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**UN Human Rights Council**  
**34<sup>th</sup> Session, Item 9 – March 20, 2017**

**General Debate**

Delivered by Mr. Yoel Mester,  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN in Geneva

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Thank you, Mr. President.

Last year, the former Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon recognized that "Antisemitism is one of the world's oldest and most pernicious and deadly forms of hatred." Unfortunately, this phenomenon is only expanding in many parts of the world.

I would particularly like to call your attention to the promotion of incitement and hate speech against Jews in the Middle East. We have recently learned that the president of the PA, Mahmoud Abbas, has appointed Imad Hamato as head of Gaza's Al-Azhar institute a few months ago. Hamato is the Anti-Semitic host of a weekly Palestinian TV program who is famous for producing phrases such as "Humanity will never live in comfort as long as the Jews are causing devastating corruption throughout the land."

I ask those states who constantly put the blame on Israel: how is it possible to promote peace when negative signals such as these are transmitted to the population, by the same leaders who are supposed to engage in a constructive dialogue?

Mr. President,

Israel believes that education and dialogue are fundamental tools to eliminating discrimination, fighting racism and encouraging a peaceful co-existence between different segments of the society. As part of the national consultation process for its upcoming UPR, the government of Israel is convening a series of roundtables with the civil society, some of which are dedicated to the challenges faced by minority groups and people of particular ethnic origins.

Thank you.