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Israel

Delivered by Ambassador Aviva Raz Shechter,
Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations in Geneva

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP

Israel's obligation to free access to holy places is consistent since the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967. The freedom of worship is enshrined in our Basic Laws and we are committed to allow any person, faith or pried, without any discrimination, to entrance to these places.

GAZA

Gaza is not under control of Israel since 2005, when Israel completely withdrew from this area. Since then, Israel had no effective control over the area .

At that time, our aspiration was that the Gaza Strip would become a prosperous and peaceful territory, free from violence. None of that has happened. On the contrary, violence continued and increased, particularly after Hamas seized control in 2007, with rocket attacks on Israel's civilians, increasing three fold the year following our withdrawal and increasing ever since.

Since then, Gaza is under the control of this internationally recognized terrorist organization dedicated not to the welfare of its people, but to violence and destruction. Gaza's resources are systematically diverted by Hamas for its own nefarious goals .

Finally, let me clarify that there is no land blockade in Gaza. All civilian goods that are not ammunition or dual-use items go to Gaza. And for our policy insists, since 2009, Israel has implemented a naval blockade in line with the laws of armed conflict at sea to prevent infiltration and illicit arms smuggling. The legality of Israel's naval blockade has been upheld by a Special Panel convened by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.