



Security Council

Distr.: General
17 April 2020

Original: English

Identical letters dated 17 April 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Following the recent call of the international community for global solidarity in the face of COVID-19 and the multiple endeavours launched by the United Nations to mitigate its outbreak, I would like to inform you of the recent efforts undertaken by my Government to assist in curbing the spread of COVID-19.

Recognizing that COVID-19 does not distinguish between peoples or recognize borders, Israel has strengthened its cooperation with the United Nations and the Palestinian Authority in order to mitigate the virus's disastrous effects in our region. This effort was exemplified by the recent phone call between President Reuven Rivlin and Mahmoud Abbas.

Furthermore, Israel has called on the international community to support the United Nations 90-day programme and direct international aid so that the Palestinian Authority can be better equipped to manage the COVID-19 crisis. This call was echoed in a recent meeting organized by Israel, in which multiple stakeholders discussed how to better coordinate national and international efforts at aiding the Gaza Strip.

On the ground, the ongoing cooperation between Israel, the United Nations and the Palestinian Authority has yielded many results, such as:

- (a) Joint consultations and deliberations between expert-level officials;
- (b) Training and guidance of Palestinian medical teams. Recently, medical training was held in Jericho by high-level Israeli medical professionals;
- (c) Delivery of COVID-19-related aid. In the past weeks, Israel delivered 1,000 protection kits and 100 litres of alcohol-based disinfectant to the Palestinian Authority.

In the Gaza Strip, Israel has continued to monitor the situation closely, and has worked with the Palestinian Ministry of Health and the United Nations. Israel has delivered hundreds of testing and protection kits to the Gaza Strip, and stands ready to assist in laboratory testing. Moreover, commercial crossings into Gaza will remain open for the transfer of goods and assistance. In the past weeks, 206 tons of medical supplies, 12 tons of food and 50 tons of building materials entered the Gaza Strip.

These recent encouraging developments have not escaped the eyes of the international community, as the Security Council briefing on the Middle East held on 30 March 2020 showed. Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov praised the “far-



reaching measures that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority have taken to try and contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus”, with the Security Council welcoming the cooperation and hoping that this good will on the part of both sides will continue well past the end of the pandemic.

It is, therefore, regrettable to note the recent accusations made by the Palestinian observer, who chooses to hinder the cooperation by highlighting conflict over solidarity and division over cooperation. In doing so, he has chosen to politicize the terrible COVID-19 outbreak to advance his own agenda. The Palestinian Authority must decide if incitement against Israel is more important than fruitful cooperation intended to save Palestinian lives. It would better serve the global cause against COVID-19 by delivering financial and medical aid to the Gaza Strip, and continuing to cooperate with Israel and the United Nations in such efforts, instead of levelling further accusations.

Israel remains committed to the global effort to combat the spread of COVID-19, and works tirelessly with international partners towards this end. I reiterate Israel’s strong desire to strengthen cooperation with all parties in order to see this crisis through.

I call for the international community to maintain its commitment to combating the spread of COVID-19 in the face of any pressures or interruptions in these challenging times. For its part, Israel stands ready to support such efforts.

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

(Signed) **Danny Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
