



CUBAN DELEGATION

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

**SPECIAL SESSION ON THE GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS EMANATING
FROM ISRAELI MILITARY INCURSIONS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN
TERRITORY, INCLUDING THE RECENT ASSAULT ON BEIT HANOUN**

**STATEMENT BY MR. JUAN ANTONIO FERNANDEZ, AMBASSADOR,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA**

(Check against delivery)

GENEVA, 15 NOVEMBER 2006

Mr. Chairman,

The Cuban delegation addresses this special session of the Human Rights Council, in its national capacity, with profound sorrow and outrage over the situation being faced by the Palestinian population.

Mr. Chairman,

The most fundamental human right of all, the right to life, is being flagrantly, massively and systematically violated by Israeli forces against the Palestinian people.

Just when everyone thought the "Autumn clouds" -which resulted in the death of nearly 60 Palestinians- had vanished, a new act of terror was committed.

It is hard to imagine the scene at Beit Hanoun on 8 November, when five Israeli tanks indiscriminately opened fire on Palestinian homes, while their inhabitants slept. Nineteen Palestinian civilians, including eight children, were the victims of this new massacre.

No excuse can justify this atrocity. Anyone who hits civilian targets knows that he will kill indiscriminately. The justification for the shelling given by Israeli authorities, blaming it on a "technical error", does not contribute to discourage international condemnation but in any case, serves to multiply it.

It is shameful that the Security Council, with its hands tied by the United States, has failed to take effective action on this issue. Although ten Council Members voted in favor of the draft resolution submitted by Qatar, it was not adopted owing to the shameful vote of the United States. By the way, it is their 31st veto of Security Council draft resolutions aimed at bringing an end to the massacre of the Palestinian people.

Mr. Chairman,

The recent events have aroused the indignation of the international community and motivated the convening of this special session of the Human Rights Council. Cuba wishes to draw your attention to the systematic character of these violations of international law committed by the government of Israel.

I have before me the Report of the Special Committee in charge of investigating Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories. This document (A/61/500) has been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/104.

The report provides enlightening details about the violations to which the Palestinian people have been subjected. Some of the figures are indeed alarming:

- Since its establishment 38 years ago, the Israeli authorities have never allowed the Committee to visit the occupied Arab territories.

- More than 9.400 Palestinian prisoners are held in Israeli jails.
- As a result of "Operation Summer Rain", between 25 June and 31st July 2006, 156 Palestinians were killed, including 81 civilians, 33 children and 9 women.

For years, the former Commission on Human Rights examined the question of the systematic violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people by Israel. Numerous reports have been submitted throughout the years, true testimonies of the excesses committed by the occupying power which have been reduced to a dead letter. Countless resolutions have been adopted on this issue, and neither Israel nor its main accomplice – the Government of the United States- have bothered to read them and, even less, to abide by them.

In less than 6 months, the recently established Human Rights Council has already convened two emergency sessions to discuss the atrocities committed against the peoples of Palestine and Lebanon. However, instead of improving, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory has further deteriorated and the suffering of the Palestinian people increases, while those responsible for this state of affairs continue to ignore the decisions of the international community with absolute impunity.

It is evident then that an entire population is being a victim a true genocide, deliberately planned and carried out as a state policy.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba finally wishes to reiterate its strong support for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to an independent, sovereign state, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Cuba also demands the unconditional return of all Israeli-occupied Arab territories and reaffirms the illegality of all Israeli settlements on Arab territories occupied since 1967. Cuba hopes that an unconditional, just and lasting peace without exclusions will be achieved in the Middle East. These are the only premises to ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights by all the inhabitants of the Middle East.

Sooner rather than later, the Palestinian people will not have to live under the threat of "autumn clouds" or "summer rains". A day will come in which an intense sun of sovereignty and independence will shine for the Palestinian people, in their free nation. They can always count on the solidarity of the Cuban people and Government to achieve that goal.

Thank you very much.