



**UNITED
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PRESS RELEASE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN RESUMED EMERGENCY SESSION, DEMANDS ISRAEL STOP CONSTRUCTION OF WALL, CALLS ON BOTH PARTIES TO FULFIL ROAD MAP OBLIGATIONS

Tenth Emergency Special Session

22nd Meeting (Night)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN RESUMED EMERGENCY SESSION, DEMANDS ISRAEL STOP CONSTRUCTION OF WALL, CALLS ON BOTH PARTIES TO FULFIL ROAD MAP OBLIGATIONS

For the second time in as many months, following the Security Council's failure to act, an emergency session of the General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a measure on the situation in the Middle East -- in this instance, demanding that Israel stop and reverse construction of the wall being built in the West Bank.

Condemning all acts of violence, terrorism and destruction, the Assembly adopted the measure this evening by a vote of 144 in favour, to 4 against (Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Marshall Islands, United States), with 12 abstentions, as it resumed its tenth emergency session on illegal Israeli activities in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied territories.

The text, which had been introduced by Italy, on behalf of the European Union, expressed the Assembly's particular concern that the route marked out for the wall under construction by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, could prejudice future negotiations and make the two-State solution physically impossible to implement and would cause further humanitarian hardship to the Palestinians.

Particularly condemning the recent suicide bombings and intensification of violence with the attack in Haifa and the bomb attack in the Gaza strip, which killed three American security officers, the Assembly also called on both parties to fulfil their obligations under the Quartet-backed "Road Map"; the Palestinian Authority to undertake visible efforts to restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks, and the Israeli Government to take no actions undermining trust, including deportations and attacks on civilians and extrajudicial killings.

Further, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report periodically on compliance with the resolution, with the first report on compliance with the demand to cease construction on the wall within one month.

The representative of Italy, introducing the text on behalf of the European Union, said the compromise reflected the determination to work towards a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

Explaining his vote, Israel's representative called the proceedings a "humiliating farce". A disservice was being done as long as the majority pandered to the resolution. Surrendering to manipulative games and illegal initiatives of the Palestinian Observer made a mockery of the United Nations. He expressed his disappointment in States that sought to promote peace but were unable to remain committed to a moral position. The Secretary-General, he added, should have more to do than compile a report on Israeli compliance, which mentioned nothing about Palestinian actions.

Principle was more important than consensus, he stated, substance more important than compromising a position for short-sighted deals. Security for both Israel and the Palestinians was inseparable but for the fulfilment of the Palestinian obligation to dismantle terrorism. No amount of debate or diplomatic manoeuvres could alter that reality.

The Observer for Palestine stated that the Israeli representative had engaged in the usual repetition of personal attacks, intimidation and blackmail. He called it the “diplomacy of gangs”; insolence and arrogance by those that were striving for nothing but becoming occupiers. The legal and historical significance of the text could not be overstated. He thanked the co-sponsors of the resolution, particularly the member States of the European Union.

The representatives of both Canada and Peru said their delegations had voted in favour of the text. And while Canada affirmed the right of Israel to ensure its own security and protect its citizens, it also believed that construction of the barrier further undermined the hopes of all those in the region yearning for peace. Both States called on the parties to respect their obligations and restart negotiations on the Road Map.

Australia's representative said his delegation had abstained, considering that only a balanced resolution could help the situation. While he affirmed Israel's right to fight terrorism, he urged that country to ensure its measures, including the barrier, did not cause further harm to the Palestinian people. Also urging both parties to resume negotiations on the Road Map, he added that the Palestinian Authority must do its utmost to combat terrorism.

The emergency meeting began yesterday, at the request of the League of Arab States, with a debate in which some 18 speakers expressed their concerns regarding the wall. Most of them condemned the construction of the barrier, and called for an end to what they felt were Israel's expansionist policies. Several wondered why the wall's route deviated from the so-called “green line” established under the 1949 Armistice.

Most maintained that the barrier would create a major obstacle to the implementation of the Quartet-backed Road Map, which calls for a series of parallel and reciprocal steps by both sides, leading to two States living side by side in peace by 2005. The Quartet is comprised of the United Nations, the United States, the Russian Federation and the European Union. (For more details on yesterday's meeting, see Press Release GA/10177 issued on 20 October.)

The tenth emergency special session dates back to 1997 when Israel began construction of a new settlement south of East Jerusalem. The Security Council met twice on this issue, but failed to adopt resolutions. Using the “Uniting for Peace” formula, a special emergency session of the Assembly was convened in April and again in July and November of 1997. It also resumed in 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001.

ANNEX I

Vote on Illegal Israeli Actions in Occupied Territories

The resolution on illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory (document A/ES-10/L.15) was approved by a recorded vote of 144 in favour to 4 against, with 12 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Marshall Islands, United States.

Abstaining: Australia, Burundi, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Malawi, Nauru, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Tuvalu, Uruguay.

Absent: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bolivia, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, Georgia, Haiti, Iraq, Kiribati, Liberia, Madagascar, Palau, Republic of Moldova, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tajikistan,

Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu.

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