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STATEMENT BY TURKEY

AS A CONCERNED COUNTRY

Human Rights Council

Flotilla Interactive dialogue

Mr President,

While several important developments in the Middle East continue to unfold and inevitably occupy its agenda, the Human Rights Council remains rightfully seized of an emblematic case: the flotilla raid.

Emblematic, because the breach of international law has never been so clearly established.

Emblematic, because human rights violations have been undeniably blatant and flagrant.

Emblematic, because the international community and international civil society have been unanimous in condemning this act of illegal and excessive use of state power on civilians, peaceful protesters from more than 30 countries.

Let's not forget: the Israeli conduct was not only disproportionate to the occasion, but demonstrated levels of totally unnecessary, unjustified and incredible violence. Nine human beings were killed in the darkness of night in international waters while carrying a message of hope and humane solidarity to Palestinians suffering under illegal blockade in Gaza.

In the face of this emblematic case, the Council had taken the right course of action. It called a special session, it tasked a mission of experts to look into the case and it endorsed conclusions reached by the experts. It has not failed to invite the country concerned to implement the said conclusions, hoping that the justice will be done without further delay.

All these steps were taken last year, between June and September; and a whole year elapsed since the inauspicious flotilla raid!

Unfortunately, we still have to deal with this case. Why? Because Israel did nothing to heal the bleeding wound.

Israel has taken no effective step to redress the situation. The families of the victims and the civil society are still seeking justice while perpetrators of the raid have been treated as heroes.

In an astonishing defiance to the principles of impunity and accountability, Israel has also refused to cooperate with the Council. None of the conclusions of the impeccable report of the experts has been implemented by Israel. Instead of trying to meet the expectations of the Human



Rights Council and the international community, Israel persists in its tactics to delay justice and to distort truth. To this end, they do not hesitate to mispresent the confidential panel put into place by the UN Secretary General.

The New York Panel is neither a substitute for nor a duplicate of the Human Rights Council. It is expected to produce results at political level. Legal action is to be pursued where it belongs, that is to say in Geneva. However, we observe that some people have come to Geneva and started going from one door to another in order to supposedly leak misleading words about work in New York. They desperately attempt to transform a late night horror movie into a fairy tale where Israeli commandos would be angels descending from the sky. They also claim that blockade in Gaza is legal. How this inhumane blockade can be considered legal and legitimate while the occupation is entirely illegal? Those futile initiatives are not only a breach of confidentiality but also constitute disrespect to the UN Secretary General. I wonder: how can such people expect to deserve the trust and confidence of Turkey?

The failure of Israel to address the issue on the basis of the rule of law and to cooperate with the Council is unacceptable to anybody with a minimum sense of justice and sensitivity with regard to human rights.

However, this is not something unexpected from Israel. The ^{negative} ~~negative~~ attitude of Israel towards the Human Rights Council is on the record. The non - cooperation file of Israel is thick. So far Israel's claim has been that the Council was picking on Israel while overlooking other situations. It is not anymore possible to use this false argumentation. The Council is day by day proving its capacity to deal with different situations which are being brought to its consideration. Now we face the opposite picture. The Council, or more particularly, those who are ready to ignore the wrongdoings of Israel under any circumstances, have to prove that they do not apply double standards in the field of human rights. This can only be done by following the cases relating to Israel with perseverance. Therefore, Mr. President, this emblematic case is also a test case for the efficacy of the actions taken by the Human Rights Council. We are confident that the Council will not fail.

Thank you.

