



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

(As delivered)

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. HAMIDON ALI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 7 JANUARY 2009

Mr. President,

Israeli military aggression unto Gaza is entering its thirteenth day today. Over the course of just less than two weeks, more than 600 lives have been lost and more than 2700 people injured, the largest majority being Palestinian civilians including women and children. Only yesterday Israeli attack killed at least 43 people and about 100 people wounded who were taking refuge inside a UN school. There is no need to even mention the level and degree of destruction to mosques, schools, homes and infrastructures, that this illegal Israeli action has brought upon the Palestinians in Gaza because any sensible person could imagine what kind of destruction thirteen days of Israeli bombardment could bring about. Any right-minded sensible person and government would also deplore this Israeli action. There is no justification for this disproportionate, indiscriminate and excessive use of force in Gaza, not even in the name of self-defense. Israeli action is against the rule of law and modern standards of human decency. Its action clearly demonstrate Israel's complete disregard for international law and violation of the UN Charter. Malaysia considers this act as a war crime and a crime against humanity.

2. How could the death of the innocent civilians particularly women and children, be in the name of self-defense? How could any other member states of this United Nations accept this argument and condone this action? How could the Security Council, which is entrusted with the maintenance of peace and security, not react to a clear violation of international peace and security? How many more deaths, casualties and destructions would it take before the Security Council would be resuscitated from its paralysis in dealing with the Palestine issue? Is the Security Council inept that only after almost two weeks into the illegal Israeli aggression on the people of Gaza, that it is now struggling to stop this atrocities? We do not believe so, at least not, judging from how fast it reacted when it was on other situation. We had on many occasion express our deep regret on this matter and we once again record our deepest regret on this apparent inaction by the Security Council.

3. But despite this, we remain confident that this Security Council which is mandated at ensuring international peace and security will take the necessary and appropriate action in dealing with this Israeli aggression. In fact, the Security Council has no option but to do just that: To stop the killings of the innocent civilians, of women and children, and the destructions of homes, schools, mosques and other infrastructure. A durable and sustainable cessation of hostility including a ceasefire must be the immediate target with the deployment of an international monitoring/peacekeeping force to de-escalate and stabilize the situation. Israeli



forces must leave the Gaza Strip. Unless this is done immediately, there would be no let-up to the death toll. One dead is far too many and the blood of those who have perished and injured by this illegitimate Israeli action will also be in the hands of the Security Council. Malaysia urges all parties to exercise utmost restraint, in particular, to avoid additional casualties among innocent civilians and damage to civilian property and infrastructure and to refrain from acts that could further exacerbate the situation.

Mr. President,

4. We also urge the Security Council ensure the immediate lifting of the blockade on Gaza. The destruction resulting from Israeli aggression further aggravated the humanitarian crisis of the beleaguered people of Gaza. The people in Gaza urgently need food, fuel and medicine. Israel, the occupying power must be made to allow international assistance to reach the people of Gaza. Despite Israeli repeated denials, what the people in Gaza faces prior to the recent Israeli assault is nothing less than a man-made humanitarian crisis caused by Israeli siege on Gaza a point of significant importance as it signals that it is not from a lack of resources that the people of Gaza are suffering.

Mr. President,

5. The root cause of the current violence in the Middle East is the occupation of Palestine Territories by Israel. It began in 1947 when people living on the periphery of the war in Europe found themselves displaced and dispossessed to make way for another group of people torn by that conflict; and to 1967 Israeli military aggression and continued expansion of its occupation of Palestinian land. Since that time, a new theatre of conflict emerged in the Middle East which impacted the state of peace and security globally. Since then too, the Security Council in its wisdom adopted several resolutions including 242, 338, 1515 and most recently 1850, aimed at addressing this Occupation, which is the longest known occupation in modern history. But the Occupation persist. Even worse, despite efforts towards a durable and lasting peace, including Quartet Roadmap and the Arab Initiative, a comprehensive solution continues to elude us. Not for the lack of effort but by sheer intransigent practices and policies of the Israeli regime. As recent as a year ago, in clear contravention of their obligations under the Annapolis Understanding, the machinery of the Israeli occupation regime plods on unrelentingly. The separation wall continues to be constructed; the illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories mushroomed; the network of checkpoints and roadblocks continued to inextricably hinder the movement of Palestinians and their economic activities. How could one expect or even hope for a tangible outcome from the peace process when one party, the oppressed, is being asked to continuously make concessions for peace, when their homes are being demolished, their land and farms being confiscated, their families and communities being separated, and their children uprooted from schools. The harsh facts of life, especially for the children, living under the Occupation will bear negatively not only on them when they enter adulthood, but also for the prospect of peace in the Middle East.

Mr. President,

6. Indeed the present situation is not conducive for durable and lasting peace. The continuing loss of life, infliction of serious injury and devastation of property will only deepen hatred and divisions, and will not serve any good to either party. Only negotiations, leading to a two-state solution, will bring about a durable and lasting peace for Israelis and Palestinians

and the Middle East. The path to peace is clear; right now we must stop the violence and the killings. The Security Council must act now. The Security Council must make every effort to ensure that these Israeli military aggressions cease immediately. We reiterate that the Council must exert every effort for an immediate ceasefire and the deployment of an international force, so as to de-escalate the conflict and stabilize the situation, and take other confidence-building measures between the parties, with the objective of resuming the peace process. While ensuring the implementation of the ceasefire, the Security Council must also ensure the complete observance of the Council's previous resolutions including among others 242 which clearly specifies that Israeli forces must withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

7. At the same time, we also call and implore on the leaders of Hamas and Fatah to initiate talks immediately to resolve their differences. Reconciliation should be a priority if these leaders are genuine in pursuing the objective of creating a sovereign and independent state of Palestine. Unity among the Palestinians themselves would be the most critical element in attaining a solution to the predicament faced by the Palestinians.

Mr. President,

8. Last year, we failed to realize 2008 as the year for a peace treaty between Israeli and Palestinians as envisioned by the Annapolis Understanding. Let us concentrate our effort again at achieving the goal we set last year, of a two state solution living side-by-side in peace and security; with the creation of a sovereign State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. For now, let us stop the bloodshed in Gaza before the situation spirals further leaving no chance and hope for peace.

Thank you.


