



Mission permanente d'Israël
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies
et des Organisations Internationales à Genève

משלחת ישראל
ליד משרד האומות המאוחדות
והארגונים הבינלאומיים בג'נבה

Speech by Ambassador Itzhak Levanon,

Permanent Representative of Israel,

Before the 3rd Special Session of the Human Rights Council

15 November 2006

Thank you, Mr. President.

Distinguished Colleagues:

At 6:30 this morning, a 57-year old woman was killed and many others were injured by several Kassam rockets fired from the Palestinian territories.

Someday, someone should stand tall and tell the truth.

Tell it to the residents of Beit Hanoun, to the citizens of Gaza, to the Palestinians and the whole world. I am here before you today to do just that.

And the truth is this: although Israel shoulders the regret for the tragic mistake which occurred in Beit Hanoun, the Palestinian Authority and its Government shoulder the blame. The blame lies with the Palestinian Authority and its Government because they did nothing to stop the brazen firing of Kassam rockets at Israeli civilian communities from within Beit Hanoun, setting the stage for an Israeli response which became inevitable.

Let me turn to my colleague the Palestinian Representative, and through him to the entire Palestinian Community, with the following message: we do not harbor any hatred of the Palestinian people, and are committed to the political solution of two states according to the Road Map. But to those who have for years fired Kassam rockets at Israeli civilians, who have stored tons of explosives, weaponry and Katuysha rockets, and who impose terror and

fear over an entire country, I say this: you must understand that you cannot seek refuge behind women and children and that your behavior bears a price. You are plunging your own people into misery.

Maybe Israel was naïve when we withdrew from the entire Gaza territory in August 2005, uprooting Israeli families and bringing our country to the brink of civil war. Maybe Israel possessed an unrealistic utopian outlook in hoping that this action would prompt you, the Palestinians, to stop the violence, to put your energies into providing public services, to start building your own institutions—your own state—and to seek solutions at the negotiating table. Instead, you have intensified the violence, you have spread vociferous and incendiary threats, and you have spent your energy stockpiling lethal weapons. Evidence of this seemingly comes with this morning's tragedy in Sderot. This was a "reaction" not to Beit Hanoun, but to Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, which from its very first moment has only caused an increase in violence and hostility from Gaza and a corresponding decrease in Israel's security.

Distinguished delegates, much to Israel's dismay, instead of universality, impartiality, objectivity, and non-selectivity—which should constitute the values of this Council—we see only evidence of one-sidedness, double

standards and politicized decision-making. Sadly, today's session is just another example of these unfortunate characteristics. Those who pushed for this special session are conspicuously ignoring tragedies in other parts of the planet. Last week, 23 civilians were killed in Sri Lanka when the army shelled a school. Another 50 civilians were slaughtered by the government-backed Janjaweed militia in western Darfur, added to the 400 killed a few days before. The memory of these forgotten innocents lays on the conscience of our Council, who can muster no inclination or desire to bring a special session to discuss their plight.

Someday, someone has to stand tall and tell the truth. As long as the children of Sderot and the children of Ashkelon are unable to live in peace and security, Gaza will be unable to have peace and security. During the last engagement in Gaza, the Israeli Defense Forces uncovered vast amounts of weaponry, rocket launchers, anti-tank missiles, grenades, AK-47 assault rifles, observation equipment, stockpiles of ammunition and next generation Kassam rockets. There cannot be a clearer indication of Palestinian intentions. In the face of such evidence, would the Human Rights Council have Israel sit idly by and wait for the conflagration to come?

Mr. President,

The Middle East does not need more one-sided resolutions like the one tabled before us today. We do not need fact finding missions. All we need is a courageous Palestinian decision to change the course from violence and hatred toward peace and cooperation.

Someday, someone had to stand and tell the truth. I have tried to do it today.

Thank you.