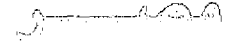




EGYPT



The Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations
New York

بعثة مصر الدائمة
لدى الأمم المتحدة
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Statement by H.E. Ambassador Maged Abdel Aziz

Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Before the Security Council

The Situation in the Middle East

November 9th, 2006

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Mr. President,

The Security Council meets today at a time when the Palestinian Territories witness continued escalation by the Israeli Occupying forces and an intensification of Israeli military attacks against Gaza, as tens of civilians were killed and injured yesterday in Beit Hanoun North of Gaza, most of whom are women and children, in blatant violation by Israel of all international laws and customs and of its commitments as an occupying power according to the Fourth Geneva Protocol, thus undermining the credibility of Israel's commitment to the goal of reaching a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on international legitimacy and in abstention of imposing de facto policies.

What the Foreign Ministers warned of during the Security Council Meeting on the 21st of September has become a reality, and this was reinforced by the absence of the Security Council and its unwillingness to assume its responsibilities in maintaining international peace and security in a manner that ends the deterioration of the situation and limits the possibility of further escalation in the region. Accordingly, it is incumbent on the Council to act and to refrain from condoning Israel's violations and illegal practices in the occupied lands, particularly in Gaza where the killings and the blockade continue without deterrence to stopping the blood shed of innocent unarmed civilians.

The last few months have proven the failure of hostile policies and unilateral measures, as they have also confirmed that the only solution will solely be attained through the negotiating table as an exclusive means to achieving peace and security between the Arabs and the Israelis. Based on that, mere condemnation of the aggression is not sufficient in order for Israel to comply and to refrain from its aggression. Therefore, the international community has to adopt a firm position to put an end to the ongoing political and humanitarian tragedy, and to provide the foundation and necessary guarantees to avoid a reoccurrence of continued disregard of United Nations resolutions, international law, the Road Map, and the role of the Quartet. In this context, the following measures should be taken:

First: Israel, the occupying power has to immediately cease its aggression against the Palestinian People, and to stop the killings of civilians in the occupied lands, and to withdraw from the areas that it entered in Gaza and return to the boundaries of the 28th of June 2006.

Second: Israel should lift the blockade imposed on the Palestinian Lands and to undertake definitive confidence building measures, namely refraining from targeting civilians and all forms violence and collective punishment, and address the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Gaza and the West Bank, and to discontinue building the separation wall, and implement the Movement and Access Agreement to ease the movement of Palestinians and to allow for the continuation of humanitarian assistance to them.

Third: Israel should abstain from unilateral measures that contribute to the protraction of the conflict and prevent reaching a final settlement, in parallel with serious exerting efforts to build confidence and resume negotiations, this, in a balanced context of parallel commitments from the Palestinian side to stop the launching of rockets form the Palestinian territories toward Israel, and in a simultaneous way with the cease of all Israeli military operations.

Fourth: The necessity of creating the appropriate atmosphere to return to negotiations, this should be through the release of the Israeli abdicated soldier, and the release of the Palestinian prisoners, officials, and parliamentarians arrested by Israel, taking into account what represent this step of importance on the way to achieve calm.

Fifth: The Security Council has to assume its responsibilities which it has neglected, and reach an immediate and mutual ceasefire on both sides through international monitoring to be established under the auspices of the Security Council, to ensure the cessation of aggression and non-resumption of actions by Israel against Palestinian civilians.

Sixth: Investigating Israel's practices in the Occupied Palestinian Lands and assigning it criminal responsibility for the destruction that resulted from its aggression, in order for Israel to comprehend that it cannot continue violating the human rights of Palestinians and occupying their lands without accountability.

Seventh: Immediate action and measures should be undertaken by the international community, comprised of the Security Council and the members of the Quartet, to address the Palestinian issue and the deteriorating situation in the Middle East, and not be content with statements that do not reflect definite positions vis-à-vis flagrant violations.

Mr. President,

We condemn the aggression which cannot be justified under any pretext or label, and reiterate our call to Israel to refrain from the use of force in order to impose a de facto situation, and to return to the negotiating table, and we reiterate our call to the Security Council, the Quartet, and all members of the United Nations to seriously work towards ending the occupation, and establishing the foundations of peace in the Middle East Region, which has long suffered from conflict. We emphasize that the Arab countries in their peace initiative of 2002, expressed a strong position which still awaits support from the Security Council, and requires transforming it into practical initiatives and procedures to achieve the security, peace, and stability which the people of the region aspire to.

Thank you Mr. president,