



PU

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

Statement on behalf of the European Union

Mr. Taisto Huimasalo
Ambassador
Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations

New York, 7 November 2006

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and the EFTA country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

*) Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Mr Chairman,

The European Union reaffirms that it remains committed to the two-State solution, as laid out in the Roadmap and agreed between the parties, which would result in a viable, contiguous, sovereign and independent Palestinian state existing side by side with Israel in peace and security. We recall the established EU position that the Union will not recognise any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties.

The European Union underlines that there is an urgent need to make progress towards a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on relevant Security Council resolutions, the Roadmap and the Quartet formula, and with a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at its core. There seems to be a consensus within the international community for an urgent need to work together to move forward on the path to peace.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union remains deeply concerned at the continued Israeli operation in the Palestinian territories and deplores the loss of civilian life it has brought. It calls on the Palestinian leadership to bring an end to violence and terrorist activities, including the firing of rockets on Israeli territory. The EU recognises Israel's legitimate right to self-defence, but it urges Israel to exercise utmost restraint and not to resort to disproportionate action. We also reiterate our call on Israel to refrain from extra-judicial killings, which are contrary to the international law and undermine the concept of the rule of law.

The European Union once again reiterates its call for the immediate and unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldier. We also repeat our call for the immediate release of Palestinian Ministers and legislators in Israeli custody. The EU voices its serious concern about the administrative detentions practiced by Israel. We are particularly concerned that detainees are not promptly informed of the reason of their detention.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union acknowledges the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We reiterate our demand that Israel stop and reverse the construction of the separation barrier in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around Jerusalem, which is in departure of the Armistice Line of 1949 and is in contradiction to relevant provisions of International Law. Furthermore it could prejudice final borders of a future Palestinian State.

The European Union urges the Israeli government to cease all activities in the Palestinian territories, including settlement building, the construction of the separation barrier as well as the demolition of Palestinian homes, which are contrary to international law and threaten the territorial contiguity of a future Palestinian state. The EU is particularly concerned about the implementation of these policies in and around East Jerusalem. The EU calls on the Israeli government to cease all discriminatory treatment of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, especially concerning work permits, access to education and health services, building permits, house demolitions, taxation and expenditure.

The European Union recalls the utmost importance of the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access, and calls on Israel to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, in particular in Gaza. The permanent reopening of Rafah, which could be followed by the opening of Karni and other crossings, has a particular priority in this respect. The European Union also reaffirms its demand for clarification concerning the exact rules and procedure applied to EU citizens wishing to visit Israel or the Palestinian Territories.

The European Union expresses its support to President Abbas and calls on the Palestinians to join his efforts towards national unity and the formation of a government with a political platform reflecting the Quartet principles and allowing for early engagement.

Finally, the European Union reiterates its continuing support to Israeli and Palestinian efforts to advance the peace process.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.