

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
17 September 2015

Original: English

Identical letters dated 17 September 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Once again, radical Islamic operatives have used the occasion of a Jewish holiday to stage provocations and instigate violence on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. These groups have a long track record of attacking Jews on their holiest days, at their holiest place.

On Sunday, as Jews around the world prepared to celebrate Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, a group of militant Islamist agitators deliberately disrupted visits by tourists and Israelis to the Temple Mount complex, the holiest site in Judaism, and instigated a violent clash with Israeli police. The operatives prepared for this violent confrontation by stockpiling rocks, planks, wooden sheets and fireworks. They also prepared lethal weapons such as Molotov firebombs and explosive devices in advance of the calculated provocation. When Israeli police entered the area to maintain order and ensure free access, the operatives unleashed their attack. The violent attacks continued for three consecutive days, throughout the Jewish festival, as the masked operatives threw rocks, firebombs and firecrackers at the police, who responded with non-lethal riot dispersal measures.

I wish to emphasize that these three days of Palestinian violence on the Temple Mount were not provoked by any Israeli activity. I would also like to make clear that at no point did Israeli police forces enter the mosque. All damage sustained at the mosque was a direct result of the activities of the militants. As a matter of policy, the Israeli police do not enter the mosque itself. Furthermore, Israeli police officers are not posted on the Temple Mount and only enter the area in specific cases when riots have to be controlled.

The violence against Jews has not been limited to those who seek to visit the Temple Mount. Alexander Lebelovitch, age 64, was returning home from a Rosh Hashana dinner Sunday night when Palestinians attacked his car with a barrage of stones, causing him to lose control of his vehicle and crash into a roadside ditch. Mr. Lebelovitch, a father of three, died from his injuries Monday morning. While stone-throwing has been all but ignored by the United Nations and the Security Council, this attack proves, once again, that stones can kill. Accordingly, Israel takes measures necessary to deter and prevent these serious attacks.

As I stated above, this is not the first time that such groups have planned provocations for the Jewish holidays. Almost one year ago, on the eve of the Jewish festival of Sukkot, masked operatives carried out a nearly identical attack, attacking



visitors to the Temple Mount and Israeli police. This past July, as Jews marked Tisha B'av, a day of commemoration and mourning, Palestinians barricaded themselves inside the Al-Aqsa mosque in order to attack police and disturb visitors to the Temple Mount. Instead of respecting holy sites, they used them as weapons depots, turning a holy site into a terror site.

We would expect Palestinians and the Arab world to condemn such profanation of holy sites, but their silence on this matter is deafening. Instead, the Palestinian Representative to the United Nations further inflames the situation by spreading misinformation and deception. In his letter to the President of the Security Council on 14 September 2015, Representative Mansour accused Israelis of breaking into the Al-Aqsa mosque compound and damaging part of the mosque. These allegations are completely and utterly false. He distorts reality in order to deceive the international community, to further incite the Palestinian public against Israelis and to change the status quo.

Israel is determined to safeguard the holy sites of the three monotheistic faiths in Jerusalem. Prime Minister Netanyahu has repeatedly declared that the Government of Israel is committed to maintaining the status quo on the Temple Mount and will oppose any attempt to change it by force. The status quo protects the right of Muslims to pray in the mosque, as well as the freedom of all people, whether Muslims, Christians, Jews or others, to visit the Temple Mount. Just yesterday, he stated: "We are in favor of strictly maintaining the status quo on the Temple Mount."

This is a matter of great urgency, and it is imperative that you clearly and publicly call this three-day campaign of violence for what it is: an unprovoked and premeditated attempt to instigate violence and prevent access to the Temple Mount. Any attempt to equivocate or avoid a clear statement denouncing those responsible will only empower these violent groups, encourage further destabilizing activities and further inflame an already dangerous situation.

The situation is too volatile for your usual call for both sides to show restraint. In order to prevent further violence and possible escalation, you must identify those responsible by name. I call upon you to publicly condemn the Islamic groups responsible for this campaign of violence, and to affirm your support for maintaining the status quo.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ron **Prosor**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative