**Statement to the UN Security Council by Ambassador Gabriela Shalev, Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations**

**The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question**

April 14, 2010

Original Source: *http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Foreign+Relations/Israel+and+the+UN/Speeches+-+statements/Statement\_Amb\_Shalev\_UN\_Security\_Council\_14-Apr-2010.htm*

Thank you, Mr. President and let me also thank you for your stewardship of this Council. And thank you, Mr. Pascoe, for your comprehensive brief.

At the outset, I wish to express the deepest sympathy of the people and Government of Israel over the recent tragedy in which the Polish President and the members of his delegation lost their lives in a plane crash. May the nation of Poland know of no more bereavement.

Mr. President,

This debate occurs between two important days in Israel. On Monday, Yom Ha'Shoah, we commemorated the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. And on the coming Monday, Yom Ha'zikaron, we will commemorate our soldiers who have fallen in war, and all Israelis murdered by terrorists. Only after these two remembrance days can we put our hearts to celebrate our day of Independence.

These two days of remembrance shed light on our people's unending struggle to build a homeland for the Jewish people, a free, independent, and democratic state. Such solemn days signal our desire to live in peace, prosperity, and cooperation with our neighbors.

Yet in the pursuit of peace in the Middle East, all parties must realize that they have not only rights, but obligations as well.

The Palestinians and the wider Arab world must show, in both word and deed, that they, too, are committed to the peace process. They should demonstrate their will not only to demand rights, but also to accept responsibilities. They must take tangible steps to combat terrorism, to put an end incitement, to engage in direct negotiations, and to begin a process of normalization with Israel.

Mr. President,

Israel is hopeful that the proximity talks will serve as a stepping stone towards the resumption of direct, bilateral peace negotiations. Only through such negotiations can we hope to reach a comprehensive peace agreement. Yet the success of such talks - and their transition into direct negotiations - depend upon all in the region to take confidence-building steps.

Mr. President,

The Hamas terrorist rulers of the Gaza Strip maintain Gaza as an epicenter of terrorism. With support, financing, and arms from Iran, Hamas brutalizes its own people while launching deadly attacks against Israeli civilians.

On 1 April 2010, across the Egyptian-Gaza border in Sinai, a massive quantity of weapons destined for Gaza was uncovered. Throughout February and March, a wave of Qassam rockets and other terrorist attacks exposed the civilian population of southern Israel to serious threat and imminent danger.

As a result of these attacks, one agricultural worker in Israel was killed, while dozens of civilians were injured. Only yesterday, the Israeli Defense Forces discovered terrorists planting explosive devices along the Israel-Gaza border.

Given this reality, Israel will exercise its right of self-defense, pursuant to international law. Israel will never fail to fulfill her obligation to protect the people of Israel.

Israel appreciates the efforts of the international community for the support of humanitarian work in Gaza. We maintain close coordination with the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies for the supply of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

In 2009 alone, 738,576 tons of humanitarian commodities were transferred to the Gaza Strip and over 100,000,000 liters of diesel were delivered to the Gaza power station. 10,544 Gazan patients and their companions received medical treatment in Israel.

These numbers reflect only part of the humanitarian aid provided to the people of Gaza. Yet Israel is still a convenient scapegoat for the situation in Gaza. However, the truth remains self-evident:

The complicated situation in Gaza is a direct result of the Hamas terrorist occupation.

The complicated situation in Gaza is a direct result of Hamas' continued rejection of the obligations laid out by the international community, namely: recognize Israel, renounce violence, and accept previous agreements.

The complicated situation in Gaza is also a result of Hamas' ongoing captivity of Gilad Shalit who is denied his human rights, including access to international humanitarian personnel.

Mr. President,

Beyond Gaza, the West Bank offers an alternative future. As a direct result of Israeli-Palestinian economic and security cooperation, life for Palestinians and Israelis continues to improve.

However, obstacles remain. Violence and terrorism are ever-present challenges. Israel is deeply dismayed to see a street in Ramallah named in honor of Yehiye Ayash, a Hamas terrorist-mastermind responsible for the murder of hundreds of innocent Israeli civilians - men, women, and children.

In another disturbing event, a town square adjacent to Ramallah was renamed in honor of Dalal Mughrabi, a leader in one of the bloodiest terrorist attacks against Israel, the Costal Road Massacre, in which 38 Israeli and American civilians were murdered.

Given that the Road Map for peace explicitly states that "all official Palestinian institutions end incitement against Israel," what message does the Palestinian Authority send by publicly honoring terrorists?

Mr. President,

At this point, I would like to respond shortly to concerns that have been expressed regarding recent measures related to the prevention of illegal infiltration of individuals into the West Bank.

These concerns reflect a misunderstanding of the effect and purpose of these measures. As a matter of fact, such measures provide significant safeguards and due process protections to existing legislation. They do not extend beyond that.

Let me be very clear: these measures apply only to unlawful infiltrators into the West Bank and do not apply to other residents of the area.

Mr. President,

Let me turn to the greatest danger facing the Middle East and the world: Iran.

Iran continues to threaten to wipe Israel off the map of the world while denying the Holocaust, reigniting anti-Semitism. At the same time Iran supports terrorism and violence against Israel and Jews, far beyond the Gaza Strip.

In Lebanon, Hizbullah terrorist organization continues to amass arms from Syria and from its Iranian patrons, with the active consent and support of Syrian authorities. Recently, Syria supplied Hizbullah with long range missiles, in an overt violation of resolution 1701. By doing so, Syria actively threatens the fragile stability in the Middle East.

Yet, the most alarming danger is that Iran continues to pursue nuclear weapons capabilities, while mocking the diplomatic overtures of the international community. Such behavior endangers not only our region, nor merely a specific group of countries. It endangers us all, and is recognized by all. Therefore, this Council has an obligation to translate this consensus into timely and effective action. To use the words of a great poet: "... If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly..."

Mr. President,

The Iranian nuclear threat, the menace of terrorism, the transfer of weapons to terrorist groups, the incitement and hatred taught to Arab children - these are the true dangers facing the situation in the Middle East and the Question of Palestine.

All in the region have a right to live without such threats, and all in the region have the responsibility to confront these dangers.

If those in our region recognize the relationship between rights and responsibilities, we will stand at the dawn of a new era for peace in the Middle East.