



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE
to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva

Intervention of H.E. Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi
Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Office in Geneva
at the Human Rights Council Second Special Session on the situation in Lebanon
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1. Once again the violation of human rights led to insecurity and conflict in Lebanon and in the Middle East Region in a vicious cycle that continues to disrupt peaceful coexistence. The Holy See is convinced that this vicious cycle can be broken if reason, good will, trust in others, implementation of commitments, and cooperation between responsible partners are allowed to prevail.

An immediate first step of such an ethical approach, in line with international law standards, requires an immediate cease-fire, first of all to help and protect the civilian population and their basic human rights.

2. The violence of these weeks is destroying a promising model of national conviviality, built over centuries, where a plurality of communities, even of very different religious convictions, learned that the only way to live in peace and security and to use their human resources and diversity in a creative way, is dialogue and close cooperation. The whole region could benefit by implementing this model in a successful way and thus open up a future of hope.

3. The Holy Father Benedict XVI, while reaffirming that peace is a gift from God, has repeatedly called for an immediate cease-fire, for the opening of humanitarian corridors to bring help to the suffering populations whose human right to life, food, health, water, housing, is now a priority, and for a prompt start of reasonable and responsible negotiations to finally end objective situations of injustice existing in the region.

4. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights reminds us that peace is the basic condition for the respect and enjoyment of all human rights. In this context, the Lebanese people have a right to the integrity and sovereignty of their country; the

Israeli people have a right to live in peace in their own State; and the Palestinian people have a right to have a free and sovereign homeland.

5. Before the current drama in the Middle East, the international community cannot be indifferent or neutral. Solutions, however, cannot be improvised at the whim of conquest by either side. And may law never reach the point of sanctioning result obtained by force alone. That would be the ruin of civilization, the defeat of international law, and a fatal example for other areas in the region and , in fact, for the world.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the Holy See is deeply convinced that no just and durable solution can be reached by recourse to terrorism or armed conflict and only dialogue is the way to peace and to the safeguard of human rights.