



Mission permanente d'Israël
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies
et des Organisations Internationales à Genève

משלחת ישראל
ליד משרד האומות המאוחדות
והארגונים הבינלאומיים בג'נבה

Statement of H.E. Itzhak Levanon

In Response to the High Commissioner's Report
Following her visit to Israel and the Palestinian Territories

3rd Regular Session
Human Rights Council
29 November 2006

Mr. President,

I would like to express the hope that the visit of the High Commissioner to Israel and the Palestinian Territories and her subsequent report about her visit will open the eyes of this Council. The eyes which have remained closed since the inception of the new Council. The eyes which have been blinded by the politicization, selectivity and one-sidedness which have dominated the Council's course of action.

The High Commissioner's initiative to visit both side, Palestinians and Israelis, permitted her to see firsthand that human suffering is the monopoly of neither side, that human distress is equal on both sides of the divide, and also that placing blame on one-side only is a distortion of reality. I therefore welcome this visit and thank the High Commissioner for accepting Israel's invitation to come and get a personal evaluation of the difficult situation.

Mr. President,

The method the High Commissioner took—adopting a balanced approach to both sides—is the path that the Human Rights Council should take. If the Council would like to gain legitimacy and credibility,

then it should be equitable. If the Council seeks the truth, then it should have a non-selective approach. Unfortunately, during the two special sessions on Gaza, we were able to hear only part of the reality and thus have an incomplete picture, describing the suffering on one side, ignoring the other.

Throughout the debates in the sessions and in the subsequent one-sided resolutions, a partial picture was projected, a half-truth was told and the Israeli plight totally ignored. By visiting both sides, the High Commissioner completed the picture. She felt for a moment what thousands of Israelis feel everyday: the distress after the Kassam rockets' impact, the panic caused by the sirens warning that a rocket attack is imminent. She saw the fear in the eyes of the children, the anxiety of a mother, and also the anger of families who have lost their loved ones. This is the reality, Mr. President. The reality in Sderot, in Ashkelon, and the Negev.

However, the visit of the High Commissioner was coincidentally in parallel with a significant development between the Israelis and the Palestinians, raising against the torch of hope. The cease-fire established at the beginning of this week is holding—not without

some violations—but still giving the hope that even more positive developments may yet be on the horizon. Prime Minister Olmert, in a programmatic speech at Sede Boker, where David Ben Gurion the forefather of our nation is buried, extended once again a “hand of peace” to the Palestinians. A hand of cooperation and a way to end the conflict. A call to the Palestinian people, who stand on the threshold of a historic crossroads. A different path which offers a chance for a different future. A path leading to peaceful coexistence, tranquility and mutual trust.

We, in Israel, are ready to pursue this path, to open a frank dialogue in accordance with the Road Map, a dialogue through which the Palestinians will be able to establish an independent and viable Palestinian state, a state with full sovereignty and defined borders. Don't miss this unique opportunity.

Mr. President,

I would like to express the hope that the Palestinians will reciprocate by grasping our extended hand of peace, that they will stop the vicious cycle of violence and that they will work towards realistic solutions that will lead us to a permanent and durable peace.

Mr. President,

I would also like to express the hope that the visit of the High Commissioner will finally open the eyes of this Council, that those members who have hijacked the Council will set it free and enable it to discuss the issues for which it was created: to protect and restore human rights where they do not exist.

Thank you.