Opening Statement by Israel at the 30th HRC Special Session

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<https://embassies.gov.il/UnGeneva/HumanRightsCouncil/SpecialSessions-Procedures/Pages/20210527-HRC-Special-Session-30-Opening-Statement-Israel.aspx>

Madam President,

*“The Day of Judgement will not come until Muslims fight the Jews and kill them”.*

This is written in the charter of Hamas, a Jihadist, genocidal, terrorist organization. These are not just words; they represent the actions of a terrorist organization that takes the cement that should be used to build hospitals and schools for Palestinians and instead, uses it to dig terror tunnels.

These are the words of a terrorist organization that has taken the Palestinian people, women and children and used them as human shields to conceal its rockets.

These are the words of a terrorist organization, who calls for all Muslims to fight the Jews and kill them.

Madam President,

Over 11 days, starting on the 10th of May, this terrorist organization fired more than 4400 rockets at Israeli civilians. The rockets were fired by Hamas from Palestinian homes, hospitals, and schools. Each one of these rockets constitutes a war crime. Each one of these rockets constitutes a tragedy. I want to ask member states participating in today’s session: what would you do if rockets were fired at Dublin, Paris, or Madrid? How would you respond if terrorists attacked Beijing, Islamabad, or Moscow?

Madam President,

What will be presented today by many countries is a false moral equivalence. As a matter of fact, an immoral equivalence, between Israel, a democracy that seeks peace and abides by international law, and a murderous, extreme terrorist organization.

Hamas fires rockets indiscriminately, targeting civilians, to kill as many innocent people as possible. Israel takes all steps to adhere to the principles of distinction, proportionality, and necessity. We do so not only because of our obligations under the Law of Armed Conflict but also because it is our moral duty to protect innocent lives.

During the recent conflict, Israel took all measures to protect civilians. Yet sadly, despite our greatest efforts, Hamas’s tactics of intentionally hiding beneath residential buildings, maternity wards and mosques resulted in innocent loss of life. Hamas’ complete disregard for Palestinian lives worked.

It worked because of your willingness to blame Israel for every death and because of the inaction by the International Community to ensure Hamas’ arsenal is dismantled. This lack of action will only encourage it to pursue its strategy of hiding behind civilians.

Madam President,

Let me be clear. Hamas initiated this conflict. It purposely raised tensions in Jerusalem to justify its attack. Anyone who uses Jerusalem as some sort of excuse for Hamas’s actions only legitimizes the use of terror. In fact, Israel did everything to defuse the tensions. The Israeli Government took the exceptional decision to ask the Supreme Court to postpone its hearing over Sheikh Jarrah. We rerouted our annual Jerusalem day parade. We even took the extraordinary step of preventing Jews from entering their holiest site, Temple Mount. What did Hamas do? It launched 4400 rockets on Israeli cities. ​

Madam President

Since the Council’s inception, 30% of all Special Sessions have targeted Israel. Instead of the Council being a moral voice, unequivocally stating that Israel has the right to defend itself and condemning Hamas for its terrorist activities, we have witnessed a ritual where Israel is targeted and singled out. It does not matter what the facts are or the reality on the ground.

Make no mistake, Israel is not immune to criticism and we have the proper mechanisms to ensure accountability. Justice will not be served here today.

Failure to condemn Hamas in today’s session, will only strengthen it, as well other terrorist organizations around the world, to use innocent people as human shields.

So, Member States must decide today. You have to decide! Are you pro-Palestinian or pro-Hamas? You cannot be both.

You cannot be pro-Palestinian if you do not condemn Hamas for firing rockets at civilians in Israel.

You cannot be pro-Palestinian if you do not condemn Hamas for using its own people, the Palestinian people, as human shields.

You cannot be pro-Palestinian if you continue to allow Hamas to use international aid to build terror infrastructure beneath schools, residential buildings, and hospitals.

Madam President,

Four days ago, the Secretary-General of Fatah, Jibril Rajob, saluted the acts of terror carried out by Hamas. By doing so, he saluted a terrorist organization that has carried out war crimes against both Israelis and Palestinians. By convening this Special Session today, the Palestinian Authority has chosen to reward Hamas for its actions and encourage it further.

Madam President,

That is the choice all members States have to make today. They can choose to embolden and reward Hamas, or they can choose to care for the Palestinian people. They can choose to stand with a terrorist organization that glorifies death, or with a democracy that cherishes life. My country has chosen. We will continue to defend our people while adhering to International Law and the morals which guide us. Now it is up to you. What is your choice?

I thank you.