



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

TENTH EMERGENCY SPECIAL SESSION
ON
ILLEGAL ISRAELI ACTION IN OCCUPIED EAST JERUSALEM AND
THE REST OF THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

NEW YORK, 16 JANUARY 2009

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

We welcome this debate of the General Assembly, which is fully consistent with the mandate of this body under the Charter of the United Nations and the Assembly's practice under the "Uniting for Peace" resolution. At the same time, we regret that full clarity on the legal basis of this session was not provided at the beginning of this session, as should have been the case. Indeed, the dramatic situation in Gaza requires the full attention of this Assembly: The ongoing violence has led to a disproportionately high number of civilian casualties, many of them children, and has been characterized by disregard for the basic tenets of international humanitarian law. We express our deepest concern at the massive loss of civilian life, much of which seems due to a disrespect for the provisions of the Geneva Conventions and the principle of proportionality. We are also deeply disturbed by the attacks against the UN school in Jabalyia, the headquarters of UNRWA and the targeting of humanitarian convoys, all in violation of international law and carried out at the expense of the civilian population.

Mr. President

We fully support resolution 1860 adopted by the Security Council more than a week ago and join those who have called for its full implementation. This legally binding decision must be implemented immediately and fully by the parties to the conflict. A durable ceasefire is both a first step and a precondition for a sustainable political solution. All military activities must therefore be stopped. There has to be an immediate end to rocket attacks by Hamas as well as to military action by Israel. It is clear that there can be no military solution to this conflict, and we therefore welcome the ongoing diplomatic efforts including the mission of the Secretary-General whose personal commitment we applaud.

Mr. President

The massive deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza is disturbing. Liechtenstein has been a regular donor to UNWRA over the past years, and the Government will decide on an additional contribution early next week, in light of the urgency of the situation. However, this is not a problem of resources. It is a problem of access, as is sadly the case in other situations as well. We wish to recall that facilitating humanitarian operations is an obligation for all parties to this conflict under international humanitarian law. Immediate, unhindered and secure passage for the delivery of humanitarian aid must therefore be granted. After weeks of relentless conflict and massive violence in one of the most densely populated areas of the world, the humanitarian needs are urgent and numerous, ranging from the delivery of medical and other basic supplies to the evacuation of injured persons. These needs must be addressed immediately and with the support of the parties. We also hope that there will be no impunity for the massive violations of humanitarian law that seems to have been committed in the course of this conflict.

Mr. President

This session serves a meaningful purpose if it results in a resolution that supports the implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 and increases the political pressure in this respect. This is a time where the General Assembly must stand united and send the unequivocal signal that the violence in Gaza is unacceptable and must end immediately. We therefore hope that a text resulting from this session will find the strongest possible numerical and political support in this Assembly.

I thank you.