

ISRAEL

62nd SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Check Against Delivery

Statement by
Mr. Gershon Kedar
Delegate to the Fourth Committee

Fourth Committee
Agenda item 33
“Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli
Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian
People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories”

United Nations, New York
12 November 2007

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you once again on the manner in which you have conducted this Committee's deliberations, and I wish you much success in chairing the present meeting.

It is particularly ironic that this Committee will spend a full three days debating the report of the misnamed Special Committee immediately following a discussion on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. For the work of the Special Committee is superfluous, replete with duplication bordering on plagiarism and one-sided propaganda. It is no wonder then that year after year barely one half of the entire membership supports the renewal of the Committee's mandate.

The lack of relevance, and indeed harm, of UN organs like the Special Committee have been recognized as charades by at least some. In his speech of 12 December 2006, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan said "Some may feel satisfaction at repeatedly passing General Assembly resolutions or holding conferences that condemn Israel's behavior. But one can also ask whether such steps bring any tangible relief or benefit to the Palestinians. There have been decades of resolutions. There has been a proliferation of special committees, sessions and Secretariat divisions and units. Has any of this had an effect on Israel's policies, other than to strengthen the belief in Israel, and among many of its supporters, that this great organization is too one-sided to be allowed a significant role in the Middle East peace process?"

Mr. Chairman,

Though the previous Secretary General's question was rhetorical, I doubt there is anyone in this room today who does not know the answer.

And so I turn to my Palestinian colleague, and say that when, later this week, the resolutions are passed, do not delude yourself. What you are receiving is not real support or even empathy. Rather it is little more than mere lip-service.

Israel's legitimate security policies cannot be changed by these resolutions. We will continue to promote the search for genuine peace based on transforming the two state vision into reality. All who support peace according to the two-state vision should be concerned with how one-sided resolutions, which blindly and routinely support without reservation one party to the conflict, affect the policies of those who may negotiate with us. Ask yourselves, do they contribute towards good will; do they promote genuine negotiations? Or rather, do they poison the atmosphere, create false hopes and encourage unrealistic demands? This is the context from which the report under discussion today and the plethora of resolutions that come in its wake should be viewed.

Mr. Chairman,

No state is beyond criticism, and Israel is willing to cooperate with all legitimate human rights organs, bodies, and rapporteurs whose mandates do not pre-determine the results of their investigations. Indeed, in recent years, Israel has received and cooperated with the rapporteurs concerning housing, "arbitrary killings", displaced

persons, and health, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Special Committee, however, is a relic from a by-gone era, and its continued existence cannot be justified morally, intellectually, or politically.

The real agenda of the Committee is not to help the Palestinians, but rather to do whatever it can, through whatever means available, to harm Israel. Thus, in principle and in practice, the Committee allows itself to ignore reality, and flagrantly refrains from dealing with human rights violations of Palestinians that are inflicted by Palestinians. Such a subject is taboo, for it contradicts the ideological and political *raison d'etre* that governs the Committee.

The Hamas military take-over of Gaza could not, however, be completely ignored by the Committee, and it is referred to in two full sentences in the present report. We are informed that factional fighting resulted in 200 dead and 1,000 injured.

But the Committee does not refer to the numerous cruel and vindictive human rights violations during the intra-Palestinian fighting. We are thus not informed about wounded Palestinians being shot to death while being treated in hospitals, Palestinians being thrown to their deaths from high-rise buildings in Gaza, nor do we learn about the numerous and deliberate maiming of political and military rivals and their families, often by being shot in the knees. Negative statements about Palestinians are beyond the pale for the Committee for one reason only – namely because Israel could not honestly be blamed.

Yet the Committee does manage to concoct a fanciful connection. Although Israel completely left the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2005 and was not involved in the intra-Palestinian fighting, the report blames Israel and refers to the situation as "a direct consequence of the Israeli occupation". Such levels of political and intellectual bankruptcy should not be tolerated in the United Nations system.

The shameful conduct of the Special Committee does not stop there. The Committee claims that its report reflects "the substance of the information gathered" during its mission. It is, however, replete with lies, false claims, and uncorroborated accusations. Moreover, the Committee patently ignores any information that does not fit its one-sided ideological agenda. Thus, it may come as no surprise to those of us familiar with the Committee's defects and shortcomings, that while Israeli anti-terror measures are discussed widely, the report fails to inform about Palestinian terrorism against Israel, even though this information is widely known and in the public domain.

And it gets worse. An earlier report (A/61/500) of the Special Committee, issued after last year's debate in this Committee, includes accusations that can only be described as tantamount to the worse type of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that were so common in the Middle Ages. This report includes an allegation that "drugs and prostitution were allowed, if not encouraged, in the occupied Syrian Golan" to infect clients with HIV.

We are also informed that a "sick child died in hospital soon after receiving an injection," clearly insinuating that he died as a result of deliberate malpractice. The parallels between such baseless claims and insinuations and murderous lies about Jews poisoning the wells of non-Jews and killing non-Jewish children for religious purposes are clear to all, except to those who are willing to give credence to the vilest of lies as long as they fit their warped political agenda. These modern day blood-libels are outrageous and disgraceful from any source, but how much more so when they come from an organ of the UN.

We can, however, find consolation in the fact that since the Special Committee is such a marginal and even trivial body, it is very unlikely that many people outside this room have ever heard of it – never mind actually read their reports.

Mr. Chairman,

Notwithstanding the malicious attempts of the Special Committee to de-legitimize Israel, the United Nations has potentially much to offer both Israel and the Palestinians, as we make renewed efforts to solve our differences. But its potentially heightened relevance is mitigated by the continued existence of the Special Committee and other UN organs and mandates whose sole purpose is to serve as anti-Israeli propaganda apparatuses.

My delegation calls upon Member States to reject the report of the Special Committee, and bring to an end, long-overdue, its ill-conceived and even more ill-managed mandate.

Thank You, Mr. Chairman.