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# Press Conference by President of General Assembly on Situation in Gaza

[It was announced later that the emergency session had been cancelled.]

Speaking at a Headquarters press conference this afternoon, the President lashed out at Israel’s strategy to use the United Nations to stall a ceasefire agreement until it had achieved its military objectives in Gaza.  In a statement, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni had described Israel’s fundamental diplomatic objective of gaining time to achieve its goals.

“Gain time for what?” Mr. d’Escoto demanded.  “So that there can be more killing?  So that there can be more destruction and more suffering of innocent people?”  Ms. Livni’s views on the need for more time were “almost the same words uttered by (United States Secretary of State) Condoleezza Rice during the (2006) Israeli invasion into Lebanon”.

The President continued:  “I think that it is not unlikely that the timing of this particular incident now is precisely to be able to do whatever they want to do before ( United States) President [George w.] Bush leaves.”

He said he had received a growing number of requests from Heads of State and diplomats around the world, particularly in the last two days, to convene the emergency session to consider the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.  However, the President declined to name those Member States when asked by a correspondent to do so.

The world, he said, was “fed up” with the inability of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council acting on the Assembly’s behalf, to fulfil its principle and founding objective of averting war and maintaining international peace and security.  This afternoon’s meeting was intended to exert pressure to ensure that the Council’s legally binding resolutions were in fact implemented, and that Member States were not allowed to shirk their duty to the Organization.  “ Israel should be open to resolutions not only of the Security Council ‑- which it does not care to comply with ‑- but also to resolutions of the General Assembly.  After all, it owes its own existence to a General Assembly resolution.  That’s more than any other country can say.”

Expressing frustration with the Council’s “dysfunctionality”, he stressed that the international community must not remain silent, and warned that a ceasefire in the current Gaza crisis would not be permanent unless the root causes of the conflict were addressed.  The United Nations had created a Jewish State in 1948, but a Palestinian one was yet to be established.  On the contrary, Palestinians were humiliated and discriminated against every day, and that must change.

Asked to comment on the moral obligation of the United States Secretary of State to end the Israeli invasion of Gaza, he said she must work for peace rather than block it.  She must not betray the ideals of the American people and the spirit and letter of the United Nations Charter, which she was obliged to uphold.

Responding to a question about what the Assembly could do specifically to end the Gaza crisis, he stressed the need to ensure that nations complied with the Charter’s call for effective, prompt action to end armed conflict.  “Just because the General Assembly is accustomed to not doing very much, doesn’t mean it cannot do something.  This is only the beginning of our struggle for peace in the Middle East.”

When pressed to name the countries that had called for the emergency Assembly session, the President said he had consulted with several representatives of Member States, including permanent and non-permanent Council members.  Many of them had expressed their belief that a draft resolution on the Gaza crisis would be brought before the Council, where it would be vetoed.

The last meeting of the Assembly’s tenth emergency special session was held on 15 December 2006 to consider illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.