
UN Human Rights Council
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ID with Special Rapporteur on Terrorism

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

Thank you, Mr. President,

We would like to thank the Special Rapporteur on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism.

We are of the opinion that tackling the issue of terrorism, in all its aspects, should be one of the main priorities of this Council, because of the myriad negative effects this horrific phenomenon has on human rights.

For Israel, terrorism is far from a theoretical question. We don't have the luxury of being able to analyze it academically, as if in a laboratory. For Israeli citizens terrorism is a real life affair- tangible, imminent and deadly. And the fact of the matter is that the overwhelming majority of terrorist acts are easily identified as such. When a Palestinian terrorist admitted to the brutal murder of 19-year-old Ori Ansbacher a month ago in the outskirts of Jerusalem, just because she was Israeli and Jewish, or when Hamas fires dozens of rockets on Israeli residents living close to Gaza with the intent of killing civilians, there is hardly a question of definition.

At the same time, Israel pays special attention to balancing its obligation to safeguard the right to life of its citizens, with its steadfast commitment to all other human rights, including in the framework of its counter-terrorism measures. Being a democracy fighting terror is no easy task, often there are dilemmas, and sometime mistakes are made. But the truth is that despite an ongoing terrorist threat that takes many shapes, civic space remains astonishingly vast. How else would it be possible for NGOs and the media to conduct such an unparalleled scrutiny of the government's every policy and action?

We would like to take this opportunity to invite the Special Rapporteur to turn its attention to the extremely crucial issue of the victims of terror, who are "the silent protagonists of our times" as Laura Dolci so rightly calls them in her powerful book, because terrorism is anything but "a victimless crime."

I thank you Mr. President.