



CHAIR OF  
THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT



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**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**SPECIAL SESSION**

**THE GRAVE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE  
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY INCLUDING THE  
RECENT AGGRESSION ON THE OCCUPIED GAZA STRIP**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. JUAN ANTONIO FERNÁNDEZ  
PALACIOS, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA, ON BEHALF OF THE NON-  
ALIGNED MOVEMENT.**

(Check against delivery)

Geneva, 9 January 2009

Mr. President,

I have the honor and the responsibility to address this special session of the Human Rights Council on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. President,

While the whole world was celebrating the end of the year 2008, hundreds of Palestinians, including women and children, were dying under the bombs of the Israeli air force and artillery. Still not satisfied with the result, the Israeli army launched a complete ground operation at the beginning of 2009.

Taking advantage of the festivities and demobilization of the world for initiating a military aggression is not moral, and simply not fair. Doing it with the added felony of brutalizing and massacring a whole people is a criminal act that must be repudiated by all.

Mr. President,

Allow me to make some arithmetic calculations, in order to have a clear picture of the situation. The Gaza Strip is one of the most highly populated areas in the world. In a surface of around 300 square kilometres live near 1.5 million peoples. This means that in every single square meter of the territory of Gaza, we can find an average of 5 Palestinian citizens. Could any weapon, no matter how "intelligent" it might be, make a difference between combatants and civilians in these conditions? Of course not.

In addition, the Israeli troops are not only looking for military objectives. They are targeting everything, from a mosque to a UN school, from a hospital to a university.

With such indiscriminate practices, the results are the images that we all are watching every day since last 27 December. Children and women dead and injured, infrastructure in ruins, no electricity or water, people wounded with no proper medical attention because of the lack of doctors, ambulances and medical supplies.

A real humanitarian disaster is happening, in addition to the conditions created by the continuous blockade suffered during the last two years by the people of Gaza, and also in addition to the brutal and colonial occupation of this territory by Israel for almost 40 years.

Mr. President,

In the light of the recent events, the NAM Coordinating Bureau, in New York, adopted on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009, two Declarations strongly condemning the military aggression, including airstrikes and ground invasion, carried out by Israel, the occupying Power.

In particular, NAM condemns the escalation of the Israeli military aggression, in flagrant defiance of the calls by the international community for a cessation of military activities and of the regional and international diplomatic efforts underway to resolve the current crisis.

As NAM, we reiterate today that the Israeli military aggression against the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip is unacceptable and constitutes a grave breach of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. It also fuels the cycle of violence and threatens international peace and security as well as the fragile peace process between the two sides.

NAM calls for an immediate cessation of all military activities and violence and for the implementation of an immediate general ceasefire.

The Movement expresses once again its grave concern about the deepening humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza as a result of the current military actions, the continued closure of all border crossings and the obstruction of access of humanitarian aid, including food and medicines, and the reduction of fuel and electricity supplies to the Gaza Strip by Israel.

Mr. President,

Since the very beginning of the aggression against the Gaza Strip, the NAM, together with other groups of countries, has been active in meeting the highest officials of relevant international organizations in Geneva to put them aware of the gravity of the situation.

On January 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, the NAM, the OIC, the Arab Group and the African Group requested officially this special session of the Council to address the dramatic moment that the Palestinian people is going through.

Mr. President,

It is time for action. The response of the Human Rights Council to this humanitarian catastrophe must be strong and determined. Concrete measures should be taken. NAM expresses its hope that the draft resolution that we have in front of us, could be adopted with the widest support of the members of the Council, and if possible by consensus.

Finally Mr. President, the Movement is convinced that there is no military solution to the conflict. NAM reaffirms its commitment to a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It is no more the time for "cast lead" or to make "root canal" treatments. It is time to build peace, to build a better future for the peoples of the Middle East, and to ensure the right of the Palestinian people to live in a free, independent and sovereign State of Palestine, on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

I thank you.