

**ISRAEL**

Thank you Chair,

This week, in Israel and in Jewish communities around the world, we celebrate Hanukkah, the triumph of light over darkness, the victory against all odds of the small but mighty Jewish Maccabees over those who sought to destroy them.

Today, we face another evil that wishes to destroy us. Hamas' brutal terror attack against Israel on October 7<sup>th</sup>, was a part of their declared goal of destroying the State of Israel.

On Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, thousands of Hamas terrorists infiltrated Israel and massacred over 1200 innocent people: men, women, children and babies, the largest number of Jews murdered in a single day since the Holocaust. Women were raped, tortured and mutilated, children dismembered and beheaded, babies burned alive. Entire families were slaughtered. Entire communities were decimated.

In that brutal terror attack, 237 men, women, children and babies were abducted and dragged into captivity in Gaza, many from countries represented here today, including Thailand, Argentina, Germany, the United States, France, Russia, Hungary, Poland, the Philippines, Romania, Tanzania, The UK, Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Mexico, Nepal, The Netherlands, Serbia, South Africa, Ukraine and Uruguay.

138 of them, the youngest of whom is now an 11 month old baby, are still being held hostage in Gaza- for over 67 days. They continue to be denied any humanitarian rights, as the Red Cross has not received access to visit them.

For 67 days now, 250,000 Israelis have been displaced in their own country, while over 12,000 rockets have been indiscriminately fired at Israel, with Hamas intentionally targeting civilians, while using their own civilians as human shields.

In stark contrast to Hamas, since the beginning of this war, the IDF has made great efforts to minimize harm to civilians and has taken steps to ensure humanitarian needs are met, despite Hamas's efforts to prevent us from doing so.

Israel enables the passage of humanitarian supplies into the Gaza Strip, and has established humanitarian corridors, in order to provide safe passage for Gaza residents to evacuate from areas in which operations are being conducted. The IDF uses various methods to warn civilians from a planned strike on a military target, including through leaflets and phone calls.

Israel acts in full accordance with international law. The enemy that we face, has no regard for international law or humanity. Hamas has committed unimaginable atrocities and crimes against humanity, and must be held accountable. Gaza must be freed from Hamas, for Israel's sake, for the Palestinian people's sake and for the sake of the entire free world.

We did not choose this war. Our choice, as a people and as a nation, has always been the choice of peace. But when faced with an enemy that seeks to destroy us, Israel, like any sovereign nation, has the right and responsibility to defend itself. Israel will continue to fight until the goals of this war have been achieved- the dismantling of Hamas and the destruction of its military capabilities, the elimination of the terror threat from the Gaza Strip, and the return of all of the hostages.

We call on the international community to condemn the savage terror acts of Hamas, to demand the immediate and unconditional release of all of the hostages still being held captive in Gaza, and to stand in solidarity with Israel as it acts to defend its country and people from those who seek its destruction. Standing with Israel now is standing against evil, for humanity.

Chair,

This week we are celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention, as highlighted in the forthcoming Atlanta Declaration on accountability tabled by the United States. Almost all of the countries in the world are parties to the Convention, demonstrating the significant place of the Convention in the global fight against corruption. The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the Conference of States Parties, hosted here in beautiful Atlanta, allows for the international community to emphasize the need to join hands in this fight. Israel is co-organizing a side event tomorrow, which will focus on international cooperation in the transnational fight against corruption, embodying this very idea.

Israel is constantly engaged in enhancing the capacities of relevant government bodies, with the aim of facilitating inter-agency cooperation in the fight against corruption. Over the past few years, these efforts have led to significant achievements in the fields of prevention and enforcement of corruption, highlighting Israel's zero tolerance approach to corrupt acts, without regard to rank or position.

Israel also believes that civil society is invaluable in efforts to prevent and combat corruption. Such organizations can, and should, play an important role in uncovering corrupt acts and assisting the relevant enforcement bodies in performing their missions. This integrative approach is a hallmark of all sincere anti-corruption efforts. It is gratifying to witness how the various resolutions tabled for the COSP this year have placed emphasis on the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach, particularly the emphasis on actors engaged in advancing the causes of gender

equality, integrity in the private sector and the effectiveness of anti-corruption strategies.

In closing, we would like to thank the dedicated staff of the UNODC Secretariat for all their hard work. We would also like express our great appreciation for our gracious host, and greatest friend, the United States of America and to the local authorities for facilitating the 10<sup>th</sup> COSP, which will be a milestone in anti-corruption efforts for years to come. I wish all the delegates a fruitful discussion. Thank you.