

Canada

Statement to the Third Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

*Mr. President,*

*Today, we have been asked to look into the issue of Israeli military incursions into Northern Gaza and the operation in Beit Hanoun. The escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip and the civilian casualties resulting from the Israeli military operation are of great concern to Canada. In the aftermath of the November 8 incident, our Foreign Minister issued a statement expressing these concerns and offering our heartfelt sympathies to the victims and their families.*

*While Canada recognizes Israel's right to protect its citizens from rocket attacks, we continue to urge Israel to act with restraint and take all measures possible to protect civilians. Israel has expressed its regrets for this incident. Canada welcomes Israel's call for an investigation into the shelling and hopes that it be thorough and swift.*

*At the same time, Canada recognizes that rocket attacks against Israel must stop. The Palestinian Authority must take concrete measures to address Israel's security concerns and eliminate attacks against Israel. The statement by a leading Hamas official encouraging attacks against Israel is disturbing, and once again demonstrates the incompatibility of terrorism and democratic principles. We strongly urge Hamas to accept Quartet principles.*

*As the UN's principal body responsible for human rights, the challenge for the Human Rights Council is to look at issues of concern in this region as in many other regions of the world in an objective and balanced manner. Unfortunately, neither this session nor the draft resolution presented take into consideration the respective roles and responsibilities of all parties, and thus is not constructive in promoting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of everyone in the region, the rule of law, and ultimately encouraging the widely agreed goal of securing long-term peace and stability in the Middle East. Canada is committed to these goals. We will vote against the draft resolution.*