

**Statement given by H.E. Mr. Paul Heinbecker
to the United Nations General Assembly
Special debate on the situation in the Middle East
December 20, 2001.**

Monsieur le Président,

Je suis heureux d'avoir la possibilité de m'exprimer à ce débat d'urgence.

La violence qui oppose depuis quinze mois Israéliens et Palestiniens a fait mille morts parmi les hommes, les femmes et les enfants, et elle en a mutilé et terrifié des milliers d'autres

L'amertume, la méfiance et l'hostilité sont maintenant omniprésentes.

Elles constituent un terrible obstacle à la reprise du dialogue.

Pourtant, les besoins à long terme des Israéliens et des Palestiniens demeurent les mêmes et ils ne changeront pas.

Israel's need is to live in peace and security within borders that are internationally recognized.

The Palestinians need also to live in peace and security in a viable state with internationally recognized borders, which can be brought about through those negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis that must be resumed without delay.

The immediate cessation of all acts of violence, provocation and destruction is essential.

Violence undermines the proponents of peace, moderation and goodwill and fortifies the advocates of extremism.

To bring an end to the violence, the first step is to condemn terrorism and act vigorously against its practitioners.

By their criminal acts, indiscriminate violence and suicide bombings, the terrorists have undermined confidence that peace and security are possible.

Accordingly, we welcome the steps which the Palestinian Authority has taken against Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

My delegation will abstain on the first resolution before us today because it fails to deal adequately with the recent terrorist actions that have done so much damage to the peace

process.

This, we believe, is a fundamental flaw.

We will abstain on the second resolution regarding the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention because, on that occasion, Canada expressed its reservations about the nature of the meeting and its failure to take account of terrorist acts against Israeli civilians.

We also provided our understanding of particular elements of the declaration.

With regard to today's resolution, we continue to have the same concerns.

Canada fully supports Israel's right to security and understands Israel's need to defend itself against terrorist attacks.

At the same time, the use of force, in the absence of political engagement, also undermines confidence and reinforces extremism.

Extrajudicial killing of known and suspected terrorists and the targeting of infrastructure take a heavy toll of lives and of the qualities of reason, moderation and good will which are needed now more than ever.

My delegation agrees with the Resolution's call on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to start implementing the recommendations of the Mitchell Report.

Both parties accepted this report when it appeared last May.

In so doing, they recognized that the Mitchell Report provided a road map for setting the peace process back on course.

The sooner they start, the better.

The Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority must resume discussion and cooperation urgently.

Peace talks require partners who can speak for their people.

Israel must re-engage with the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, that is to say, the Palestinian Authority.

The international community ardently desires the resumption of dialogue and negotiation.

It stands ready to help.

Canada now, as in the past, is willing and able to assist in efforts to reach a solution.

Thank you.