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**Swedish Presidency  
of the European Union**

**EU Statement**

**United Nations  
Human Rights Council – 12th session  
29 September 2009**

**Item 7: Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories - General debate**

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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 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union once again conveys its deep concern over the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In light of the urgency to seek a durable solution to the crisis, the European Union urges the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel to enter into serious peace negotiations as soon as possible, respecting previous agreements. We hereby reiterate the need for a political solution, with an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian state, comprising the West Bank and Gaza, living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel. One of the European Union's overarching human rights priorities is combating impunity. On this basis, we call upon both parties to fully adhere to international humanitarian and human rights law.

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 immediate and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza. Reconstruction and economic recovery has to be allowed. The European Union calls for a complete stop to all violence, including a sustained halt of rocket attacks at Israel. We reiterate our call on those holding the abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit to release him without delay.

Mr President,

The Human Rights Council has before it the report of the UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict. The Report includes allegations regarding grave violations of international humanitarian law, including deliberate attacks on civilians. The EU is committed to assess the report and its recommendations seriously. We will do so based on the clear positions expressed by the EU on the conduct of the conflict and the importance the EU attaches to a durable peace. The EU deeply deplores the loss of life during the Gaza conflict, particularly the civilian casualties.

The EU has consistently reminded all parties to the conflict of their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law. The EU emphasises the importance of appropriate and credible investigations into possible violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by the parties to the conflict in accordance with international standards, noting in this regard that the mission directs its recommendations to both Israel and Palestinian actors. The Council should ensure appropriate follow up in particular by assessing whether appropriate investigations have been conducted by both sides. The EU will remain actively engaged in negotiations on a resolution in the Human Rights Council on the follow-up to this report, as well as that of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Thank you, Mr President.