



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.AustraliaUN.org

General Assembly

15 January 2009

Resumption of 10th Emergency Special Session

Statement by H E The Hon Robert Hill Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

(Check against delivery)

Australia is deeply disturbed by the violence in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel.

Australia strongly supports UN Security Council resolution 1860's call for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire. We support the resolution's recognition of the need to address arms smuggling and open border crossings. We also support the resolution's call for the unimpeded provision and distribution throughout the Gaza Strip of humanitarian assistance, and all efforts to improve the situation of civilians.

At this critical time, we believe the focus for all of us present at this session needs to be on supporting those diplomatic efforts underway to give practical effect to UNSCR 1860. Serious and intensive negotiations are ongoing. We welcome the Egyptian-French ceasefire proposal and the important role played by Egypt in hosting talks, as well as the efforts of others, including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

A solution must be found to end Hamas's rocket attacks against Israel, which have led to the current crisis and which we condemn. It must also end arms smuggling into the Gaza Strip. This conflict has demonstrated once again the vital need for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Australia remains strongly committed to that objective.

Australia is deeply concerned that, tragically, this conflict is profoundly affecting civilians. All parties should avoid actions which could result in unnecessary or increased suffering on the part of innocent civilians. Australia condemns any action by Hamas to deliberately endanger civilian lives.

We call on Israel to do all it can to ensure the safety of UN and humanitarian workers. It is also critical that Israel meets its obligations under international humanitarian law to the people of the Gaza Strip, and ensure that its people have access to basic goods, food, medical supplies and humanitarian assistance. We recognise and welcome Israel's establishment of 'pauses' for the delivery of humanitarian aid, and we encourage Israel to do everything within its power to improve humanitarian access and restore basic services.

On 1 January 2009, Australia announced an immediate commitment of \$5 million in additional assistance to the people of the Gaza Strip which will provide emergency food and medical supplies, as well as cash assistance to conflict-affected families. This builds on the doubling of Australia's assistance to the Palestinian people in 2008 to \$45 million. We stand ready to consider further assistance.

Statement by H E The Hon Robert Hill
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Australia to the United Nations

(Text against delivery)

Australia is deeply disturbed by the violence in the Gaza Strip and against Israel. Australia strongly supports UN Security Council resolution 1860's call for an immediate double and fully respected ceasefire. We support the resolution's recognition of the need to address arms smuggling and open border crossings. We also support the resolution's call for the unimpeded provision and distribution throughout the Gaza Strip of humanitarian assistance, and all efforts to improve the situation of civilians. At this critical time, we believe the focus for all of us present at this session needs to be on supporting those diplomatic efforts underway to give practical effect to UNSCR 1860. Serious and intensive negotiations are ongoing. We welcome the Egyptian-led initiative proposal and the important role played by Egypt in forming talks, as well as the efforts of others, including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. A solution must be found to end Hamas's rocket attacks against Israel, which have led to the current crisis and which we condemn. It must also end arms smuggling into the Gaza Strip. This conflict has demonstrated once again the vital need for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Australia remains strongly committed to that objective. Australia is deeply concerned that, tragically, this conflict is profoundly affecting civilians. All parties should do the utmost to ensure that any necessary or imminent military action on the part of Israel or others does not result in unnecessary or increased civilian casualties.