

## **Klaus Netter at United Nations Human Rights Council:**

Mr/Mme President,

Human rights mechanisms such as this Council often see their role as to name-and-shame human rights abusers. Unless the abuser is Hamas. In that case, the Council will ignore-and-obscure. We must ask what it will take for this Council to pronounce the name "Hamas"?

Despite the fact that Hamas initiated and escalated the conflict last summer, this Council could not bring itself to condemn by name the terrorist organization that rules Gaza in its resolution calling for a commission of inquiry. Following the lead of that resolution, the Commission has issued a report that devotes few of its pages to Hamas war crimes. And, to bring the cycle to its logical conclusion, we expect to see a resolution at the end of this session that blasts Israel while only briefly mentioning the generic "Palestinian militants" or "the Palestinian side," or worse still, leaves that side unmentioned.

There is no moral equivalence between Israel and Hamas. As recently confirmed by a group of international military experts, Israel far exceeded the obligations of International Humanitarian Law in its counter-terrorism operations last summer. Hamas, on the other hand, dug tunnels into Israeli territory with the sole aim of carrying out horrendous terrorist attacks against Israeli farming communities near the border. Hamas fired missiles indiscriminately at Israeli cities throughout the country. Hamas stored weapons and fired from civilian areas. Hamas leaders built bunkers for themselves under hospitals in Gaza, and from those bunkers cowardly ordered Palestinian civilians to become human shields for Hamas weapons and tunnels by ignoring Israeli warnings to evacuate such areas.

Council resolutions that attack Israel or try to create a moral equivalence between a democratic state carrying out a just self-defense operation and a ruthless terrorist organization only serve to perpetuate the conflict. If this Council cares about peace, it must take a stand against Hamas, and do so by name. This Council owes so much to Palestinian and Israeli civilians who were victims of Hamas aggression.

Thank you, Mr/Mme President.