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STATEMENT

On behalf of the European Union

by

H.E. Mr. Anders Lidén
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Sweden

at the General Assembly
on the Report of the Human Rights Council

United Nations
New York

4 November 2009

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr. President,

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

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia^{*} and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union is deeply concerned over the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The EU again urges the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel to enter into serious peace negotiations as soon as possible, respecting previous agreements and international law, including fulfilling all Road Map commitments. We reiterate the need to ensure a political solution, with two states - Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian state - living side by side in peace and security. If there is to be genuine peace, a way must be found to share Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. The EU will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by both parties.

We call upon both parties to fully adhere to international humanitarian and human rights law. All allegations of human rights violations and of violations of international humanitarian law must be thoroughly investigated and those responsible must be held accountable.

Mr President,

A durable solution to the Gaza crisis has to be achieved through the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1860. The EU remains gravely concerned at the humanitarian situation in Gaza and calls for the sustained, immediate and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza. The EU reaffirms its support for the proposed UN-led civilian reconstruction activities in Gaza. The European Union calls for a complete stop to all violence, including a sustained halt of rocket attacks at Israel. We reiterate our call for the release now of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Palestinian prisoners should be released in greater numbers, with priority being given to minors.

Mr President,

The UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict reports grave violations of international humanitarian law, including deliberate attacks on civilians. It is a serious report. The EU is committed to assessing it seriously. The EU takes note of the recommendations of the Mission and emphasises the obligation of all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The EU deeply deplores the loss of life during the Gaza conflict, particularly the civilian casualties. The European Union condemns all targeting of civilians and United Nations facilities during the conflict.

The EU has consistently reminded all parties to the conflict of the urgent need to ensure accountability for all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law to deter further violations. An overarching human rights priority for the EU is to combat impunity. The EU urges the parties to launch appropriate, credible and independent investigations into possible violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in accordance with international standards.

In this regard the European Union believes that appropriate follow-up should be done.

Thank you, Mr President