

8 January 2009



Security Council

SC/9567

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Security Council
6063rd Meeting (Night)

**SECURITY COUNCIL CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE, DURABLE, FULLY RESPECTED CEASEFIRE
IN GAZA LEADING TO FULL WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES**

**Resolution 1860 (2009) Adopted by 14 in Favour, Abstention by United States;
Also Calls for Unimpeded Humanitarian Assistance, Welcomes Egyptian Initiative**

Gravely concerned by the deepening humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and the resulting heavy civilian casualties “since the refusal to extend the period of calm” between Israel and Hamas, the Security Council this evening stressed the urgency of and called for an “immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza”.

Adopting resolution 1860 (2009) by a vote of 14 in favour with the United States abstaining, the Council also expressed its grave concern at the escalation of violence and emphasized that Palestinian and Israeli civilian populations must be protected in the densely packed territory that has been the theatre of a deadly 13-day conflict between Israel Defence Forces and armed Hamas militants.

The measure, which recalls that “a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved by peaceful means”, capped days of intense ministerial-level negotiations at United Nations Headquarters after Arab leaders and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas flew to New York for urgent meetings with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Security Council diplomats to craft a binding resolution to end the fighting, which began on 27 December, when Israel launched a major offensive in Gaza in response to Hamas rocket attacks.

Immediately following the vote, Secretary-General Ban said, after two weeks of escalating violence and suffering in Gaza and southern Israel, he was heartened and relieved at the adoption of a resolution to end the tragic situation. The Council's action signalled the will of the international community and must be fully respected by the parties. He stressed, however, that more would be needed, and a political way forward was required to deliver long-term security and peace. “My visit to the region next week will focus on helping to ensure that the ceasefire is implemented, that urgent humanitarian assistance reaches those in need and encouraging the diplomatic efforts currently under way,” he added.

The resolution sets out urgent tasks for the international community and calls on United Nations Member States to intensify their efforts to provide arrangements and guarantees in Gaza to sustain a durable ceasefire and calm, including to prevent illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition, and to ensure the sustained reopening of crossing points on the basis of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Calling for the unimpeded provision and distribution throughout Gaza of humanitarian assistance within Gaza, including food, fuel and medical treatment, the resolution recognizes the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in providing such assistance, and emphasizes the need to ensure “sustained and regular flow of goods and people through Gaza crossings”.

The resolution welcomes the regional and international efforts under way to end the crisis, including the Egyptian initiative crafted by President Hosni Mubarak and his French counterpart Nicolas

Sarkozy, which, among other things, calls for a temporary ceasefire followed by talks on how to control the border crossings, as well as how to achieve reconciliation among Palestinian factions.

Explaining the United States decision to abstain, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that, while her Government had agreed with the goals and objectives of the resolution: "The United States thought it important to see the outcomes of the Egyptian mediation efforts in order to see what this resolution might have been supporting." Still, she said, the United States believed that, by adopting the resolution, the Council had provided a road map for a sustainable, durable peace in Gaza.

Riyad Al-Maliki, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority, said that adoption of the resolution had been delayed several days, despite the deepening humanitarian crisis and heavy loss of lives of Palestinian civilians. Some 700 Palestinians had been killed and close to 3,000 had been wounded. Nevertheless, Israel must now end its war against the Palestinian people and withdraw its forces from the Gaza Strip. It must also lift the closure of borders and ensure humanitarian access to the people in need. "The violence must cease so that [...] we can rebuild what the brutal Israeli war machine had destroyed in Gaza," he declared.

Israeli Ambassador Gabriela Shalev told the Council that Israel had withdrawn from Gaza in 2005 hoping it would never have to return. However, after eight years of continuous rocket attacks by the Hamas terrorist organization, Hamas' refusal to extend the period of calm, and its smuggling of weapons during that period, Israel had been left with no choice but to act in self-defence. "Responsibility for the current hostilities lies squarely with Hamas," she said, adding that the international community must focus its attention on the cessation of Hamas' terrorist activities, including the total cessation of rocket fire and smuggling, in order to be durable and to allow the possibility of lasting peace.

David Miliband, Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, whose country sponsored the text, told the Council that statistics did not do justice to the situation in Gaza, "but the word 'crisis', which is sometimes overused, is wholly appropriate". His Government had been calling for an immediate ceasefire from the very beginning of the conflict and tonight, at last, the United Nations was speaking clearly with one voice. The job now was to turn the words of the resolution into a reality, he said.

Also speaking tonight were the Foreign Ministers of Libya, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation also addressed the Council, as did the representatives of Costa Rica, Japan, Mexico, China, Uganda, Viet Nam, Burkina Faso, Austria and Croatia.

The meeting began at 9:15 p.m. and ended at 10:15 p.m.

Background

The Security Council met this evening to take action on a draft resolution (document S/2009/23) sponsored by the United Kingdom, which reads as follows:

"The Security Council,

"Recalling all of its relevant resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008),

"Stressing that the Gaza Strip constitutes an integral part of the territory occupied in 1967 and will be a part of the Palestinian state,

"Emphasising the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians,

"Expressing grave concern at the escalation of violence and the deterioration of the situation, in particular the resulting heavy civilian casualties since the refusal to extend the period of calm; and *emphasising* that the Palestinian and Israeli civilian populations must be protected,

"Expressing grave concern also at the deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza,

“Emphasising the need to ensure sustained and regular flow of goods and people through the Gaza crossings,

“Recognising the vital role played by UNRWA in providing humanitarian and economic assistance within Gaza,

“Recalling that a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved by peaceful means,

“Reaffirming the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

“1. *Stresses* the urgency of and *calls for* an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza;

“2. *Calls for* the unimpeded provision and distribution throughout Gaza of humanitarian assistance, including of food, fuel and medical treatment;

“3. *Welcomes* the initiatives aimed at creating and opening humanitarian corridors and other mechanisms for the sustained delivery of humanitarian aid;

“4. *Calls on* Member States to support international efforts to alleviate the humanitarian and economic situation in Gaza, including through urgently needed additional contributions to UNRWA and through the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee;

“5. *Condemns* all violence and hostilities directed against civilians and all acts of terrorism;

“6. *Calls upon* Member States to intensify efforts to provide arrangements and guarantees in Gaza in order to sustain a durable ceasefire and calm, including to prevent illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition and to ensure the sustained re-opening of the crossing points on the basis of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access between the Palestinian Authority and Israel; and in this regard, *welcomes* the Egyptian initiative, and other regional and international efforts that are under way;

“7. *Encourages* tangible steps towards intra-Palestinian reconciliation including in support of mediation efforts of Egypt and the League of Arab States as expressed in the 26 November 2008 resolution, and consistent with Security Council resolution 1850 (2008) and other relevant resolutions;

“8. *Calls for* renewed and urgent efforts by the parties and the international community to achieve a comprehensive peace based on the vision of a region where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace with secure and recognised borders, as envisaged in Security Council resolution 1850 (2008), and recalls also the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative;

“9. *Welcomes* the Quartet’s consideration, in consultation with the parties, of an international meeting in Moscow in 2009;

“10. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.”

Statements before Vote

BERNARD KOUCHNER, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, speaking in his national capacity, said the Council was meeting in the common cause of achieving a ceasefire. In Gaza, there was an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. He said he was moved and distressed by the plight of the victims and families on both sides. The immediate end to hostilities was something the European Union and President Nicolas Sarkozy had been committed to.

He said the draft called for the end to the firing of rockets, the end to the Israeli operations, the opening of the border crossings and an end to arms smuggling. Those parameters were something the

President of France had brought up with the leaders of the region and President Hosni Mubarak had drawn up a proposal. That plan was the only way to peace. He expressed regret that it had not been possible to give a little more time to reconcile different views or to endorse the results of negotiations now under way. The message of hope needed to be heeded without delay and negotiation under way needed to achieve prompt results.

Action

The Council then adopted resolution 1860 (2009) by a vote of 14 in favour with 1 abstention (United States).

Statements after Vote

United Nations Secretary-General BAN KI-MOON said that for the past two weeks, people all over the world had witnessed the escalating violence and the suffering in Gaza and southern Israel. He was heartened and relieved at the adoption of a resolution to end the tragic situation. That decision signalled the will of the international community and must be fully respected by the parties. It called for a ceasefire and for humanitarian access. There was also a need for quickly rebuilding what had been destroyed. An immediate and durable ceasefire was only the first step. More would be needed, and a political way forward was required to deliver long-term security and peace. His visit to the region next week would focus on helping to ensure implementation of the ceasefire and that humanitarian aid reached those in need.

DAVID MILIBAND, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, said the Council had been brought together by the gravity of the situation existing in Gaza. The word "crisis" was wholly appropriate. The Council was also brought together by the vision of security and dignity for Palestinians and Israelis both. There was a clear consensus on an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire and on the humanitarian need of the people in Gaza through aid and opening of the border crossings, as well as on security for Israel through an end to arms smuggling and on the need for a political process going forward. Tonight, the United Nations had served its purpose by speaking clearly and with authority. There were more responsibilities, for the States in the region, as well as the international community as a whole. The current responsibility was to chart a course back to resolution 1850 (2008). That could now be done with the just adopted resolution. The job now was to turn the words of the resolution into a reality.

CONDOLLEEZZA RICE, Secretary of State of the United States, said that the situation in Gaza was very serious and the overall goal must be ensuring stabilization and normalization on the ground. The resolution just adopted showed that the Council and the United Nations were indeed seized of the matter. It was also a step towards the collective goals reflecting the desire of all for sustainable peace in the region. While much remained to be done, much work was under way, she said, stressing that the initiative proposed by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was not just to be applauded, but must be supported. Such work would lead to a durable ceasefire and sustainable peace.

Many tasks remained to be addressed, including rooting out the causes of the hostilities, tackling the smuggling and provision of weapons, securing crossing points in line with the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access, and providing security for the Israeli people and a better life for the people of Gaza. "We must establish an international consensus that Gaza must never again be used as a launching pad for rockets against Israeli citizens, because it is important to remember how this crisis began", she said, stressing that the violence in the Strip had been instigated by Hamas, "a terrorist group that called for the destruction of Israel".

Continuing, she said that, some 18 months ago, Hamas had taken over the Gaza Strip in a coup and, since then, thousands of guns, rockets and mortars had been smuggled into the territory. Hamas had refused to extend the "period of calm" and its continued armament was a root cause of the current situation and had gravely endangered the residents of both Gaza and southern Israel. "Hamas's commitment to violence is not only an attack on Israel, but also on the two-State solution," she said.

The United States required the principled resolution of the situation in Gaza, and the Security Council resolution just adopted was a basis on which that could be done. At the same time, she stressed

that it was not just a matter of resolving the situation on the ground. There would need to be a principled resolution also of the political challenges in Gaza that re-established the Palestinian Authority's control, including over borders; facilitated the normal operation of Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings; and, in time, the opening of other crossings. She said that the United States supported President Mahmoud Abbas as he carried out his responsibilities towards the establishment of a State of Palestine.

She went on to say that the United States remained deeply concerned about the innocent Palestinians suffering in Gaza, and would maintain and continue the humanitarian efforts it was taking to support United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and non-governmental organizations working on the ground. She said the United States recognized the right of Israel, like other States, to exercise its right of self-defence, and it had stressed to Israel that it was obligated to take feasible steps to minimize the impact of any actions on civilians. She reminded the Council that Hamas continued to hold Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who must be released.

Finally, she said that the United States thought it important to see the outcomes of the Egyptian mediation efforts in order to "see what this resolution might have been supporting", and that was why her delegation had abstained in the vote. Still, after a great deal of consideration, the United States had decided that the resolution, the text, goals and objectives of which it supported, should be allowed to go forward. "I believe in doing so, the Council has provided a road map for a sustainable, durable peace in Gaza," she said.

ABDURRAHMAN MOHAMED SHALGHAM, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of Libya, said on behalf of the hundreds that had been killed and the thousands that had been wounded, the objective had been to put an end to Israeli aggression, lift the siege on Gaza and provide humanitarian assistance to the suffering people there. To that end, Libya had previously submitted its own draft resolution to address the crisis. After several meetings, the United Kingdom, the United States and France had submitted a draft which, after several more rounds of negotiations, the Arab Group believed satisfied a minimum of its demands.

While the Group had voted in favour of that text, especially because it called for an immediate end to hostilities, he stressed that not all of the Group's proposals and demands had been met, including the desire for a mechanism to ensure a quick resolution to the crisis. He said that the international community must continue to put pressure on Israel to end the violence and open borders to ensure that humanitarian assistance reached the population that was in dire need. At the same time, he said that the international community must ensure that Israel's crimes in the region did not continue.

ALI BABACAN, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, said that, after three days of negotiations, the Council had been able to reach a decision on a resolution. While some delegations might not be satisfied with the outcome, the resolution was nevertheless a compromise decision that expressed the will of the Council, especially in that it called for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. The call for unimpeded humanitarian access was also an important element of the text. Now, the Council must move forward with implementation. Indeed, full and effective implementation was crucial to ending the crisis. Turkey also believed that, as soon as possible, all Palestinian parties must move forward with national reconciliation efforts. Turkey would work with those parties to ensure progress going forward.

ALEXANDER YAKOVENKO, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, said the resolution favoured an immediate ceasefire by all parties, as well as finding a long-term and comprehensive solution to the problems of Gaza. It was a balanced and, hopefully, effective resolution. The situation in Gaza could not be solved by the use of force. The fact that all members of the Council had spoken in favour of a long and durable ceasefire did not mean that the work was finished. It was important to make even more efforts to overcome the crisis in Gaza. The developments in the last hours had underlined the need for a solution.

JORGE URBINA (Costa Rica) said the just adopted resolution had a tremendous moral force. The resolution called on the parties to bring about an immediate cessation of hostilities and attested to the resolve of the international community. He underscored the legal, binding nature of the resolution. It was mandatory that it be complied with by all parties in the conflict. Failure to comply could and should entail serious consequences. He hoped the Council could be consistent with its decision taken today, and would

use its authority to ensure respect for the decision.

YUKIO TAKASU ([Japan](#)) said it was important that the Council had been able to take a decision on the grave and serious situation in Gaza, after several rounds of consultations over the past few days. The resolution, above all, stressed the urgency of action and called for an immediate ceasefire. At the same time, earlier in the day, the international community had been shocked to hear about the killing of a staff member of UNRWA. Japan expressed condolences to the family of the victim and stressed that the incident revealed the urgency of ensuring an immediate ceasefire. Indeed, calm, normalcy and safe living conditions in and around Gaza must return and must be the ultimate goal of the international community's efforts. He added that the text must also ensure that the peace process got back on track in line with resolution 1850 (2008).

CLAUDE HELLER ([Mexico](#)) said that in the face of the tragic events that had been occurring in Gaza since late December, causing death and destruction and deepening the humanitarian crisis there, the Council had the duty to end the violence and relieve human suffering. Finally tonight, the Council had shouldered its responsibility by calling for an immediate and durable ceasefire and the opening of crossings to provide humanitarian relief. Mexico had insisted on the broadest consensus during the negotiations and the balanced text just adopted met its requirements. What was needed now was to build a foundation for the future.

He stressed, however, that Mexico would have preferred that the text incorporate an explicit reference to respect for the provisions of international humanitarian law, as well as a more direct reference for establishing an international mechanism to monitor the implementation of all the measures to be adopted at the conclusion of diplomatic efforts currently under way. The Council and the wider international community must support those negotiations and ensure that the broader Middle East peace process continued apace.

ZHANG YESUI ([China](#)) said, since the outbreak of the conflict, China had consistently supported swift Council action aimed at a ceasefire and opening the border crossings. While the resolution was not totally satisfactory, taking into account the gravity of the situation on the ground, China had voted in favour. The resolution reflected the will of the international community. He urged the parties to achieve an immediate ceasefire and to implement the resolution. He hoped the international community would help bring the parties together to a comprehensive and durable solution to the Palestinian question.

FRANCIS BUTAGIRA ([Uganda](#)) had voted in favour to end the hostilities and the humanitarian tragedy. The resolution was balanced, providing for an immediate ceasefire, humanitarian access and protection of civilians. Today's outcome reflected a consensus, which indicated that the Council was aware of its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. The Council should remain engaged in finding peace in the Middle East, with Israel and Palestine living in peace with each other. He urged the parties to implement the resolution.

LE LUONG MINH ([Viet Nam](#)), said his delegation would liked to have seen a resolution with more clear cut language on the implementation of an immediate ceasefire and early withdrawal of Israeli troops, which he considered a prerequisite for ending the crisis and providing relief to the suffering Palestinian people. However, in light of the continuing violence and deepening humanitarian crisis, Viet Nam had supported the current text, which it believed could, nevertheless, provide a basis for bringing an end to the current crisis and paving the way for the continuation of the peace process.

MICHEL KAFANDO ([Burkina Faso](#)) welcomed the adoption of the resolution and said that the Council could not be indifferent to the tragedy under way in Gaza, especially in light of the serious and deteriorating humanitarian situation. Burkina Faso believed that the Council should have acted earlier, but "as they say, better late than never". He said that the language of the text could have been clearer, but it nevertheless was an expression of the Council's will and was, after all, the result of compromise. He applauded the efforts of the negotiating parties, particularly the Arab Group, which had made compromises to ensure the text was adopted. He hoped that adoption of the resolution would not only end the current conflict, but build a foundation for continued negotiations towards a sustainable peace in the region.

THOMAS MAYR-HARTING ([Austria](#)) said it had been important to achieve the immediate need for a ceasefire and to preserve the unity of the Council. He was, therefore, grateful for the efforts that had

made the consensus possible. There must be an unconditional halt to rocket attacks on southern Israel and an end to military operations in Gaza. Another priority was a lasting and sustained opening of the border crossings, so that the humanitarian situation of Gaza could be addressed. One point had not been explicitly mentioned in the resolution, namely the obligation of all parties to fully respect humanitarian and human rights law.

NEVEN JURICA ([Croatia](#)) said an immediate, permanent and effective ceasefire implemented by all was a necessity and should end the suffering in Gaza, as well as the terrorist threat in southern Israel. A ceasefire could only be achieved on the ground through ensuring that there were no more rocket attacks and arms smuggling. Confidence in mechanisms on the ground was imperative. A political dialogue was the only way to achieve lasting peace, based on a two-State solution.

RIYAD AL-MALIKI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the [Palestinian Authority](#), said that adoption of the resolution had been delayed several days, despite the deepening humanitarian crisis and heavy loss of lives of Palestinian civilians. Some 700 Palestinians had been killed and close to 3,000 had been wounded. Moreover, Israel had relentlessly pursued its goal of ruthlessly destroying Palestinian property and infrastructure, including schools and mosques. Nevertheless, Israel must now end its war against the Palestinian people and withdraw its forces from the Gaza Strip. It must also lift the closure of borders and ensure humanitarian access to the people in need. Israel must immediately implement the resolution, he said, adding that: "The violence must cease so that [...] we can rebuild what the brutal Israeli war machine had destroyed in Gaza."

Prince SAUD AI-FAISAL, Minister for Foreign Affairs of [Saudi Arabia](#), said today had raised the hope for a new era in the work of the Security Council. It had assumed its responsibility to end the violence in Gaza. He hoped that all parties would look at the text as an affirmation of the Organization's mandate to ensure international peace and security and alleviate human suffering. Indeed, the text should be seen as a model for addressing future crises.

He went on to say that the real joy was not in what had been achieved in New York, but what would be achieved in Gaza, where he hoped that many lives would now be saved. Adoption of the resolution would show that the Council worked for the well-being of all people and was not a tool to be manipulated by States. At the same time, that joy was tempered by the loss of so many lives during the negotiating process. It was said that success always had a price, but in this case, that price might have been too high. Still, he hoped that the resolution would bring an immediate end to the current conflict and serve as a basis to move forward with peace in the Middle East.

AHMED ABOUL GHEIT, Minister for Foreign Affairs of [Egypt](#), said President Mubarak had, in the presence of President Sarkozy of France, tabled a road map to settle the situation in Gaza. The adopted resolution welcomed that initiative. President Mubarak welcomed the resolution as a crucial support for the Egyptian efforts. The Arab people hoped the Council would see to the immediate implementation of the resolution. Egypt would spare no efforts, together with the Palestinians, to restore calm and provide an atmosphere conducive to negotiations towards establishment of a Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. He stressed that all Palestinians were part of one fabric and had one just cause. Egypt would make every effort to bridge the gap between them.

GABRIELA SHALEV ([Israel](#)) said that Israel, when it left Gaza in 2005, had hoped it would never have to return. However, after eight years of continuous rocket attacks by the Hamas terrorist organization, Hamas' refusal to extend the period of calm, and its smuggling of weapons during that period, had left Israel with no choice but to act in self-defence. Responsibility for the current hostilities lay squarely with Hamas. The international community must focus its attention on the cessation of Hamas' terrorist activities. Any arrangement must be fully respected and secured, including the total cessation of rocket fire and smuggling, in order to be durable and to allow the possibility of lasting peace.

* * * * *

For information media • not an official record