



**STATEMENT BY MR V.K. NAMBIAR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON
JULY 24, 2002**

Thank you Mr. President,

We are grateful to you for convening this meeting at short notice following the sharp deterioration of the situation in the Middle East.

The attack launched by Israel late Monday night in the Gaza strip has resulted in the loss of a large number of precious human lives and injury to hundreds. Most of the dead and injured were helpless and unarmed Palestinian civilians, including women and children. The Secretary General, in his statement, had pointed out that Israel has a “legal and moral responsibility to take all measures to avoid the loss of innocent lives; it clearly failed to do so in using a missile against an apartment building”. Even while we have noted the statement by Israel that these deaths of civilians was a “mistake”, we cannot but strongly deplore this act of unwarranted violence and indiscriminate killings at a time when serious efforts are afoot to broker de-escalatory measures between the concerned parties. We have in the past deplored the acts of violence perpetrated against Israeli civilians. In the present instance we join other member countries in calling upon Israel to conduct itself in a manner that is fully consistent with international humanitarian law.

Mr. President,

It is has been almost two years since the commencement of the current spiral of aggravated action and reaction in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Countless lives have been lost and many others broken by loss of livelihood or of loved ones. All efforts at finding a solution have been frustrated for one reason or another. We join our friends from the Arab Group of States in requesting the Security Council to call for necessary measures to bring an end to the current tragic situation.

In the meantime, we are also faced with what Secretary General Kofi Annan has referred to as a “threat of economic collapse and social destitution” looming over the Occupied Territories. India believes it is time for the international community to act proactively to reduce the suffering and deprivation faced by the Palestinians. In this context we support the Secretary General’s call for the parties to fully respect their international obligations as well as to facilitate the work of the UN and of other agencies.

Mr. President,

It would seem from actions like the Monday night attack that we are moving away from the vision of Israel and Palestine living peacefully as two states, side-by-side, within secure and recognised boundaries. But such a slide-back must not be allowed to happen. We reiterate our call for an immediate end to violence and the resumption of dialogue leading to a negotiated and permanent settlement of this question based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and as envisaged in Security Council resolution 1397. My Government attaches great importance to the on-going efforts of the Quartet and to the initiative of Saudi Arabia endorsed by the Arab League Summit at Beirut, aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East

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