Europe agrees to back UN resolution condemning Hamas terror group

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The European Union agreed to support a US-sponsored United Nations General Assembly resolution condemning Hamas, following negotiations with Washington, diplomats said Thursday.

The draft resolution will likely be voted on in the United Nations General Assembly on Monday, an official in Israel’s mission to the UN told The Times of Israel on Thursday.

After the US agreed to make some changes to the initial draft, the EU on Thursday agreed to support the text. All 28 EU member states are expected to vote in favor.

“All 28 members will support the US text,” a European diplomat told AFP.

If adopted, the resolution would be the first General Assembly vote to condemn the Palestinian terrorist group. The EU’s support dramatically increases its chances of passing, though it is unclear whether it will guarantee the needed simple majority among the UN’s 193 member states.

Earlier this week, European diplomats said there were disagreements on the proposed US text, notably including references to UN resolutions and to the two-state solution.

The Europeans had asked, and the Americans agreed, to insert a clause that states that a future Israeli-Palestinian peace deal should be “in accordance with international law, and bearing in mind relevant UN resolutions.”

However, the draft still does not make explicit mention of a two-state solution, though virtually all recently passed UN resolutions passed on the subject do.

Both the US and the EU recognize Hamas as a terrorist organization.

The new draft of resolution, entitled, “Activities of Hamas and Other Militant Groups in Gaza,” also makes explicit mention of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, another terror group with a large presence in the Gaza Strip.

The draft “condemns Hamas for repeatedly firing rockets into Israel and for inciting violence, thereby putting civilians at risk” and demands that “Hamas and other militant actors including Palestinian Islamic Jihad cease all provocative actions and violent activity, including by using airborne incendiary devices.”

It further condemns Hamas’s use of sources in Gaza “construct military infrastructure, including tunnels to infiltrate Israel and equipment to launch rockets into civilian areas, when such resources could be used to address the critical needs of the civilian population.”

The draft resolution also calls on all parties to fully respect international humanitarian law, “including in regards to the protection of the civilian population.”

It encourages “tangible steps towards intra-Palestinian reconciliation,” as well as “concrete steps to reunite the Gaza Strip and the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority and ensure its effective functioning in the Gaza Strip.”

Addressing the General Assembly’s annual debate on the “Question of Palestine” on Thursday, Israel’s Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon urged the international community to vote in favor of condemning Hamas for the first time in the body’s history.

“Every year, the United Nations adopts at least 20 resolutions specifically to condemn Israel. Not a single one of these resolutions or any GA resolution at all has ever included Hamas,” he said.

“But the international community has an opportunity to take a moral stance and finally condemn Hamas,” Danon said. “If the international community does not condemn Hamas, it is enabling a terrorist organization.”

On Wednesday, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh sent an open letter to General Assembly President Maria Fernanda Espinosa and to its member states, slamming the US-sponsored resolution, arguing it was meant to “delegitimize Palestinian resistance.”

“We in the Islamic Resistance Movement — Hamas are following up with great anger and condemnation the ongoing and miserable efforts by the United States of America, not only by adopting the Israeli narrative of the conflict, but also by providing all the necessary material and moral support for the Israeli occupation to continue its aggression against our people and deprive them of their basic rights of freedom, independence and self-determination, guaranteed by all international conventions and laws,” Haniyeh wrote in the [letter](http://hamas.ps/en/post/1729/hamas-sends-letter-to-unga-president-regarding-us-efforts-to-delegitimise-resistance).

“We stress on the necessity to work hard to thwart the American efforts to condemn the resistance at the UN General Assembly,” the letter added.

Earlier this month, Hamas fired more than 400 rockets and mortar shells at southern Israel from the Gaza Strip in the space of a single day, killing at least one person — a Palestinian man living in Israel with a work permit — and injuring dozens more.

It appeared to be the largest-ever number of projectiles fired at Israel from the coastal enclave in a 24-hour period, more than twice the number fired on any day of the 2014 Gaza war, according to Israeli statistics.

The flareup was sparked after a covert Israeli operation in the Strip went awry, with seven Palestinians, including a Hamas commander, killed in the ensuing gun battle. One Israeli soldier was also killed.

A ceasefire negotiated by Egypt, the UN and others has largely held since then.

Danon responded to the Hamas letter by saying that “a terrorist organization going to the UN for assistance is like a serial killer asking the police for assistance.”

“Hamas speaks about international law while it fires rockets into civilian populations, holds the bodies of IDF soldiers and Israeli citizens, and uses its own people as human shields,” Danon said.

Two apparently mentally ill Israeli civilians — Avera Mengistu and Hisham al-Sayed — who entered Gaza of their own volition in 2014 and 2015, respectively, are currently being held by Hamas, along with the remains of two IDF soldiers, Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul, killed in the 2014 Israel-Gaza war.