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**General Debate the Oral Update of the High Commissioner on
the Gaza COI recommendations**

Delivered by Ambassador Aviva Raz Shechter
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Thank you Mr. President [High Commissioner].

Two weeks ago, in the southern Israeli town of Sderot, just 3.7 kilometers from the Gaza Strip, thousands of Israeli civilians participated in a large-scale cultural event. These were families with young children, teenagers and adults who came together to enjoy an open-air musical performance on a warm summer evening.

Nobody expected the three rockets fired by Gaza terrorists that evening, clearly with the intention of killing and maiming as many as possible. And if it were not for Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system, we would be telling quite a different story today.

This Council remains astonishingly silent whenever such unacceptable attacks are committed by Palestinian terrorists against Israeli civilians. This stands in sharp contrast compared with the eagerness the Council shows in condemning Israel. I wonder what any other country would do when faced with such deliberate attacks on its civilians, by a terror organization publicly calling for its destruction.

I have been given the floor to relate to the High Commissioner's update about the Gaza riots COI recommendations. Yesterday's update included some monitoring data about the Gaza events. But where is the data about almost 2000 rockets fired indiscriminately against Israeli civilians?

- Hundreds of petrol bombs
- Dozens of explosive devices and shooting incidents
- Thousands of acres of farmlands, forests and nature reserves burned by thousands of ignited kites and balloons.

Clearly, there is something fundamentally lacking in the monitoring process, and something deeply flawed in the analysis that followed.

Moreover, the attempt to depict the Gaza border events as “peaceful demonstrations”, while completely ignoring the responsibility of the Hamas terror organization for orchestrating these events, falls short from describing the true reality on the ground.

By now, it should be clear to everybody that the so called “investigative mechanism” set up by the Council was a fundamentally biased one, aimed at putting the blame on Israel, and avoid dealing with the real instigator of this violence. Moreover, the poor outcome produced by the members of the panel, who lacked any relevant expertise in IHL, included a series of radically one-sided, detached from reality recommendations.

The myth of “peaceful protests” has been shattered, time and time again. Every time Hamas operatives have been proven to be leading the riots and sending civilians to the border as human shields and human weapons. It has been shattered every time Gaza terrorists instigated border attacks using the mass demonstrations as cover. And whenever rockets have being fired from Gaza to kill Israeli civilians. All of these form only a part of an ongoing armed conflict between Hamas, a terror organization bent on Israel's destruction ,and Israel which has an obligation to defend its citizens against these attacks.

Let me stress that Israel conducts independent and transparent investigations of every case of alleged wrongdoing. We certainly do not wish to see innocent people nor children being hurt. At the very same time, nothing can change the fact that we are dealing with violent demonstrations and daily terrorism.

Mr. President, [High Commissioner]

The Palestinian representative will no doubt use this opportunity to throw wild allegations at Israel. But let me tell what you will not hear from him: There will be no mention of the deep animosity that exists between Fatah, the group he represents, and Hamas, which control's Gaza. You will hear nothing about the Palestinian Authority's own responsibility for the difficult living conditions of Gaza residents, including the imposition of draconic financial measures. You will certainly not hear a shred of empathy for the plight of Israeli civilians who for too long have had to endure Palestinian terror.

Another important thing that was completely absent from yesterday's update on Gaza is the heart-wrenching human story of the Israeli civilians and soldiers held by Hamas without any word about their fate or whereabouts, in clear contravention of international law. Hamas not only refuses to release any information about them, but abuses the anguish of the families in order to advance its perverse goals.

Finally, Mr. President, [High Commissioner]

In the last March session, the Palestinian representatives were claiming to show good will by moving one of their many Item 7 resolutions to Item 2. But the truth is that the only purpose of this maneuver was to create another platform for them to use in order to attack Israel, which is why we are discussing this matter today.

I thank you Mr. President. [High Commissioner]