.

Making further statements were Cuba (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), Finland (on behalf of the European Union), Yemen, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Tunisia, Sudan, Morocco, Spain, Norway, Algeria, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Jordan, Iran, Indonesia, Syria, Libya, Brazil and South Africa.

Also speaking were the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States and the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The meeting, which began at 10:30 a.m., was suspended at 1:08 p.m. and resumed at 3:25 p.m., adjourning at 5:46 p.m.

Background

The Security Council met today on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

Briefing on Situation in Gaza

ANGELA KANE, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, said that, yesterday, Israeli forces destroyed a house in Beit Hanoun, killing 18 people, as part of an operation that the Israelis said was intended to prevent and disrupt the launching of rockets at Israel and to damage the terror infrastructure in the Beit Hanoun area.

She described extensive damage from the Israeli operations over the period from 1 to 8 November, including 82 killed, of which 21 were children. She said 57 were described by Israel as "armed terrorists". During the same period, 52 rockets and mortars were fired towards Israel, with four civilians injured.

Since the launching of the operation, she said, the United Nations had been in contact with the Israeli Government at the highest level, and the Prime Minister gave assurances that no operation would be launched that was not essential to stopping the firing of rockets by militants.

She said the Beit Hanoun incident was shocking: men, women and children, who posed no threat, were killed as they slept in their homes, and it was not the first time that an Israeli military operation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had resulted in a high number of civilian casualties.

The Secretary-General had repeatedly expressed his deep concern about the rising civilian death toll in northern Gaza and reiterated his call to the Israeli Government to cease its military operations in Gaza, without delay, she noted. He looked forward to the results of the promised full investigation, which he hoped would be an opportunity to re-evaluate the policy of military pressure as a whole; that was quite clearly not producing the desired goal of stopping rocket attacks.

She said that the United Nations continued to condemn such rocket fire and that it was critically important for responsible Palestinian forces to join in action to make sure that militant attacks stopped. It was one of the reasons why the diplomatic Quartet continued to encourage the efforts of President Mahmoud Abbas to bring about a national unity government.

In the wake of the tragedy in Beit Hanoun, she expressed hope that both Israelis and Palestinians would pause and reflect on the fact that the conflict between them would not be resolved by force and that ways must be found to bring about negotiations.

Statements

RIYAD MANSOUR, Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations, said that, over the past week, Israel had continued and intensified what he called "barbaric military aggression" against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in the Gaza Strip, including "flagrant violations and grave breaches of international law", which had caused great suffering and extensive destruction.

He said that yesterday's barrage of Israeli tank fire was a massacre whose victims, asleep in their beds, included a one-month-old baby, seven children and six women, with blood and body parts scattered across the neighbourhood.

"This is State terrorism," he said, maintaining that the perpetrators must be held accountable under international law for war crimes, the latest of 39 years worth of such crimes. The lawlessness and impunity of Israel must be brought to an end and the Palestinian people must be accorded their rights under international law, including their right to protection as a civilian population under occupation, he said.

The Security Council had thus far failed to act on the situation, despite countless appeals by many parties, creating a culture of impunity among Israelis, and destabilizing the region during a time period in which President Mahmoud Abbas had been attempting to promote unity and calm, he said.

He refused to accept what he called the "repulsive" statements by Israeli officials expressing regret for the Beit Hanoun incident, saying that was not enough; the perpetrators had to be brought to justice. In addition, he called for a strong condemnation of the ongoing Israeli aggression, the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and a ceasefire monitored by a United Nations observer force.

DANIEL CARMON (Israel) said that a tragic event had occurred during the escalation of the situation in Gaza, following the ongoing terrorist attacks against Israel and his country's response in self-defence. Israel regretted the deaths of innocent civilians and was deeply saddened by what he called a heartbreaking occurrence.

He said, however, that if Palestinians had desisted from inflicting terror on Israelis, if Qassam rockets had stopped sailing out of Gaza into Israel, the incident in Beit Hanoun would never have happened.

After Israel had left Gaza over a year ago, instead of becoming a place where Palestinians strove to improve their lives, it had become a launching pad for terrorist attacks and a cog in the terror machine of puppet masters, with more than 1,000 rockets fired, weapons still smuggled and Corporal Gilad Shalit still in captivity,

he said.

While Hamas officials continued to threaten the existence of Israel and the rockets continued to be launched, Israel had been asked repeatedly to show restraint, he said. But, in terms of when a State was allowed to defend its people, only actions could change the reality in Gaza.

Stressing that Israel's enemy was not the Palestinian people, but the terrorists who attacked the Israeli people, he said that the Palestinian leadership must be held accountable for what happened in its territory and among its population, and for the terrorism that deliberately targeted innocent civilians.

He called for a renewed commitment to the two-State solution to the crisis and a rejection of the terrorist elements within the Palestinian leadership. At the same time, he stressed that Palestinian moderates must not be allowed to hide behind the terrorists. "If you want national rights, you must take responsibility," he said.

Permitting the status quo to continue and allowing terrorism to go unchecked constituted "a reckless endangerment of the prospects for peace, our regional future, and the very foundations of human dignity and right to life", he said.

JAMAL NASSER AL-BADER ([Qatar](#)) said that, at a time when the Palestinian people were suffering from a grave deterioration in their humanitarian situation as a result of the blockade imposed on them by the Israeli occupation authorities, the Israeli Government had escalated its military operations in Palestinian territory, especially in the Gaza Strip, beyond all expectations. That was not confined to simply transforming the Gaza Strip into a total battlefield, but had also involved a massacre by the Israeli Army, at dawn yesterday, which claimed the lives of about 20 people and injured more than 45, mostly women and children.

He strongly condemned that heinous operation, which was a breach of international law and international norms. The Council must tackle that acute crisis and assume its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security and the protection of civilians from murder, devastation and human rights violations. The Council must accord the question the attention it merited, in comparison with other questions. It was paradoxical for the Council to deal with less pressing questions with greater attention, while ignoring a critical question with potentially grave repercussions.

In the Middle East, the "volcano of conflict" had erupted and had yet to subside, he warned. While the blood of innocents continued to be shed unabated, the temperature of the peace process rose and fell, in accordance with the political climate prevailing in certain capitals. The tempo of that process had ranged between stalling and a complete standstill, thus eroding popular confidence in the process, which, in turn, had led to widespread frustration and despair. "All acts of violence, provocation, instigation and destruction warrant condemnation, no matter who perpetrates them," he said. "The shedding of people's blood, be they Arab or Israeli, is taboo," he added.

It was imperative to accelerate the resumption of efforts to find a peaceful and lasting settlement to the Middle East crisis and its crux, the question of Palestine, in accordance with international terms of reference, relevant Security Council resolutions and the "Road Map", while recognizing that it was impossible to fight an idea with a bomb, he stressed. Armies and walls could not provide security for citizens in the present age, especially in a region like the Middle East. The crisis there could not be resolved by force, but by resorting to dialogue and common sense. He asked the Council why it addressed questions of lesser importance and seriousness with great earnestness and resolve, while the Arab-Israeli conflict, which endangered the security of the entire region, did not enjoy such attention.

NANA EFFAH-APENTENG ([Ghana](#)) said that the disastrous outcome of the latest military operation and others of the past had shown that it was impossible to conduct such attacks in a populated area, like Gaza, without causing death and injury to innocent civilians and collateral damage to property. The regret expressed by the Israeli Government had been noted, and Ghana looked forward to the early conclusion and release of findings of the investigations, as promised. Since attacks of that nature had, in the past, led to reprisals that caused more havoc and fuelled the conflict between Palestine and Israel, without an end, he appealed to the Palestinian people to exercise maximum restraint and avoid revengeful attacks against Israel. Both sides were also reminded of their obligations under international humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

He went on to say that the Security Council must act quickly to request the cessation of Israeli military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and to call on Palestinians to stop firing rockets against Israel. Indeed, Ghana did not believe the international community had devoted as much attention to that long-festering conflict as it deserved. It must now resolve to work assiduously towards resolving the Palestinian question on the basis of its resolutions, and in accordance with the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative.

JEAN-MARC DE LA SABLIERE ([France](#)), expressing heartfelt condolences to the Palestinian people over the Beit Hanoun deaths, reiterated his country's condemnation of Israeli artillery attacks in populated areas and called for the consideration of an independent investigation and for the immediate halt to Israeli military operations in Gaza. He also reiterated France's condemnation of rocket attacks against Israel.

He said that an urgent meeting of the Middle East diplomatic Quartet could provide an opportunity to come up with a mechanism for the protection of civilians, given the mounting casualty toll in the past few months. In addition, France, along with its European partners, would continue to work for a just and lasting peace, in accordance with Council resolutions and the Madrid outcome.

DUŠAN MATULAY ([Slovakia](#)), aligning himself with the statement to be made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union, said he remained deeply concerned about the escalating violence between Israel and Palestine, and called on both parties to exercise the utmost restraint to calm the situation. Although Israel had a right of self-defence against terrorism and its perpetrators, its response must be always proportionate, and everything must be done to avoid the loss of innocent life. However, the Palestinian Authority needed to undertake all necessary measures to find and release the kidnapped Israeli soldier and prevent further attacks on Israel, most notably rocket attacks.

In conclusion, he said that there was no military solution to the Palestinian-Israeli dispute; the only way to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region was through dialogue. Furthermore, Slovakia supported the two-State solution to the conflict. The international community must remain engaged in the peace process in the Middle East, and Slovakia believed that a window of opportunity for a mutual recognition of two viable States still existed.

BEGUMK. TAJ ([United Republic of Tanzania](#)) expressed deep concern over the disastrous events that took place in northern Gaza, caused by Israeli military operations. Her country condemned those events, which had resulted in civilian casualties, in grave violation of humanitarian law. Indeed, Israel should not use the pretext of self-defence to target innocent civilians, because such intolerable attacks would always be unjustifiable. The international community must respond to Israeli military policies which had gone too far, and which must not be allowed to continue.

She said that Israel must be asked to cease its aggression, withdraw from Gaza and exercise utmost restraint in its actions, including by taking every step to protect civilians. She also looked forward to the early conclusion of the promised investigation by Israel, and supported the call for independent investigations, as well. Meanwhile, Palestinian militants must stop firing rockets at Israeli targets. Unfortunately, much violence had come during a time when there had been hope for reaching an agreement on peace. The Israeli assaults had caused economic paralysis. Deliberate efforts should be taken to ensure that no further destruction of Palestinian infrastructure and property took place, and that urgently needed humanitarian assistance was provided unimpeded. Dialogue between all parties should be given a chance -- President Abbas and the Hamas leadership should resume talks to form a government of national unity, with support from the Quartet. In the meantime, her country stood ready to discuss the resolution currently being tabled, with a view to its early adoption.

JOHN BOLTON ([United States](#)) said there must be an honest and even-handed discussion of recent events in Gaza, where the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority

Government had continued to play a role in perpetuating instability and violence. There was no question that Israel had a right to defend itself and its citizens – indeed, when Israeli forces withdrew from much of Gaza on 7 November, Palestinian terrorists resumed firing rockets into Israel, targeted at civilians, almost immediately. While deeply regretting the injuries and loss of life in Gaza on 8 November in and around Beit Hanoun, the United States had seen the Israeli Government's apology and understood that an investigation would begin, which would hopefully lead to steps being taken to avoid repetition of similar incidents.

He called on all parties to act with restraint, so as to avoid any harm to innocent civilians. He also called for the immediate and unconditional release of Corporal Shalit and two other Israeli soldiers kidnapped on 12 July by Hizbollah during its terrorist attacks across the Blue Line. Since it was the responsibility of the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority Government to prevent terror and to stop attacks from within Gaza, Hamas must accept Quartet principles, which were: the renunciation of terror; recognition of Israel; and acceptance of previous agreements. Statements by the Hamas leadership that the truce with Israel was over and armed struggle could resume were "alarming", and calls by the military wing by Hamas to Muslims worldwide to strike American targets and interests should be condemned by the international community. The Hamas-led Government was further called on to dismantle terrorist infrastructure, since terror – whether directed at Israel, the United States or the European Union office in Gaza City – was not the solution.

The Road Map was the only agreed international basis upon which to move forward towards the two-State goal, he said. The Quartet had welcomed efforts by President Abbas to form a government explicitly committed to Quartet principles, and the United States stood ready to renew engagement and assistance to a Palestinian Authority committed to peace and the Quartet principles. It also supported diplomatic efforts to engage responsible leaders, help the Palestinians strengthen and reform their security sector, and support Israeli and Palestinian leaders to resolve their differences. Acutely aware of the economic and humanitarian needs of the Palestinians, the United States would continue working with the Israeli Government and President Abbas to help meet critical humanitarian needs in the West Bank and Gaza, where conditions had deteriorated as a result of the Hamas-led Government's refusal to govern responsibly.

PASCAL GAYAMA ([Congo](#)), endorsing the statement to be made by Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that the attacks in Gaza represented an intolerable situation. Israel had a right to protect itself, but that did not free it from its obligations under international humanitarian law.

In addition, he said that such dangerous developments hurt the chances for building trust between the two parties and for the creation of a national unity government among Palestinians, which could then allow the pursuit of negotiations. It was only by such negotiations that the solution of two States, living side by side in peace, could come about.

ADAMANTIOS VASSILAKIS ([Greece](#)) said that recent tragic events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had made today's Council meeting imperative. The situation in Gaza and the West Bank had deteriorated to an alarming degree in the past few months. The abhorrent events in Beit Hanoun were the latest in a vicious cycle of violence that had caused the deaths of many innocent civilians, including an unacceptable number of women and children. While recognizing Israel's duty to protect its citizens, he underscored that Israel's action should not be disproportionate or contrary to international law, including international humanitarian and international human rights law.

Lasting peace in the Middle East depended on the behaviour of the parties involved, he continued. The international community should spare no effort, or leave any option unexplored, to pursue and achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in that region. Tragedies like the one in Beit Hanoun made that responsibility painfully apparent. The international community must urgently examine in depth all available options and apply the necessary steps to bring the peace process back on track, so that those committed to peace were given a credible advantage over those wishing to obstruct it.

ELLEN MARGRETHE LØJ ([Denmark](#)) expressed her delegation's shock at the news that 19 Palestinian civilians, 11 of them children, were killed when Israeli artillery hit a housing block in Beit Hanoun. She urged Israeli authorities to complete an inquiry into the incident promptly and to make the results public. Yesterday's tragedy was the culmination of days of intense military action in Gaza, causing the loss of many civilian lives and great damage to houses and civilian infrastructure. Denmark deplored the fact that Israeli military operations had taken a heavy toll on civilians. The right of a State to defend itself against terrorist threats did not justify disproportionate or indiscriminate use of force, which was contrary to international humanitarian law, and only fuelled further hatred and conflict.

She said that all sides must cease the use of force for political purposes. The Palestinian Government must take action to stop all attacks on Israel from Palestinian territory. To pave the way for progress, the kidnapped Israeli soldier must be released immediately. Likewise, the Palestinian ministers and legislators in Israeli custody must be freed promptly.

Increasingly, the collapse of the Palestinian Authority and chaos in the territory seemed imminent, she said, warning of social, economic as well as political collapse. Clashes among Palestinian factions only aggravated human suffering and desperation. Denmark supported President Abbas' attempt to build national unity and establish a credible Palestinian Government, with a platform reflecting the principles laid down by the Quartet. Israel had a crucial role to play in improving Palestinian economic prospects, including by releasing immediately the tax and customs revenues, now being withheld, and implementing the Agreement on Movement and Access. She stressed the need for all parties to play constructive roles to support the peace process, including neighbours such as Syria.

KAREN PIERCE ([United Kingdom](#)) said that no one could remain unmoved by the suffering of the families in Beit Hanoun. Recognizing that Israel had a right to self-defence, she said that actions for such purposes, however, must be proportional and mindful of civilian life.

Welcoming an Israeli investigation into the attack, she said that individuals must be prosecuted if there had been culpability. In addition, she called for the end of rocket attacks and the release of the captured Israeli soldier. Offering the assistance of her country to a Palestinian Government committed to a two-State solution and to previous agreements, she said her country would also seriously consider the need for an urgent meeting of the diplomatic Quartet.

VITALY CHURKIN ([Russian Federation](#)), like previous speakers, expressed concern over the deterioration of Palestinian-Israeli relations and called for action to be undertaken urgently to prevent its further destabilization. He called on both sides to display wisdom and to recognize that they had reached a sensitive point in their relations. He was also concerned about the tragic incident that had occurred in Beit Hanoun, and felt that the Israeli Army's actions had gone beyond simply dealing with rocket fire – it had become disproportionate. Indeed, such indiscriminate use of force was intolerable, and had come at a time when Palestinian Authority forces were attempting to create a coalition government capable of addressing the problems of its people and negotiating a peace with Israel.

He noted that talks between Fatah and Hamas on creating a national unity government had been suspended. He encouraged both parties to resume those talks in a constructive spirit, despite the challenges they faced. Also, robust measures must be taken to rein in extremists, prevent terrorist attacks and stop rockets from being fired, all of which provoked the Israeli Government. The abducted Israeli soldier must be released, and Russia supported mediation efforts towards that goal.

All Palestinian factions and groups must recognize that provocative acts of any kind were detrimental to the national aspirations of their people, and that the key to regional peace lay with their ability to work with the Israeli Government, he said. Although Israel's right to protect its citizens was not in doubt, it could not achieve that goal while severely impacting or collectively punishing the residents of Gaza. Both sides must end violence and take steps to stabilize the situation, and joint efforts were needed to clear the way for dialogue and not create impediments to its advancement. Russia looked forward to the upcoming Security Council meeting on 21 November on a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East.

WANG GUANGYA ([China](#)) expressed concern over Israel having opened fire on the Gaza Strip, which had resulted in numerous civilian casualties, including women and children. Hopefully, Israel would carry out earnest and serious investigations of the incidents and publish its findings at an early date. Furthermore,

China believed that the Palestinian and Israeli dispute should be resolved through negotiation, in the absence of military operations. That included both rockets fired by Palestinians and military operations conducted by Israel. Both sides should exercise maximum restraint and bring to an end the current cycle of violence.

He said that efforts by major parties in Palestine, such as Fatah, the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Hamas, to discuss the formation of a national unity government and to improve relations between Palestine and Israel had been encouraging, but those had been dashed as a result of the recent violence. China called upon all parties to bring an end to conflict and to create an atmosphere conducive to negotiations. A comprehensive and just solution to the Middle East question should be worked out on the basis of the principle of land for peace, and through political negotiations and United Nations resolutions. Indeed, the reality demonstrated that peaceful Palestinian coexistence with Israel was fundamental to the region's stability. Hopefully, both would demonstrate the necessary political will to bring that condition about.

CÉSAR MAYORAL ([Argentina](#)) expressed grave concern about the recent events in the Gaza Strip, in particular, the rising deaths of innocent civilians caused by Israeli military operations. Argentina unequivocally condemned the operation carried out in the residential area of Beit Hanoun on 8 November, which resulted in the deaths of at least 18 Palestinians, including women and children. He called on the immediate cessation of Israeli military actions in populated areas. Although Israel had the right to defend itself against terrorist attacks, in the exercise of that right, it should abide by humanitarian international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, regarding the protection of civilians.

He said that, in view of the serious nature of the events in Beit Hanoun, an independent and impartial investigation should be carried out and the results made available to the international community. Further, the parties should exercise restraint and avoid taking measures that could lead to an increase in violence. Towards that goal, attacks with Qassam rockets from the Gaza Strip against Israeli targets must end immediately, and the Palestinian Authority should take measures to prevent new suicide bombings and all other attacks against Israeli civilians. Indeed, recent statements by leaders of Hamas had been disturbing.

He went on to say that Israel must cease all military activities in the Gaza Strip and withdraw from that territory, while ending military operations in the West Bank. It should also end unilateral measures, such as settlement activities and the construction of the separation barrier. Meanwhile, negotiations between President Abbas and Prime Minister Haniyeh to form a national unity government reflecting the three principles set out by the Quartet should continue. Obtaining the release of the Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, should remain a priority, and hopefully Egyptian efforts in that regard would bear fruit. Also, crossings into and out of Gaza should be kept open, with both parties taking measures to implement the Agreement on Movement and Access.

KENZO OSHIMA ([Japan](#)) expressed concern about the continued fighting between Israel and Palestinian military groups in Gaza since the abduction of Corporal Gilad Shalit in June. His country also was gravely disturbed by the report of many new casualties at Beit Hanoun, as the result of Israeli military action yesterday, for both the worrisome humanitarian consequences and its negative political impact. All parties must exercise maximum restraint to avoid aggravating the situation, and Israel, in particular, should avoid any action that might lead to civilian casualties. Hopefully, serious efforts to determine the causes of the incident, and to prevent the recurrence of such a tragedy, would be undertaken by an investigatory panel established by the Israeli Defense Forces.

He also urged the Palestinian Authority to take measures to end the violence of Palestinian extremist groups, including rocket attacks against Israel, and to secure the immediate release of the Israeli soldier. Meanwhile, Japan's Special Envoy on the Middle East peace process, who was currently visiting Israel, Palestine and Syria, was appealing for an end to confrontation and was carrying out consultations to encourage parties to engage in more constructive efforts to promote peace. Palestinians, meanwhile, must break the current stalemate over the formation of a new government; indeed, if the Palestinian Authority were to make clear that it would pursue peace through negotiation with Israel, then the international community, in turn, should extend its support of that policy.

Meanwhile, the international community, including Israel, should continue providing assistance to end the deteriorating humanitarian situation among Palestinians, he said. The Israeli Government should quickly resume the transfer of tax and customs revenue to the Palestinian Authority, as well as implement fully the Agreement on Movement and Access. For its part, Japan had steadily implemented its pledge to provide \$25 million in humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, made by former Prime Minister Koizumi in July. It was also seeking to create a "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity", aimed at facilitating coexistence and mutual prosperity in the region, through consultations among Government representatives of Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Japan.

JORGE VOTO-BERNALES ([Peru](#)) said that his Government condemned the Beit Hanoun attack, which was part of an escalation of violence in Gaza. The right of any State to defend itself did not justify the disproportionate use of force, which was making it less likely for earlier agreements to be met.

He said it was indispensable for negotiations to be resumed and for Palestinian governance to be resolved in a way that was amenable to going back to the Road Map. For that to occur, a simultaneous dialogue between all parties must be supported and all parties must exercise maximum restraint.

RODRIGO MALMERCA DIAZ ([Cuba](#)), on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, expressed horror at the Beit Hanoun attack and condemned Israeli military assaults in the Gaza Strip. He also emphasized the need to preserve the institutions of the Palestinian National Authority, and for the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.

Calling for an immediate ceasefire, he demanded that Israel cease aggression and withdraw from Gaza and scrupulously abide by its obligations under humanitarian law. He also called for the establishment of a United Nations observer force to supervise a ceasefire, and for the diplomatic Quartet to take immediate steps to help restart peace negotiations.

KIRSTI LINTONEN ([Finland](#)), speaking on behalf of the European Union, recognized Israel's legitimate right to self-defence, but urged that State to exercise utmost restraint when taking any action, emphasizing that such action should not be disproportionate, or contradict international humanitarian law. The Union also called on Palestinian leaders to bring an end to the firing of rockets on Israeli territory, and urged that efforts continue to form a national unity government, with a platform reflecting the Quartet principles. The Union also reiterated its intention to actively contribute to the Quartet's efforts to restart the Middle East peace process, on the basis of the Road Map, relevant Security Council resolutions and the commitments made at Sharm el-Sheikh in 2005. The recent violence had clearly underlined that there could be no military or unilateral solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that the only way forward was for Israel and Palestine to negotiate a viable two-State solution.

ABDULLAH M. ALSAIDI ([Yemen](#)) said that the Beit Hanoun attack was barbaric and unjustifiable. It was also part of Israel's war of genocide. The question now was whether the international community would stand by as a spectator. He called on the Council to take a firm stand against Israeli State terrorism, which had gone on for more than half a century.

He said that the deteriorating conditions of the "open prison" of Gaza created a fertile ground for extremism and weakened the voice of wisdom. Therefore, the Council must adopt a binding resolution on an immediate ceasefire, with a force to monitor it, and make sure that all previous agreements were respected.

MAGED A. ABDELAZIZ ([Egypt](#)) said Israeli military attacks against Gaza, killing civilians in Beit Hanoun, had undermined the credibility of Israel's commitment to the goal of reaching a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, based on international legitimacy and "in abstention of imposing de facto policies". Indeed, what the foreign ministers had warned of during the Council's meeting on 21 September had become a reality, reinforced by the Council's unwillingness to assume its responsibilities to maintain international peace and security. Accordingly, the Council must take action, and refrain from condoning Israel's violations and illegal practices in the occupied lands, particularly in Gaza, where killings and the blockade continue to harm unarmed civilians.

He said that Israel must withdraw from the Gaza area and return to the boundaries of 28 June 2006. It must also lift the blockade imposed on the Palestinian

lands, refrain from targeting civilians and committing violence as a form of collective punishment, stop building the separation wall and implement the Agreement on Movement and Access to ease flows of Palestinians and humanitarian assistance. In addition, Israel should abstain from unilateral measures that contributed to prolonging the conflict, in a balanced context of parallel commitments from the Palestinians to stop launching rockets at Israel.

Continuing, he said that the Israeli abducted soldier must be released, alongside the release of Palestinian prisoners, officials and parliamentarians arrested by Israel, so as to create an appropriate atmosphere for the return to negotiations. The Council, in turn, must assume its responsibilities to ensure the end to aggression by Israel against Palestinian civilians. Investigating Israel's practices in the Occupied Palestinian lands, and assigning to it the "criminal responsibility" for the destruction that resulted from its aggression, was needed so that Israel would understand that it could not continue violating the human rights of Palestinians and occupying their lands without accountability. Immediate action was needed by the international community to address the deteriorating situation in the Middle East; it should not be content with statements that did not reflect definite intentions to reverse flagrant violation.

FAWZI BIN ABDUL MAJEED SHOBOKSHI ([Saudi Arabia](#)), aligning himself with the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement to be delivered by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, said that Israeli massacres perpetrated in the Gaza Strip, including in Beit Hanoun, had resulted in the deaths of many innocent civilians, including women and children. Some of those attacks had occurred while people slept. Indeed, such barbarism could not be justified in the name of self-defence; rather, it was more akin to an act of revenge. Even in cases where such "vengeful" acts could possibly be condoned, international law dictated that they should be proportionate to the initial crime. But the disproportionate use of Israeli military might ran contrary to international laws and norms and relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention.

He said that Israel had created an "atmosphere of death", leaving nothing on the horizon that gave Palestinians any hope. Nor did it give them an alternative to the peace process, which had been aborted by the Israeli Government. The lack of action on the part of the international community, and the way in which the Council had been allowing the violence to continue, had enabled Israel to deny the right of determination of the Palestinian people, including to establish a State with Jerusalem as its capital. Saudi Arabia reiterated its call to the international community to move quickly to put an end to aggression against the Palestinians and to revive the peace process.

CAROLINE ZIADE ([Lebanon](#)) said that, if previous Israeli aggression were not enough, Israel's latest bloody attack had wiped out any chance for peace in the region. Condemnation was not enough; there was an urgent need to put an end to Israel's military activities through a strong resolution that included mechanisms to assure Israel's compliance.

She said that Lebanon's compliance with resolution 1701 (2006) had been excellent, but Israel continued to violate Lebanese airspace. She called on Israel to resume implementation of all its commitments. In addition, she expressed hope that the Council would launch a new initiative to assure implementation of previous resolutions, towards the creation of a permanent peace in the region.

HAMIDON ALI ([Malaysia](#)), associating himself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, said he supported the deployment of a United Nations force in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, saying that the violence could not be allowed to spiral out of control.

If the Israeli destruction of Palestinian life and property was considered legitimate, he maintained that the dark ages had returned, especially if Council members appeared to endorse Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity. He appealed to the Council to shoulder its responsibilities by deploying a United Nations force, without delay, on the basis of a draft resolution to be submitted by Qatar.

SURKHAY SHUKUROV ([Azerbaijan](#)), speaking on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), said the Conference had met at the ambassadorial level in New York on 7 November to discuss the continued deterioration of the situation as a result of the military aggression being carried out by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Gaza Strip. It had expressed grave concern, particularly since the excessive and indiscriminate use of force by Israel had caused extensive loss of civilian life and injuries. The ambassadors had also condemned those military assaults and emphasized the need to preserve the institutions of the Palestinian National Authority and Palestinian infrastructure and properties.

He said that, given the dire humanitarian situation in the region, the group had called for the provision of emergency assistance to the Palestinian people and urged the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility. The Council should demand that Israel cease its aggression against Palestinian civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and immediately withdraw its forces from within the Gaza Strip to positions prior to 28 June. It should also call for an immediate ceasefire between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, to be supervised by a United Nations observer force. In addition, it should call on Israel to abide by its obligations under the Geneva Conventions, in terms of protection of civilians during times of war.

He said that the group had further called on the international community, including the Quartet, to take steps, such as confidence-building measures between the parties, so as to help resume peace negotiations, in accordance with General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. The group had also decided to endorse the draft resolution tabled by the Arab Group in the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization Committee), entitled "Israeli Aggression in the Gaza Strip".

MUNIR AKRAM ([Pakistan](#)) expressed appreciation for the Council's decision to hold today's emergency meeting in response to the call by the Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement. It was a measure of the impunity enjoyed by Israel that, even as the Council decided to meet, there were additional horrendous actions, such as those of yesterday in Beit Hanoun. Pakistan joined the call for an international independent investigation into that incident and its implications in terms of the violation of international humanitarian law. Indeed, the renewed violence that had risen sharply in recent months had been a setback to the quest for the settlement of the Palestinian question and a durable Middle East peace.

He said it was unfortunate that the Council had not followed up on the Arab Peace Initiative; there was a crying need for the Council to restore its credibility. It was also time to end Israel's conflicts with all its neighbours, and to end the tragedy of Palestine, which was the major source of humiliation and anger felt throughout the Muslim world. Given the threat to international peace and security, and the responsibility entrusted to the Council by the United Nations Charter, it must respond to call for an immediate ceasefire and establish a sustainable, credible and verifiable peace in the Occupied Territory.

Meanwhile, he urged the two sides to take simultaneous confidence-building measures. Israel must end its campaign in Gaza, release Palestinian prisoners, remove checkpoints and other obstacles to movement, halt and reverse construction of the wall, freeze settlement activities and the building of outposts, release customs and back payments belonging to the Palestinian Authority and accept negotiations with the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinians must halt rocket attacks, secure the release of the Israeli soldier, achieve internal cohesion and establish a national unity government to negotiate with Israel. The Middle East conflict was the greatest threat to global security, to the fight against terrorism, to the promotion of harmony among civilizations and to the credibility of the United Nations – the international community must act to put out those fires, he urged.

ALI HACHANI ([Tunisia](#)) said his country was carefully following Israel's brutal aggression, which seriously threatened the stability of the entire region and was a grave violation of international law. Violence beget violence, fuelled hatred and despair and impeded the resumption of negotiations. He urged the Council to act to put an end to the bloodshed, through, among other measures, adopting the resolution that had been circulated.

ABDELMAHMOUD ABDELHALEEM ([Sudan](#)) described the factors that he said had led to a siege of the Palestinian territories and a deterioration in humanitarian conditions there. Current Israeli practices included increased the killing of Palestinians and the incarceration and mistreatment of many more, along with the continued building of the separation wall. He called on the Council to take immediate action to put an end to such civilian suffering, to make sure its resolutions

were implemented, and to investigate the massacre that took place in Beit Hanoun.

HAMID CHABAR (Morocco) denounced Israel's attacks on Gaza, in particular the bombardment of Beit Hanoun. He was indignant over Israel's escalation of violence against defenceless Palestinian people, and the wanton destruction of infrastructure, the kidnapping of Government officials and the blockade, all of which violated all manner of human rights, including those enshrined in the Geneva Conventions. Morocco called on Israel to learn its lesson over the failed attack of Lebanon this summer, which had threatened the region's stability and led to violence and counter-violence, leading it far away from the constructive spirit needed to achieve peace.

Amid the growing tension between the parties, he said Morocco still believed that the international community could help restore communication between the two parties. The parties now must back up their words with concrete acts: agree to a ceasefire; end the isolation of the Palestinians and their capital; and provide moral support to efforts to create a single Palestinian government that would serve as a partner in the peace process. The Council had the responsibility of sending international observers to oversee a complete end to acts of aggression against Palestinian people. The Quartet, in turn, had the responsibility to examine and smooth out the political dimension, involving not just Palestine, but also Syria and Lebanon.

ÍÑIGO DE PALACIO ESPAÑA (Spain), aligning himself with the European Union, said his country was concerned by the growing violence in the region, and by the discord among the Palestinians, themselves, which threatened international security. Precisely because war was useless as an instrument to resolve conflict, both parties should commit themselves to working with other regional actors and the wider international community to achieve a lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. To attain such a goal, two actions must be carried out in parallel: to create an atmosphere more propitious to peace; and to promote an international consensus to launch a peace initiative, involving Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, among others.

He said that, to begin with, a set of short-term measures should be carried out, such as the immediate liberation of soldiers and prisoners, and the return of money retained by Israel, followed by the creation of a border management system that would harmonize legitimate security concerns with the need for smooth circulation of goods and services. Also, support should be given to Palestinian efforts to form a unity government, without preconditioning that process with security requests. An international conference must be convened to demonstrate the world's renewed commitment to peace, as well as to promote greater participation of regional actors in the Quartet's activities. The Mediterranean Forum, convened on 27 and 28 October, was a good starting point to promote international consensus on the issue. There, various heads of delegations on both sides of the Mediterranean had agreed to set in motion a multilateral peace process involving a wide range of actors, based on the terms of reference accepted at the Madrid Conference.

MONA JUUL (Norway) said that her Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Store, had been in Gaza yesterday and had seen for himself the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation and the widespread destruction left behind by the Israeli campaign. Mr. Store had also met with President Abbas, as well as with Israel's Minister for Foreign Affairs, bearing the message that, while recognizing Israel's right to defend itself, Norway could not accept such disproportionate military retaliation. Actions such as yesterday's had been contrary to international humanitarian law and would only serve to cultivate hatred and reinforce continued armed resistance. There was no military solution to the current conflict, and she urged Israel to end its incursions into Gaza.

She said that Norway's position had always been that the Palestinian leadership should bring to an end the firing of rockets into Israeli territory, since it did not serve the Palestinian population or the prospects for peace. They must also provide the safe return of Corporal Gilad Shalit. Meanwhile, President Abbas' efforts to establish a national unity government should reflect the principles set out by the Quartet. A comprehensive settlement based on the Road Map, the commitments from Sharm el-Sheikh and relevant resolutions could only come about through negotiation.

YOUCEF YOUSFI (Algeria), condemning Israeli actions that led to deaths such as those in Beit Hanoun, said that Gaza had been converted into a vast prison for its suffering population. Israel had been acting with impunity in attacking innocent civilians under false pretences, and the international community must act to stop its reprehensible excesses.

He called on the Council to end its indulgence of Israel's behaviour and to pressure Israel to end its aggression and withdraw its troops from Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Council should also impose a ceasefire and make sure that the Geneva Conventions and its own resolutions were complied with by Israel.

PAUL BADJI, Chairman of the Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that the use of excessive force by the Israeli Army represented an act of war against the Palestinian population. The use of heavy weaponry was clearly disproportionate, as the number of civilian casualties continued to mount.

While his Committee urged Palestinian militants to cease their rocket fire into Israel, he urged Israel to immediately stop its military operation, to conduct a comprehensive inquiry of the event in Beit Hanoun, and act in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention. He called upon both parties to refrain from the use of violence, and upon the Council to shoulder its responsibilities to stop the violence through a negotiated two-State agreement.

ABDULAZIZ NASSER AL-SHAMSI (United Arab Emirates) declared his support for the Palestinian people, as they faced Israeli massacres and other violations that amounted to genocide. He dismissed the Israeli explanation of self-defence and called upon the Security Council and the Quartet to urgently condemn the recent attacks and ensure that investigations were conducted, with perpetrators brought to justice and compensation paid to victims by Israel.

He stressed that necessary measures should also be taken to ensure the protection of Palestinians, the removal of blockades, Israel's total withdrawal from Gaza and from all Arab and Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, and its adherence to all provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. He hoped the international community would not fail, once again, to take decisive action.

YAHYAA MAHMASANI, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States, said that using military force to dictate a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict was futile, and had only led to further bloodshed and destruction. He condemned Israel's actions of yesterday, along with its use of internationally prohibited weapons. Indeed, those acts only served to escalate the already tense situation in the region and hindered efforts to find a peaceful solution. Such acts were yet more evidence that Israel did not intend to be a true partner in the peace process. The Quartet should play its role in helping revive the peace process, in accordance with the Arab League's request. The Secretary-General should establish a fact-finding mission on the Israeli aggression against the Palestinians and submit a report to the Council on its findings. The Israeli line of logic – using force as course of action – could not lead to a proper solution; there was a need for all parties to return to the negotiating table.

ABDULLAH AL-MURAD (Kuwait) hoped that the Council would take urgent measures to deter Israel from engaging in even more aggression, which had so far injured and killed many people. Indeed, Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had reached a level that it could no longer be ignored, and it was unfortunate that so many civilian deaths had not previously attracted the international community's attention. That some of those deaths had occurred because of "technical error", as reported by Israeli officials, was shocking. Self-defence was also a flimsy justification for such aggression, for that was in violation of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law. Indeed, it was the Palestinians that were defending themselves, and not the other way around.

He said that violent Israeli practices – extrajudicial killings, excessive use of force, disproportionate responses, the demolition of homes and institutions and disregard for the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion of July 2004 on the illegality of the separation wall – went against human rights laws, including the Geneva Conventions. Kuwait called on Israel to halt its actions against the Palestinian population, and for the establishment of an international mechanism for monitoring a ceasefire and to guarantee that such aggressions no longer took place. The people of Palestine had a right to establish their own State, with Al-Quds as its capital, without which there would be no permanent and just peace. The international community, including the Quartet, should convince Israel to

resume negotiations and fully withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territory on the basis of the Road Map. The Council should assume its responsibilities by adopting the draft resolution before it, so as to prevent Israel from committing aggressions with impunity.

ZEID RA'AD ZEID AL-HUSSEIN (Jordan) strongly condemned the attack on Beit Hanoun, as well as Israel's policy of collective punishment of the Palestinian people, which would only destabilize the region further and make a negotiated settlement less likely. He said that there was no unilateral solution to the Middle East crisis. Israel must show the necessary flexibility to revive the peace process, and President Abbas' efforts in that regard should be supported.

JAVAD ZARIF (Iran) strongly condemned the aggression, war crimes, crimes against humanity and State terrorism of the Zionist regime perpetrated systematically against the Palestinian people. Regrettably, due to the inaction imposed on the Security Council by certain permanent members, all those crimes had gone on without meaningful action by the international community. He hoped that, in view of the latest escalation in the region, members of the Council would live up to their responsibilities and, as a first step, adopt the draft resolution before the Council.

ADE PETRANTO (Indonesia), expressing his condolences to the Palestinian people for their losses, said that the continued Israeli military offensive was a threat to the prospects of achieving a negotiated solution to the Middle East conflict. In that light, and in view of the tragic humanitarian situation on the ground, he expressed deep concern that the Council had taken no action to intervene.

Condemning Israeli aggression and its strategy of "brutal and collective punishment," he called on that country to recognize that there was no military solution to the conflict. It must withdraw fully from the Occupied Palestinian Territory and abide by its international humanitarian obligations. He called on the Council to accept its responsibilities and make certain that yesterday's massacre was not repeated. To those ends, he said the draft resolution submitted by Qatar was a good basis for moving forward.

BASHAR JA'AFARI (Syria) said that a lot had been said before the Council over the last years regarding Israeli action in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The victim of such aggressions had also extended to Syrians, Jordanians, Egyptians and Lebanese. Many times, the Council had considered resolutions condemning Israeli massacres, but a well-known State had always exercised its veto, preventing that body from condemning Israel for its crimes. In fact, the matter was not a humanitarian issue, but rather a political one and, as long as the world ignored the need for a political solution, Israel would be allowed to commit aggressions against unarmed Palestinians with impunity. Indeed, it was astonishing that the right of Palestinians to defend themselves in the face of brutal occupation was treated as a form of terrorism, while Israel's terrorism was depicted as an act of self-defence.

He said that, if the United States had not prevented the Council from adopting a draft resolution condemning a similar Israeli massacre in July, yesterday's aggressions would not have occurred. The climax of absurdity was that the perpetration of Beit Hanoun had occurred because of an "error", as claimed by Israel, which had frequently been used as a justification for similar killings in the past. For its part, Syria had a sincere wish to bring about a just and comprehensive peace as a strategic matter, and those who did not believe that to be the case were short-sighted. Indeed, Syria had striven in all ways possible to help with the formation of a government of national unity in Palestine, which some had described as problematic. In fact, the problem lay in the continued occupation of, and aggression against, the Palestinian people.

Noting that the Arab Group had submitted an emergency draft resolution to help end the Israeli massacres, he said that the text enjoyed the direct support of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and most of the speakers today. Syria would have liked to see other States from the north join those that had called for, and prepared, that text, since justice was not geographical, it was political. He appealed to all Council members to adopt the resolution as quickly as possible, and to bring about the liberation of all occupied lands. Israeli occupation would continue to cause tension in all international relations.

Mr. EMBARAK (Libya) said that the double-standards applied to Israeli atrocities, such as the one committed yesterday in Beit Hanoun, degraded the credibility of the Security Council and rendered it unable to stop further violence.

He called for, at the very least, the serious consideration of the resolution submitted by Qatar, including the deployment of an observer mission and the end of repressive measures taken by Israeli forces meant to starve and blackmail the Palestinian people.

PIRAGIBE TARRAGO (Brazil) said the increasingly grave situation in the Middle East highlighted the need to urgently address the underlying causes of the conflict. Unless concrete measures were adopted to deal with those causes, the Council might be faced with a full-scale crisis beyond its control.

Saying that too many innocent lives had been lost, he called upon the Israeli Government to cease all military operations in Gaza without delay, and on the Palestinians to halt attacks against Israel. He also called for a full investigation of yesterday's incident in Beit Hanoun and humanitarian help for the Palestinians. To put the peace process back on track, he reiterated his President's proposal to call for a broad, United Nations-sponsored conference to assist the Middle East peoples to find ways to live peacefully, despite their differences.

DUMISANI KUMALO (South Africa), associating himself with the statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said the recent attacks in Gaza were raising tensions in the region to new, dangerous heights and threatening regional and international peace and security. He urged the Council to act decisively, in order to resolve the conflict. No party should take unilateral actions that sought to predetermine issues that could only be resolved through negotiations. He called on the Israeli Government to act with restraint and to avoid further civilian casualties and destruction of vital infrastructure. He called on the Palestinians to stop firing rockets into Israel. The only lesson learned from the past decades was that retaliatory actions merely gave rise to more violence.

He said the draft resolution presented by Qatar deserved serious consideration. The Council should call for an immediate ceasefire and establish a United Nations observer force to supervise that ceasefire. The Council's failure to find a lasting solution to the crisis for more than 40 years had denied hope to the people of Palestine. Without hope, people in the region would believe that they had no other recourse but to engage in more violence and counter-violence. It was a concern that, every time there was progress, those that did not want change used the opportunity to make the situation worse. The international community must accept its responsibility and reignite the peace process.

Taking the floor again to respond to previous statements, Mr. CARMON (Israel) said that, since some delegates had referred to ongoing Israeli activities, it was only right to update them on the actual facts: more Qassam rockets had been launched from Gaza towards southern towns in Israel during today's meeting, wounding some people. Also, two statements made today were completely unacceptable. One had said that the responsibility for bringing about change belonged to the Palestinian Authority alone, when, in fact, as previously explained, extremists were clearly being drawn by outside forces for the purpose of promoting their own selfish agendas. For example, extremists like Hamas were fuelled by Syria and Iran to orchestrate violence all over the region. Syria was home to countless terrorist organizations and leaders, such as Khaled Mashaal, the exiled leader of Hamas.

As for Iran, he said its Government was being led by a President who denied the Holocaust, while acquiring the capability to launch the next one. Iran's infamy had been reconfirmed last week, when Argentina had called for judicial arrest warrants for Syrian and Iranian officials for terrorist acts in Buenos Aires that had killed and injured many. There was a need to nullify the efforts of Iran to jeopardize the peace process and for sponsoring terrorist organizations. The danger from Damascus and Tehran must be stopped before it was too late.

Also speaking again, Mr. MANSOUR, the Permanent Observer of Palestine, said he did not wish to prolong the discussion by adding more accusatory statements. He could, very easily, for instance, recall the Israeli Prime Minister's statement from today, which said that aggression against Gaza would continue and that similar accidents would be repeated, in disregard of the appeals being made in today's debate. Similarly, he could refer to Israeli extremist acts taking

place while President Abbas was trying to create a government of national unity. The new Deputy Prime Minister of Israel, who had just joined the Government of that country, held views that were widely known to be segregationist; he was an advocate of ethnic cleansing.

Instead, he said he had taken the floor to thank all the delegates who had conveyed their condolences to the Palestinian leadership and to the families of the victims. Members of the Council were urged to adopt the draft resolution before it as soon as possible. The preference was for it to be acted on today, if possible. Hopefully, the Council would adopt the resolution and not let the Palestinian people down, thereby sending the right message to the world.

BASSAM DARWISH ([Syria](#)) said that the words of the Israeli delegate would not purify the horrific acts of its regime, including the massacres and other unjust acts spoken about today. Solving the problem in a just and lasting manner would end the endless discussion.

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