



**STATEMENT BY MR. A.GOPINATHAN, DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA IN THE EMERGENCY SESSION OF THE
UN SECURITY COUNCIL ON MARCH 29, 2002 ON THE SITUATION IN
THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION**

Mr. President,

We thank you for convening this emergency session. We also thank the Secretary-General for his Statement to the Council on the sharp deterioration of the situation in the Middle-East today.

We are meeting this evening under extraordinary circumstances. The Council had expressed the collective will of the international community only a fortnight ago in its Resolution 1397 which outlined the vision of two States living in peace within secure borders.

Only yesterday the Summit of the Arab League States in Beirut adopted the resolution supporting the plan put forward by the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. All of us thought that the push towards peace in the Middle-East had received a significant momentum through this action of the Arab League.

Mr. President, today we seem to have moved away from that vision. The needless escalation of violence in the region is unwarranted and is a cause for deepest concern. We call for an end to the violence and for resumption of peaceful dialogue and negotiations in order to realise the vision of two States living in peace within secure boundaries in accordance with UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and subsequent accords agreed to and accepted by the Parties.

President Arafat continues to remain for all of us the embodiment of Palestinian nationhood. The way President Arafat is being treated is shocking. We do not see how the siege of President Arafat and today's military operation at his Headquarters in any way contributes to eventual cessation of violence or greater security.

Mr. President, my delegation reiterates our call for an end to the violence and immediate resumption of dialogue and negotiations so as to achieve lasting peace and security for all in the region. We call on the Council to express the collective will of the international community, once again within less than three weeks, for immediate resumption of such dialogue.

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