

Mahmoud Abbas begs UN Security Council to: “save my people”

PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT APPEALS TO UNSC TO IMMEDIATELY STOP “GENOCIDE” IN GAZA

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 7, (NNN-KUNA)—Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has appealed in an address to the Security Council to “save my people” in Gaza from genocide by pressing for an immediate and full cessation of the Israeli aggression.



“Let the cannons fall silent,” he appealed as the Council met late Tuesday to discuss the situation in Gaza on the eve of a Council vote on a draft resolution demanding an “immediate and permanent” ceasefire.

Any procrastination at ending the fighting and killing, he warned, “would only deepen the tragedy of the past few days. Any delay would lead all the peoples of the region, especially youth, to believe that peace was only a mirage.”

The Palestinian people and the wider international community “would accept nothing less of the Council than to immediately stop the violence and suffering,” he stressed, in reference to the draft resolution scheduled to be voted on Wednesday evening.



He said the only way to effectively protect the Palestinian people is by creating an international force that would ensure peace and bring an end to the unjust siege that had afflicted Gaza for so long.

Such a force would also see the opening of all closed points of entry, in Israel, as well as Egypt and also ensure “an immediate and mutual ceasefire.”

He supported, in this regard, the plan set out earlier Tuesday by Presidents Hosni Mubarak and French President Nicolas Sarkozy who invited the Palestinians and Israelis for an “urgent meeting to reach arrangements and guarantees that would not allow the repeat of the current escalation.”

The guarantees include “securing the borders and opening of the border crossings and lifting the siege.”

Abbas said lifting the siege was non-negotiable and essential for peace to prevail. Once the siege was lifted, he added, the Palestinians would work strenuously to overcome internal differences among Palestinian factions and the Palestinians would not accept any plan that proposes to separate Gaza from Palestinian lands.

He said any resolution adopted by the Council must include the need for the political process to continue under effective international supervision, towards the creation of a Palestinian state on the

boarders of 1967, and that all Palestinian detainees would be released.

“Give (the Palestinian people) the peace they deserve today and put an end to genocide and destruction, don’t let one more Palestinian mother cry for her children. Let my people live. Let my people be free,” he added.

Addressing the Council, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal said the Council’s duty, when a conflict erupts, is to “halt it at the earliest possible time,” which was not the case when the Israeli aggression on Gaza began 11 days ago.

“Either the Security Council deals with our legitimate issues with seriousness and responsibility...or we will be forced to turn our backs and consider what options present themselves,” he said.

He recalled when the Council reacted promptly and decisively with the situation in Georgia and contained the situation, ended the fighting and brought about the withdrawal of foreign troops. This, he said, “certainly raises serious questions about the credibility of the Security Council and the whole system of international peace and security.”

“There is no way out of this crisis except through a clear and explicit resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire and lifting of the siege,” he said.

Abbas supported the plan set out earlier Tuesday by Presidents Hosni Mubarak and French President Nicolas Sarkozy who invited the Palestinians and Israelis for an “urgent meeting to reach arrangements and guarantees that would not allow the repeat of the current escalation.”

He argued that the Arab draft resolution on the Council’s table does not only aim at stopping the military operation, but also to deal with the causes that have led to it. The lifting of the siege, calming the situation and placing of the necessary monitoring process will guarantee the permanence of the solution. “Only this will guarantee the security of Israel, Palestine, and the security and stability of the region,” he said.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told the Council that the ongoing attacks against Israel showed that “new arrangements were necessary, not a return to the status quo ante” and called on the international community to assist in the reconstruction of Gaza. She said the Israeli prime minister had informed her that Israel would open a humanitarian corridor Wednesday. While welcoming the Egyptian-French initiative, she said a solution must be found on the short term, but it must be a solution that does not allow Hamas to use Gaza as a launching pad. It must also be a solution that allowed for opening the crossings.

“We are pleased by and wish to commend the statement of president -- the president of Egypt and to follow up on that initiative,” she said.

“The time had long since come when Palestinians, who deserved to live in their own state, would get their state, and that Israelis who wished for peace and security, would have that peace and security.

“Although the challenges of the moment in Gaza must be resolved urgently, there must also be a focus on creating the conditions that would ultimately lead to a real peace,” she added.

Council President, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner expressed satisfaction that after two days of discussions in the region, Sarkozy had managed to have the beginnings of negotiations for a ceasefire and he is awaiting the Israeli response. Israeli UN envoy Gabriela Shalev said her government is “seriously” considering the joint initiative.

He said any resolution adopted by the Council must include the need for the political process to continue under effective international supervision, towards the creation of a Palestinian state on the borders of 1967, and that all Palestinian detainees would be released.

Kouchner called for a ceasefire that guarantees a permanent opening of crossings, a halt to the smuggling of arms into Gaza and an international monitoring mechanism.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the Council that the only answer to the crisis in Gaza is an end to the violence. “Whatever the rationale of the combatants, only an end to violence and a political way forward can deliver long-term security and peace,” he said. Ban said he was “gratified” at the Egyptian-French initiative for a “way out of the present impasse.” The Council’s 15 members plus Palestine, Israel, the League of Arab States and the 10 members of its Committee on Palestine took the floor to call for a ceasefire and ease the blockade on Gaza.

More speakers are scheduled to address the Council Wednesday and a vote on an Arab draft resolution demanding an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza is scheduled to be taken later Wednesday.

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