

ISRAEL



Mr. President,  
 Mr. Secretary General,  
 Distinguished Delegates,  
 Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate His Excellency, the Foreign Minister of Gabon, upon his assumption of the Presidency of the General Assembly, and wish him much success.

Mr. President,

The United Nations was established out of the devastation of World War Two in order to build a world of unity and of peace. Today, sixty years after this organization came into being, we must ask ourselves:

What are we united for and what are we united against?

Are we united for peace and security?

Are we united for fairness and justice?

Are we united against terror?

Are we united against tyranny?

Or are we, sadly, united only in cynical and immoral majority votes, that make a mockery of the noble deals on which this body was founded.

Tomorrow is Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, when all Jews stand before G-d to account for their actions. It is an appropriate time for us all - separately and together- to engage in such an accounting.

Mr. President,

I sense a change in the world.

In the face of the global campaign of terror which has left no country free of its devastating impact, the world is beginning to realize what we, in Israel, have long known:

That terrorism is a challenge to humanity as a whole, not just to individual countries.

That the response to this global threat must also be global, if it is to be effective.

That the threat of terrorism anywhere, is a threat to freedom everywhere

- That fighting terror is crucial to our ability to bring peace.

There was a time, when the problems of terror, Islamic fundamentalism and Iranian nuclear ambition, were seen as local problems — Israel's problems — not challenges which threatened the community of nations as a whole. Today, however, our community of nations is more united than ever in the battle against terrorism, whose sole objective is to undermine everything that we seek to build — peace, stability, prosperity and opportunity for all.

Today we are also more united than ever in opposition to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The international community now realizes that Iran - with missiles that can reach London, Paris, Berlin and southern Russia - does not only pose a threat to the security of Israel, but to the security and stability of the whole world.

Indeed, Iran has replaced Saddam Hussein as the world's number one exporter of terror, hate and instability.

The international community now also realizes – as reflected in Security Council Resolution 1559 – that Syria's occupation of Lebanon and its support for Palestinian terror must end if our collective aspirations are to be fulfilled.

And the international community now realizes that terror and tyranny are the twin enemies of individual freedoms and human rights - including the right to life itself – which define our humanity.

Today the community of nations knows that securing freedom and democracy for all the peoples of the world, must be our collective goal. The pictures of human flesh torn apart by the terrorists, from New York to Beslan – and just yesterday, once again, in Jerusalem – are waking us up to the challenge we face.

In this split of unity - and in the name of all those in the world who suffer from terror and tyranny - I call on this Assembly to refocus its priorities

I call on this Assembly to end its obsession with Israel and to ensure that UN resources are allocated more equally and more effectively. Our United Nations must provide solutions to the global challenges of hunger and poverty, of disease and weapons proliferation, of drug trafficking and sustainable development. We must not let the Palestinian desire to vilify Israel distract our global community from the obligation to address the needs of all peoples.

I call on this Assembly to address head-on the active involvement of Iran and Syria in terrorism, and Syria's continued occupation of Lebanon. There can be no place in the community of nations for those who promote the killing of children.

- I call on this Assembly to promote practical measures to help nations cut off all financial and political lifelines to terror.

I call on this Assembly to address the growth of anti-Semitism and other forms of racism and intolerance. I urge you, Mr. President, and the Secretary General, to convene a special session of this Assembly on this crucial matter. We all share the responsibility to educate our children to understanding and tolerance, rather than hatred and inclement.

We must build a united and global coalition, to fight terrorism, racism and anti-Semitism.

We must build a united front against the cold-blooded murderers of our children.

In this battle, Mr. President there is no middle ground. There is no room for explanations or excuses. There are no mitigating circumstances. Declarations and

condemnations are not enough. Every nation, every government, every leader, has the responsibility to act. Those who choose instead to support and sponsor terror must be isolated and held to account for their crimes.

Mr. President,

When I speak of terror and its dangers to life and freedom, I speak from bitter, personal, experience

My own home town of Beersheva suffered a double suicide bombing just three weeks ago. Sixteen innocent people were killed when their commuter buses were blown up. In the middle of an important meeting with visiting officials, I rushed to call my mother and brother, to check that they were alive.

Hamas, which operates freely from Palestinian territory, and receives support and safe haven from the regimes in Damascus and Tehran, proudly claimed responsibility for this horrific attack.

And again yesterday, Mr. President, as I was meeting with the Secretary-General to discuss Middle East peace, I was passed a note informing me of the latest suicide atrocity, in which two more Israelis were blown to pieces by a Palestinian murderer.

In the last year alone, 150 Israelis have been killed and thousands more injured, in over 40 separate suicide bombings and other cold-blooded attacks. Over two hundred other suicide bombing attempts were blocked by our defensive measures.

No Israeli mother is free of the fear that her child may be lost No Israeli child, immune to the terrorists' plans.

In the name of G-d above, and all humanity here on earth, this killing must stop.

Mr. President,

Palestinian terrorism is the key reason that the dream of peace in the Middle East, has not yet become a reality. Combating this terror is crucial to the prospects for peace in our region. No peace initiative can survive, if terrorists continue to enjoy a free hand to undermine it.

The Roadmap recognizes this, calling in Phase One for sustained Palestinian action against terror, the dismantling of terrorist organizations, and the end of incitement in schools and the media.

Sadly, the current Palestinian leadership has refused to fulfill these fundamental obligations, preferring to blame Israel for its failures. The Palestinian side spends more energy fighting Israel here at the UN than it does fighting the terrorists in its own territory.

In the post-9/11 world, this is not acceptable. The Palestinians are not exempt, from the imperatives of the global war on terror. On the contrary, it is in their clear interest to join it. To stand up against Hamas and Islamic Jihad is to stand up for Palestinian rights, not against them.

We urge the international community to recognize this reality and help the voices of reform and moderation within Palestinian society to emerge. The future of the Palestinian people will be determined by the choices that the Palestinians and their leadership make on the ground. The solutions - for the Palestinians and Israelis as one - lie in Gaza and Ramallah, not The Hague or New York.

Mr. President,

Israel is acting in both the diplomatic and the security arenas to deal with the consequences of this chronic failure of the Palestinian leadership:

On the diplomatic front, Israel accepted the Roadmap in May 2003, and we remain committed to its realization.

At this time, however, we have no responsible Palestinian partner ready to join us in this effort. Israel is now planning to leave the Gaza Strip as a means of enhancing security and establishing a new, more promising, platform for a return to negotiations. We are in constant contact with the donor community and the World Bank in a joint effort to rebuild Gaza in the wake of Israel's withdrawal.

On the security front, Israel is building a security fence, to stop the unchecked wave of Palestinian attacks.

Mr. President,

The fence does not take lives. It saves them. Where there is a fence, there is no terror. Where there is no fence, there is terror. The modified route of the fence reflects the necessary balance between the security of our citizens and the welfare of the Palestinian population, as called for by Israel's Supreme Court. Most importantly, the fence is reversible. The lives taken by terror are irreversible. By helping take terrorism out of the equation, the fence contributes to the prospect of a return to negotiations and the realization of the Roadmap's vision of peace.

Mr. President,

Ultimately, we need real contact and dialogue, based on mutual respect for the humanity of the other, if we are to resolve the conflict in the Middle East.

The Government of Israel is ready for such contact. We are ready to talk to any leadership — from Syria, or Lebanon or the Palestinians - who comes to the table without terror, and with the genuine intention of finding mutually acceptable solutions to our differences.

Mr. President,

Tomorrow, Yom Kippur, is a day of prayer, of fasting, and of soul-searching.

In Beersheva, in a synagogue named after my father, I will be praying together with those who recently buried their murdered children.

I will pray that our collective aspiration for life and freedom will prevail over the terrorists and those who sponsor them.

I will pray that G-d will delver peace on earth, for all humanity.

And I will pray that mankind can unite — through the United Nations — to help make this dream become a reality.

**שנה טובה וחתימה טובה לכל עם ישראל**