



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

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ITZHAK LEVANON
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ISRAEL**

BEFORE THE SECOND SESSION OF
THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

On The Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories

Geneva, 29 September 2006

Mr. President:

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the High Commissioner for Human Rights for accepting the invitation to come and visit Israel and the Palestinian territories. We believe that Ms. Arbour will be able to succeed where Mr. Dugard has failed.

Mr. President,

Israel had high hopes that the Human Rights Council would exceed the low expectations and double standards of the Commission. Yet, the resolutions and reports that have been issued by from this Council since its very beginning have proven otherwise, emphasizing its one-sided and imbalanced nature. Only one country has been singled out by resolutions, while the Council has failed to address the grave situations in other parts of the world. Even worse, two special sessions have been dedicated to alleged human rights violations of Israel, while failing to address the simple facts which led to Israel's actions in self-defense: the indiscriminate attacks by Hamas' Qassam rockets and Hizbullah's Katushya rockets on Israeli towns and villages, two renowned

terrorist organizations. Such blatant omissions cast a black stain on the legitimacy of the good faith and objectivity of this Council.

Related to this lack of objectivity is the prejudicial nature of the Special Rapporteur's mandate, which casts a shadow over his very work. As with earlier reports, the report presented today is irresponsibly laced throughout with inflammatory and opinionated language, often with reference to alleged "facts" from unsubstantiated sources. Absent, however, is any substantive discussion of the concrete facts for the reason behind the latest escalation in violence. They are as follows:

In June 2006, almost one year after Israel unilaterally withdrew all of its citizens and soldiers from the Gaza Strip, Palestinian terrorists penetrated sovereign Israeli territory, killed two IDF servicemen and kidnapped a 19-year-old army corporal, Gilad Shalit. Simultaneously, Qassam rockets were indiscriminately fired into Israeli civilian territory, causing widespread injuries, death and structural damage—rockets that continue to fall today.

THIS is the reason for the recent escalation in violence, and it is not merely "deplorable," as the Special Rapporteur termed it, it is an act of aggression. I know of no other nation on this Council that would not have responded in self-restraint as Israel did, and done its duty to defend its citizens in the face of such deliberate deadly attacks. If the Palestinians want to join the community of nations, they must be required to play by the same rules as everyone else.

On Tuesday, the Special Rapporteur called upon both Israelis and Palestinians to get away from the terminology of terror. The Special Rapporteur might do well to heed his own advice, as his inflammatory descriptions of Israel throughout the report veer quickly into the absurd, where Israel is accused of "terrorizing" the Palestinians at every turn. While the sonic booms of aircraft apparently fall into this category, the sonic booms of suicide bombers apparently do not.

On Tuesday, the Special Rapporteur called upon Israel and the international community to engage with the Palestinian government headed by Hamas. Surely the Special Rapporteur is

cognizant of the fact that Hamas is an organization whose founding Charter is virulently anti-Semitic and calls for the "obliteration" of Israel. Less than one week ago, the Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh said (quote) "I personally will not head any government that recognizes Israel" (end quote). Who, exactly, does the Special Rapporteur expect Israel to engage with?

Mr. President,

The Special Rapporteur's report presented today is simply a rehashing of the statement he delivered last Tuesday, and is an unfortunate waste of time. This report—as the previous one—only undermines any effort to advance a Palestinian cause. The systematically biased, prejudicial approach renders this an irrelevant document.