

# Ron Prozor, Israel Ambassador to UN, Speech at General Assembly Question of Palestine Debate, November 24, 2014



Mr. President,

I stand before the world as a proud representative of the State of Israel and the Jewish people. I stand tall before you knowing that truth and morality are on my side. And yet, I stand here knowing that today in this Assembly, truth will be turned on its head and morality cast aside.

The fact of the matter is that when members of the international community speak about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a fog descends to cloud all logic and moral clarity. The result isn't realpolitik, its surrealpolitik.

The world's unrelenting focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an injustice to tens of millions of victims of tyranny and terrorism in the Middle East. As we speak, Yazidis, Bahai, Kurds, Christians and Muslims are being executed and expelled by radical extremists at a rate of 1,000 people per month.

How many resolutions did you pass last week to address this crisis? And how many special sessions did you call for? The answer is zero. What does this say about international concern for human life? Not much, but it speaks volumes about the hypocrisy of the international community.

I stand before you to speak the truth. **Of the 300 million Arabs in the Middle East and North Africa, less than half a percent are truly free - and they are all citizens of Israel.**

Israeli Arabs are some of the most educated Arabs in the world. They are our leading physicians and surgeons, they are elected to our parliament, and they serve as judges on our Supreme Court. Millions of men and women in the Middle East would welcome these opportunities and freedoms.

Nonetheless, nation after nation, will stand at this podium today and criticize Israel – the small island of democracy in a region plagued by tyranny and oppression.

Mr. President,

**Our conflict has never been about the establishment of a Palestinian state. It has always been about the existence of the Jewish state.**

Sixty seven years ago this week, on November 29, 1947, the United Nations voted to partition the land into a Jewish state and an Arab state. Simple. The Jews said yes. The Arabs said no. But they didn't just say no. Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon launched a war of annihilation against our newborn state.

This is the historical truth that the Arabs are trying to distort. The Arabs' historic mistake continues to be felt – in lives lost in war, lives lost to terrorism, and lives scarred by the Arab's narrow political interests.

According to the United Nations, about 700,000 Palestinians were displaced in the war initiated by the Arabs themselves. At the same time, some 850,000 Jews were forced to flee from Arab countries.

Why is it, that 67 years later, the displacement of the Jews has been completely forgotten by this institution while the displacement of the Palestinians is the subject of an annual debate?

The difference is that Israel did its utmost to integrate the Jewish refugees into society. The Arabs did just the opposite.

The worst oppression of the Palestinian people takes place in Arab nations. **In most of the Arab world, Palestinians are denied citizenship and are aggressively discriminated against. They are barred from owning land and prevented from entering certain professions.**

And yet none - not one - of these crimes are mentioned in the resolutions before you.

If you were truly concerned about the plight of the Palestinian people there would be one, just one, resolution to address the thousands of Palestinians killed in Syria. And if you were so truly concerned about the Palestinians there would be at least one resolution to denounce the treatment of Palestinians in Lebanese refugee camps.

But there isn't. The reason is that today's debate is not about speaking for peace or speaking for the Palestinian people – it is about speaking against Israel. It is nothing but a hate and bashing festival against Israel.

Mr. President,

The European nations claim to stand for Libert ,  galit , Fraternit  - freedom, equality, and brotherhood – but nothing could be farther from the truth.

I often hear European leaders proclaim that Israel has the right to exist in secure borders. That's very nice. But I have to say – it makes about as much sense as me standing here and proclaiming Sweden's right to exist in secure borders.

When it comes to matters of security, Israel learned the hard way that we cannot rely on others – certainly not Europe.

In 1973, on Yom Kippur – the holiest day on the Jewish calendar - the surrounding Arab nations launched an attack against Israel. In the hours before the war began, **Golda Meir**, our Prime Minister then, made the difficult decision not to launch a preemptive strike. The Israeli Government understood that if we launched a preemptive strike, we would lose the support of the international community.

As the Arab armies advanced on every front, the situation in Israel grew dire. Our casualty count was growing and we were running dangerously low on weapons and ammunition. In this, our hour of need, **President Nixon** and **Secretary of State Henry Kissinger**, agreed to send Galaxy planes loaded with tanks and ammunition to resupply our troops. The only problem was that the Galaxy planes needed to refuel on route to Israel.

**The Arab States were closing in and our very existence was threatened – and yet, Europe was not even willing to let the planes refuel. The U.S. stepped in once again and negotiated that the planes be allowed to refuel in the Azores.**

**The government and people of Israel will never forget that when our very existence was at stake, only one country came to our aid – the United States of America.**

Israel is tired of hollow promises from European leaders. The Jewish people have a long memory. We will never ever forget that you failed us in the 1940s. You failed us in 1973. And you are failing us again today.

Every European parliament that voted to prematurely and unilaterally recognize a Palestinian state is giving the Palestinians exactly what they want - statehood without peace. By handing them a state on a silver platter, you are rewarding unilateral actions and taking away any incentive for the Palestinians to negotiate or compromise or renounce violence. You are sending the message that the Palestinian Authority can sit in a government with terrorists and incite violence against Israel without paying any price.

The first E.U. member to officially recognize a Palestinian state was Sweden. One has to wonder why the Swedish Government was so anxious to take this step. When it comes to other conflicts in our region, the Swedish Government calls for direct negotiations between the parties – but for the Palestinians, surprise, surprise, they roll out the red carpet.

**State Secretary Söder** may think she is here to celebrate her government's so-called historic recognition, when in reality it's nothing more than an historic mistake.

The Swedish Government may host the Nobel Prize ceremony, but there is nothing noble about their cynical political campaign to appease the Arabs in order to get a seat on the Security Council. Nations on the Security Council should have sense, sensitivity, and sensibility. **Well, the Swedish Government has shown no sense, no sensitivity and no sensibility. Just nonsense.**

Israel learned the hard way that listening to the international community can bring about devastating consequences. In 2005, we unilaterally dismantled every settlement and removed every citizen from the Gaza Strip. Did this bring us any closer to peace? Not at all. It paved the way for Iran to send its terrorist proxies to establish a terror stronghold on our doorstep.

I can assure you that we won't make the same mistake again. **When it comes to our security, we cannot and will not rely on others – Israel must be able to defend itself by itself.**

Mr. President,

The State of Israel is the land of our forefathers – **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**. It is the land where **Moses** led the Jewish people, where **David** built his palace, where **Solomon** built the Jewish Temple, and where **Isaiah** saw a vision of eternal peace.

For thousands of years, Jews have lived continuously in the land of Israel. We endured through the rise and fall of the Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek and Roman Empires. And we endured through thousands of years of persecution, expulsions and crusades. The bond between the Jewish people and the Jewish land is unbreakable.

Nothing can change one simple truth - Israel is our home and Jerusalem is our eternal capital.

At the same time, we recognize that Jerusalem has special meaning for other faiths. Under Israeli sovereignty, all people – and I will repeat that, all people - regardless of religion and nationality can visit the city's holy sites. And we intend to keep it this way. The only ones trying to change the status quo on the Temple Mount are Palestinian leaders.

**President Abbas** is telling his people that Jews are contaminating the Temple Mount. He has called for days of rage and urged Palestinians to prevent Jews from visiting the Temple Mount using (quote) "all means" necessary. These words are as irresponsible as they are unacceptable.

**You don't have to be Catholic to visit the Vatican, you don't have to be Jewish to visit the Western Wall, but some Palestinians would like to see the day when only Muslims can visit the Temple Mount.**

You, the international community, are lending a hand to extremists and fanatics. You, who preach tolerance and religious freedom, should be ashamed. Israel will never let this happen. We will make sure that the holy places remain open to all people of all faiths for all time.

Mr. President,

No one wants peace more than Israel. No one needs to explain the importance of peace to parents who have sent their child to defend our homeland. No one knows the stakes of success or failure better than we Israelis do. The people of Israel have shed too many tears and buried too many sons and daughters.

We are ready for peace, but we are not naïve. Israel's security is paramount. Only a strong and secure Israel can achieve a comprehensive peace.

The past month should make it clear to anyone that Israel has immediate and pressing security needs. In recent weeks, Palestinian terrorists have shot and stabbed our citizens and twice driven their cars into crowds of pedestrians. Just a few days ago, terrorists armed with axes and a gun savagely attacked Jewish worshipers during morning prayers. We have reached the point when Israelis can't even find sanctuary from terrorism in the sanctuary of a synagogue.

**These attacks didn't emerge out of a vacuum. They are the results of years of indoctrination and incitement.** A Jewish proverb teaches: "The instruments of both death and life are in the power of the tongue."

**As a Jew and as an Israeli, I know with utter certainty that when our enemies say they want to attack us, they mean it.**

**Hamas's genocidal charter calls for the destruction of Israel and the murder of Jews worldwide.** For years, Hamas and other terrorist groups have sent suicide bombers into our cities, launched rockets into our towns, and sent terrorists to kidnap and murder our citizens.

And what about the Palestinian Authority? It is leading a systemic campaign of incitement. **In schools, children are being taught that 'Palestine' will stretch from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. In mosques, religious leaders are spreading vicious libels accusing Jews of destroying Muslim holy sites. In sports stadiums, teams are named after terrorists. And in newspapers, cartoons urge Palestinians to commit terror attacks against Israelis.**

Children in most of the world grow up watching cartoons of Mickey Mouse singing and dancing. **Palestinian children also grow up watching Mickey Mouse, but on Palestinians national television, a twisted figure dressed as Mickey Mouse dances in an explosive belt and chants "Death to America and death to the Jews."**

I challenge you to stand up here today and do something constructive for a change. Publically denounce the violence, denounce the incitement, and denounce the culture of hate.

Most people believe that at its core, the conflict is a battle between Jews and Arabs or Israelis and Palestinians. They are wrong. **The battle that we are witnessing is a battle between those who sanctify life and those who celebrate death.**

Following the savage attack in a Jerusalem synagogue, celebrations erupted in Palestinian towns and villages. People were dancing in the street and distributing candy. Young men posed with axes, loudspeakers at mosques called out congratulations, and the terrorists were hailed as "martyrs" and "heroes."

This isn't the first time that we saw the Palestinians celebrate the murder of innocent civilians. We saw them rejoice after every terrorist attack on Israeli civilians and they even took to the streets to celebrate the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center right here in New York City.

Imagine the type of state this society would produce. Does the Middle East really need another terror-ocracy? Some members of the international community are aiding and abetting its creation.

Mr. President,

**As we came into the United Nations, we passed the flags of all 193 member States. If you take the time to count, you will discover that there are 15 flags with a crescent and 25 flags with a cross. And then there is one flag with a Jewish Star of David.** Amidst all the nations of the world there is one state – just one small nation state for the Jewish people.

And for some people, that is one too many.

As I stand before you today I am reminded of all the years when Jewish people paid for the world's ignorance and indifference in blood. Those days are no more.

**We will never apologize for being a free and independent people in our sovereign state. And we will never apologize for defending ourselves.**

**To the nations that continue to allow prejudice to prevail over truth, I say "J'accuse."**

I accuse you of hypocrisy. I accuse you of duplicity.

I accuse you of lending legitimacy to those who seek to destroy our State.

I accuse you of speaking about Israel's right of self-defense in theory, but denying it in practice.

And I accuse you of demanding concessions from Israel, but asking nothing of the Palestinians.

In the face of these offenses, the verdict is clear. **You are not for peace and you are not for the Palestinian people. You are simply against Israel.**

Members of the international community have a choice to make.

You can recognize Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, or permit the Palestinian leadership to deny our history without consequence.

**You can publically proclaim that the so-called "claim of return" is a non-starter, or you can allow this claim to remain the major obstacle to any peace agreement.**

You can work to end Palestinian incitement, or stand by as hatred and extremism take root for generations to come.

You can prematurely recognize a Palestinian state, or you can encourage the Palestinian Authority to break its pact with Hamas and return to direct negotiations.

The choice is yours. You can continue to steer the Palestinians off course or pave the way to real and lasting peace.

Thank you, Mr. President.