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The situation in the Middle East
Question of Palestine

**Letter dated 29 November 2000 from the Permanent
Representative of France to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement on the Middle East issued on 20 November 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter and the annexed statement circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 40 and 41, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jean-David **Levitte**
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 29 November 2000 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the Middle East issued on 20 November 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

For weeks now lives have been lost on a daily basis, both Palestinian and Israeli. This is an intolerable situation. The European Union appeals to both sides' sense of responsibility not to respond to provocation.

The lack of progress in the peace process, including on the settlements issue, is the source of the Palestinian community's frustration and the violence.

The European Union urges Israeli and Palestinian leaders to comply fully, and without delay, with the undertakings entered into at Sharm el Sheikh five weeks ago and in Gaza on 2 November.

It calls on the Israeli authorities:

- to pull back their armed forces to the positions they occupied before 28 September and to end restrictions on the movement of goods and persons in the Palestinian territories;
- to lift the financial sanctions imposed on the Palestinian Authority;
- if action by the security forces appears unavoidable, to use non-lethal means only, as called for by the United Nations Secretary-General.

It calls on the Palestinian Authority:

- to make every endeavour to bring the violence to an end;
- to issue strict instructions to the security forces to stop shooting at Israelis, in accordance with the statement made by President Arafat.

The European Union calls on the Fact-Finding Commission, set up following the Sharm el Sheikh Summit and in which the European Union is represented by Javier Solana, Secretary-General and High Representative for the common foreign and security policy, to commence its work on the ground without delay.

It supports the move by the United Nations Secretary-General to examine with the parties arrangements for an observer mission in accordance with the Security Council's mandate.

It continues to support the endeavours and personal commitment of President Clinton in the search for peace.

The goal naturally remains a resumption of the dialogue and the peace talks, as this is the only way out of the current crisis. The protagonists are well aware of this. Putting a stop to the violence is a matter of vital urgency.

The European Union is willing to make a contribution. It is ready to assume its responsibilities.