

**Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting  
the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the  
Occupied Territories  
Fourth Committee**

Mr. Chairman,

Today's meeting offers yet another window into the "theater of the absurd."!  
This committee has chosen to devote its valuable time to a one-sided report that distorts the truth and ignores the reality on the ground.

Unfortunately, the report of the Special Committee under consideration today does not – as the title infers – 'seek to advance human rights or promote Palestinian development.' Nor does it bring us a single step closer to a lasting peace. Instead, it furthers a biased narrative of the conflict and advances a clear political agenda aimed at discrediting Israel.

Mr. Chair,

Israel is committed to facilitating international efforts to develop Gaza and assist the Palestinians in building a strong and vibrant economy. At the same time, we believe that development must go hand-in-hand with the demilitarization of Gaza.

Almost ten years ago, Israel completely withdrew from Gaza. In keeping with the international community's encouragement, we went back to pre-1967 lines, evacuated all Israeli settlements and army bases and handed over the Gaza Strip to the Palestinian Authority .What did we get in return? We got a decade of terrorist attacks, mortars, missiles, and terror tunnels into Israel. How's that for peace on the Palestinian side?

Since Israel disengaged from Gaza in 2005, Hamas has stolen hundreds of millions of aid dollars intended for the development of Gaza to build its terror infrastructure. It is critical that this time we ensure that there are mechanisms in place to certify that all funding and construction materials reach their intended humanitarian destination.

In this regard, Israel – together with the Palestinians and the UN - has agreed to establish a mechanism for rehabilitating the Gaza Strip. The proposed mechanism addresses Israel's legitimate security concerns, provides reassurance that construction materials will be directed to rebuilding, and enables Palestinian Authority to play a central role in governing Gaza - all of which are critical.

Mr. Chair,

All over the Middle East, extremist ideology is spreading like a malignant disease. Radical groups like ISIS, Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Hezbollah and Hamas share a fundamentalist vision in which minorities are persecuted, women are subjugated, and freedoms are repressed.

Israel is on the frontline combatting this enemy. It may be convenient to point fingers at us, but it doesn't address the heart of the problem. Rather than singling out Israel, your condemnations should be aimed at extremists who are only interested in inflaming the region.

Over the summer, Israel was once again the target of unrelenting terrorist attacks. For 50 days, Hamas indiscriminately rained rockets onto our homes and our cities and sent heavily armed terrorists through underground tunnels into our communities. There is no country in the world that would tolerate such an assault on its citizens – and Israel should not be expected to either.

In the face of these constant threats, Israel launched an operation of self-defense, - "Protective Edge" to counter the attacks and defend our citizens. Throughout the operation, Israel was committed to upholding international law and did everything in its power to avoid harming innocent civilians. We also accepted 11 different cease-fire proposals, but Hamas rejected every one and continued to fire rockets.

We believe that every civilian casualty of the conflict – both Israeli and Palestinian – was a tragedy. But the time has come for you to be honest about who is responsible for last summer's tragedy. It is time for you to lay blame where it belongs – with Hamas!

If you are truly concerned about the future of the region, then you must work to ensure the demilitarization of Gaza. This is the only way to bring about a durable and sustained quiet.

Mr. Chair,

Israel is committed to helping the Palestinians in Gaza, as well as, the West Bank. By increasing the flow of goods and people between these two areas, both economies are being strengthened. To this end, Israel recently adopted a number of measures to stimulate economic growth in the West Bank.

Israel developed a new program that allows 20 Palestinian factories in Area C to export directly to the Israeli market without undergoing additional security checks.

Dialogues between the Israeli and Palestinian Ministries of Finance recently resumed. As an outgrowth of these meetings, Israel and the PA are engaging in real-time information sharing.

Israel continues to invest in upgrading commercial crossings and as a result, we have witnessed a marked increase in volume of goods transferred in the last few months.

Israel supports the involvement of the international community in the development of industrial zones in the West Bank such as the French, Japanese and the planned German-Turkish zones. When operational, these industrial zones will create thousands of jobs.

And yet – none of these developments and none of these achievements are found in this year's report.

Mr. Chair

Just two days ago another terrorist attack took place in Jerusalem. A Palestinian terrorist deliberately drove a van into a crowd of Israelis waiting at a train station, killing two and injuring many others.

The proximity between these attacks and statements of incitement against Israel by the Palestinian leadership is not coincidental. Statements of incitement and the glorification of terrorists serve only to fuel hatred, violence and extremism. The PA must immediately put an end to the ongoing incitement against Israel taking place in the Palestinian media and in schools.

The Palestinian Authority must also play a constructive role in this process by demonstrating a commitment to bilateral negotiations rather than unilateral actions. It is only through direct negotiations that we and the Palestinians will be able to find concrete solutions to the challenges at hand. Any other route will hold the region captive by the chains of resentment and hatred – and pass a legacy of violence and intolerance to the next generation.

Mr. Chair,

We call on our Arab neighbors to join Israel in taking concrete and courageous steps to pursue the path of peace. Let us end the cycle of inflammatory rhetoric and start utilizing this committee's resources in the way that they were intended – to improve the lives of the people in our region.

Thank you