Statement by Israel on Draft UN Security Council Resolution on Jerusalem

December 18, 2017

Israeli Mission to the United Nations

Thank you, Mr. President.

Today, the United Nations has taken another step backwards. Another step away from advocating for truth and justice.

Almost exactly one year ago, in this very same room, this body adopted the shameful resolution

2334. It was a resolution that had the audacity to try to designate Israel’s presence at the Western Wall, at Judaism’s holiest site in Jerusalem, as a flagrant violation of international law.

Those words pierced the hearts of Jews everywhere. They mocked the generations of Jews who prayed toward Jerusalem for thousands of years. They belittled the ancient declaration of the Jewish people that states, “next year in Jerusalem.”

Yet here we are again. We still find ourselves fighting the same battle for truth and morality.

Those who voted for today’s resolution have only reaffirmed the UN’s decades-long double standard when it comes to Israel. They are guilty of blatant hypocrisy.

Every other country in the world has the right to designate its capital city.

But when it comes to Israel, somehow this most basic national right is questioned and condemned.

We thank the United States for staying loyal to the truth and vetoing this absurd resolution.

President Trump, Vice President Pence, Ambassador Haley, and the entire administration proved that the United States does not back down from what’s right. They continue to advocate for real dialogue, and a hope for peace in our region.

The Palestinians, however, have once again displayed a disturbing trend. Every time the prospects for meaningful negotiations emerge, the Palestinians run away. Every time there is a chance for hope, the Palestinians sabotage the efforts.

All too often, the international community only makes it worse.

In 1947, the Palestinians rejected resolution 181. In 2000, they walked out of the Camp David talks and began a war of terror against Israelis. And in reply to Prime Minister Netanyahu’s repeated offers to negotiate, the Palestinians have just one response: give in to our demands, or suffer the consequences of incitement and violence.

The American administration is now working tirelessly to revive negotiations. They, like us, are eager to spark a new hope for peace.

By declaring the obvious, that Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Israel, President Trump was simply stating a fact. He hoped to encourage both sides to move forward at the negotiating table.

But the Palestinians, once again, responded with endless rockets fired at our civilians.

Mr. President,

Let me be clear. We will continue to stand strong. When it comes to Jerusalem,we do not back down.

3000 years ago, King David declared the city of Jerusalem the capital of the Jewish people. Jerusalem has been Israel’s capital for almost 70 years. Our nation has never given up when faced with adversary. We will not allow others, including the United Nations, to determine our fate, especially when it comes to Jerusalem.

Not then, and not now.

This week, Jews all over the world are celebrating the holiday of Hanukah. We welcome the good wishes sent from so many nations, many of whom are represented at this table today. But it seems that some of those who wish us well have forgotten exactly why we celebrate Hannukah.

Hannukah is not about gifts. It is not about food. Hannukah is about the liberation of Jerusalem.

In the year 167 B.C.E., a Hellenist King attempted to outlaw Jewish practice and desecrate our temple in Jerusalem. But he failed. A small group of brave fighters – the Maccabees, we call them in Hebrew – drove out the Hellenists and reclaimed Jerusalem.

*That* is what we are celebrating. *That* is why we light the candles. We are honoring our brave ancestors who reinstated Jewish sovereignty, more than 2000 years ago, over our capital, Jerusalem.

History did not always turn out that way for our people. Just 100 years after the miracle of Hanukah, our Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. The Jewish people were exiled from Jerusalem.

But the connection between Jerusalem and the Jewish people was never broken. It will never be broken – not by the Romans, not by the Babylonians, not by the Ottoman Turks, not by the British Empire, and not by the United Nations.

Today, even as our adversaries are, once again, seeking to delegitimize our presence in Jerusalem, the Jewish people will prevail, as we always have.

Mr. President,

We have heard hateful statements from some world leaders over the past few days. Statements from countries that continue to be hostile to the Jewish people and to Israel. From leaders of nations that, throughout history, restricted Jewish prayer at the Western Wall.

Even as late as 50 years ago, Jews were denied access to the Western Wall.

So let me be very clear: leaders of countries that oppress minorities, jail journalists and quash all opposition have no right to lecture Israel.

Leaders of countries poisoned by violent Antisemitism cannot condemn Israel for so-called lack of tolerance and acceptance.

Let me repeat what we have said time and again: Jerusalem under a sovereign Israel is more free and more open to people of all religions than at any other time in history. We pledge to ensure that all people, of all religions, will continue to be able to practice their faith freely – in Jerusalem and throughout our entire country.

Last year, at this Council, you voted on resolution 2334. I held up a bible and reminded you of thousands of years of Jewish history and presence in Jerusalem.

This year, with another resolution attempting to deny truth, we will fight back once more!

Members of this Council can vote again and again – hundreds and hundreds more times to denounce our presence in Jerusalem.

But you will never succeed in changing the bible. You cannot rewrite history.

Not long ago, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, a wise Jewish leader, called the UN a house of darkness and lies.

But he also noted that with just one small candle of truth, one could turn that darkness into light.

We will continue to light that candle of truth.

Tonight, millions of Jews around the world will light 7th candle of Hannukah.

They will celebrate the unbreakable bond between the Jewish people and our eternal capital, Jerusalem.

Now is the time for all countries to finally recognize that Jerusalem is, always has been, and always will be the capital of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Thank you.