



**STATEMENT BY MR. V.K. NAMBAR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON  
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON  
APRIL 19, 2004**

Mr. President,

I thank you for scheduling this open debate of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East at this short notice.

The targeted killing of Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi is unjustified and unacceptable and cannot be condoned under any circumstances. Such action, following closely on the killing of the Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, can only lead to further destabilization of the already fragile situation in the region and escalation of the cycle of violence and counter-violence.

As is known to all, India has consistently opposed all acts of terrorism, including cross-border terrorism. There can be no justification for terrorism in any form and from any source.

We believe that the need of the hour in West Asia is moderation and restraint so as to enable peace negotiations to restart at the earliest. The violence must be halted and both Israelis and Palestinians must work together towards a viable negotiating process aimed at a just, lasting, comprehensive settlement based on the Roadmap, outlined by the Quartet. We have reiterated several times in the past that the Quartet Roadmap provides the only existing way forward for the attainment of the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognised boundaries, based on Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 1397 and 1515.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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