**UNHRC Session Timeline: Resolution on Gaza Violence Investigation Approved**

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**UNHRC approves Gaza resolution**

The UNHRC approved on Friday a resolution asking the commission of inquiry to “provide recommendations to protect civilians against any further assaults” in Gaza.

The resolution was approved by a vote of 29-2, with 14 abstentions, following a day-long special session in Geneva. The US and Australia were the only two countries to vote against the resolution.

Croatia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Kenya, Panama, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Switzerland, Togo, Slovakia and the UK all abstained.

The Ukraine and Mongolia were not present at the time of voting.

**UK abstains from vote on resolution**

The UK on Friday stated that is recognizes the "tragic and concerning loss of life" in more than 100 Palestinians killed in the recent spurts of Israeli-Palestinian violence on the Gaza border.

However, it said it is unable to support an investigation that ignores Hamas, as it would not "provide us with true understanding of accountability."

It added that despite its abstention, the UK wants an independent investigation to be conducted into events of the last few weeks.

**Hungary, Australia "cannot agree" to text of resolution**

As the UNHRC session reconvened Friday afternoon, Australia stated that it is concerned the proposed resolution is one-sided, leaving the inquiry open to accusations of bias. Israel is mentioned throughout, it said, but Hamas is not mentioned at all.

Hungary said that an investigation must look into the actions of all parties, and this one does not.

**German representative at the UNHRC session**

Israel must refrain from excessive use of force against unarmed civilians, Germany said during the UNHRC session on Friday afternoon. Likewise, Hamas and those leading the protest must ensure that it remains non-violent. It added that it regrets the text of the resolution does not adequately reflect the situation on the ground.

Speaking on behalf of Croatia and Slovakia, Germany commended Egypt's [decision Friday to maintain the opening of the Rafah crossing](https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Egypts-Sisi-orders-Gaza-border-opened-for-Ramadan-leader-says-on-Twitter-557784) throughout the holy month of Ramadan. It called compliance with international humanitarian law a "cornerstone for peace and security."

Germany, Croatia and Slovakia decided to abstain from voting on the UNHRC resolution on Gaza.

**Palestinian representative at the UNHRC session**

Palestinian Ambassador to the UNHRC Khraishi called peaceful demonstration an "absolute right" on Friday. "Israel and its defenders have given the impression that Palestine occupies Israel. How long will this joke continue?" he asked.

He said that the current Israeli leadership is trying to control the world under the pretext that the country is under threat. "We have said we want peace and the world agrees with us that there should be a two-state solution. But Israel refuses that."

"What do you expect from us? That we will react with joy when you kill us?"

He added that law is not a negotiable matter - it is a set of rules that must be implemented. He stated that the Palestinians are ready to subject themselves to investigations, but that they have no trust in Israeli investigations.

He called Israel out for its hubris, saying it considers itself "above the law." Khraishi concluded by issuing his recommendation for Israel: "Try to be more modest."

**US calls on member states to vote "no" on resolution**

The US representative to the UNHRC stated that the country would vote "no" on the resolution regarding Israeli action in Gaza, and called on other member states to do the same. Israeli Ambassador Shechter called the resolution "devoid of any sense" and said it "deserves to be torn apart."

The US said that the continued insistence of the UNHRC to focus more on Israel than any other states, the resolution's one sided focus, and its failure to hold Hamas to task, is biased and calls into question the UNHRC's credibility.

**South African representative at UNHRC session**

As the UNHRC prepared to vote on a resolution regarding Israel's recent actions in Gaza, South Africa stated that Israel's defense reminds it of the previous apartheid regime's defense of its actions.

It added that the international community can not "pick and choose" which countries to focus on, and to which countries international law applies.

**Canada representative at UNHRC session**

Canada said it was "gravely concerned" by the number of dead and wounded in Gaza and "appalled that a Canadian citizen is among those wounded."

Canada called for an immediate independent investigation to examine the facts on the ground, but stated that it cannot support the biased mandate of the UNHRC investigation that the council is set to vote on.

"We cannot support the resolution before the Council today, as it clearly prejudges the outcome of such an investigation. The resolution is one-sided, and does not advance the prospects for a peaceful, negotiated settlement to this conflict," Canada said.

"The resolution also singles out Israel, without any reference to other actors. Canada’s long-stated position is that we expect all parties to uphold international humanitarian law and human rights law, and this is not reflected in the resolution," Canada said.

**Iceland representative at UNHRC session**

Iceland said that Israel had a right to defend itself but called on it to refrain from disproportionate violence: "The exercise of that right must be proportionate."

"The use of live ammunition and reports of close to 60 fatal casualties raise serious questions on the proportionality of the response," Iceland said.

"At the same time, we urge Palestinian leaders not to inflame the situation further – any demonstration must be peaceful. Those who intentionally place civilians in harm's way are in breach of international law.'

**Ireland representative at UNHRC session**

Ireland said that the people of Ireland profoundly shocked by recent events in Gaza and their thoughts are with those killed. It continued to say that Israel, like all countries, has the right to defend its territory, but it should only be used in cases of threat of loss of life and it believes that most of those killed did not present real threat.

**Russia representative at UNHRC session**

Russia decisively condemned Israeli action, including the "brutal suppression" of protestors. It said they believe the US opening of embassy in Jerusalem additional irritant and could damage peace process.

**Kuwait representative at UNHRC session**

Kuwait said it believes that the people of the world are looking to the UN to take action and that the credibility of the UNHRC is at stake more than ever. It continued to say that it is incumbent on the council to launch a clear strong message.

**Iran representative at UNHRC session**

Iran blames the US for escalating regional tension by opening US embassy in Jerusalem this week, including Gaza violence.

**Turkey representative at UNHRC session**

Turkey at the UNHRC special session said it is "horrified" by recent events in Gaza. This "massacre" is unacceptable, it said. It also condemned the US embassy opening in Jerusalem, claiming such a step will inevitably ignite further tensions in the region. Turkey supports a possible resolution on the Gaza matter and an investigation into the Gaza deaths.

Israeli "impunity" must not prevail, it concluded.

**Syria representative at UNHRC session**

Syria at the UNHRC special session condemned Israeli "massacres" on the Gaza border, and blamed the US for the UN Security Council's "inaction."

**Sweden representative at UNHRC session**

Sweden is appalled by the violence and death toll in Gaza and calls on Israel to respect right to "peaceful protest." Hamas must avoid provocation and use of violence and must not put children in harm's way. Sweden believes that an independent investigation is needed.

**India representative at UNHRC session**

India is "deeply concerned" and "saddened" by Gaza violence. India remains convinced that dialogue is the only viable option, and that a solution should be based on relevant resolutions. India is unwavering in its support for the Palestinian cause, and calls on all sides to exercise restraint.

**French representative at UNHRC session**

France at the UNHRC condemned Israel's violence on the Gaza border, and plans to support a resolution to quell the violence. However, it iterated that it is committed to upholding Israel's security.

It also stated its opposition to the US opening of its embassy in Jerusalem.

**Saudi representative at UNHRC session**

Saudi Arabia condemned Israel's "appalling aggression" against the Palestinian people, which claim many dead and wounded as a result of recent events. "My country wants to reaffirm our principled position for the Palestinian question in line with the Arab Peace Initiative," the representative said.

The kingdom then reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian right to establish an independent state with east Jerusalem as its capital.

**Australia representative at UNHRC session**

Australia stated that it is strongly committed to a two-state solution within internationally recognized borders and does not support actions that diminish this possibility.

International inquiries should be impartial, it said. The Filipino representative at the session later concurred with this statement. Australia then stated that it is giving consideration to all proposals for external investigations.

Australia regrets loss of life, and recognizes that the Gaza border situation is complex. Israel has the right to protect its population, but should also exercise restraint. However, the role of Hamas can not be ignored.

**US representative at UNHRC session**

"The United States remains concerned over the recent outbreak of violence along the Gaza fence. But today’s session is blatantly taking sides and ignoring the real culprit for the recent outbreak of violence, the terrorist organization Hamas. Hamas has even admitted its involvement in the violence when a Hamas official proudly announced that 50 of the 62 killed were members of Hamas," the US said.

"The United States affirms Israel’s right to defend itself. We also condemn in the strongest terms actions by Hamas and other militant groups," it continued.

It gave as an example the Palestinian attack on "the Kerem Shalom Crossing, the biggest entry point in Gaza for fuel, food, and medical supplies."

The US also noted that protestors "sent burning kites adorned with swastikas across the fence, and taken other actions that place civilians’ lives in jeopardy. This is the real story of what is happening in Gaza."

"The scale of violence is quite small compared to the worst human rights situations occurring across the globe. It is hypocritical for this body to spend time and money on this Commission if there are no Commissions looking into human rights and atrocities in the DPRK, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, and the Russian occupation of Crimea," the US said.

"The continued anti-Israel bias of this Council does nothing to promote that future, and the one-sided action proposed by this Council today only further shows that the Human Rights Council is a broken body," the US said.

**Belgium representative speaks at UNHRC session**

Belgium called for an independent investigation and compensation for victims in Gaza. It also stated it expects Israel to only use lethal force as a measure of last resort, but also said Hamas was wrong for pushing people to cross Israel's border.

It further called for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in an appropriate setting, such as the UN.

**European Union statement**

EU statement to UNHRC: "the EU is deeply alarmed by the sharp escalation of violence and loss of human life" and "express our grave concern about the use of excessive force."

It expects Israel to respect the right of peaceful protest and not to use excessive force. Hamas should ensure that the protests remain peaceful. There is a need for independent investigation.

The EU says it remains committed to working with both parties toward the resumption of meaningful negotiations.

**Palestinian Ambassador to the UN in Geneva Khraishi makes case that the Gaza protests are peaceful.**

**Israeli Ambassador Aviva Raz Shechter on PA**

During her address to the UN, Shechter commented on the Palestinian Authority's effect on the situation, saying "It is shameful that the Palestinian Authority is willingly taking part in the implementation of Hamas’s strategy, which is also to harass and violate the human rights of its own population. Let me remind you that this is the same Palestinian Authority which refuses to transfer funds and salaries to Gaza, and remains surprisingly silent about the plight and death of thousands of Palestinians in the Yarmouk camp in Syria."

**Israeli Ambassador Aviva Raz Shechter: "It took this Council four years to relapse to its worse form of anti-Israel obsession."**

Israeli Ambassador Aviva Raz Shechter to UNHRC:

This session empowers Hamas and rewards it terror strategy. We have long known that the human rights of Israeli not on the agenda of this council, now we see that neither are the Gazans. Self-Defense is an obligation, not a choice. This principal that is enshrined under international law.

"We don't see the people of Gaza as our enemies, and Israel deeply regrets any civilian loss of life. Israel unilaterally disengage from Gaza in summer 2005. There is no occupation in Gaza. It is a myth. But the unfortunate outcome of Monday's riots can only be attributed to Hamas's cynical exploitation of its own population, in a violent campaign against Israel," Shechter said.

Shechter made the point that "There is nothing peaceful in Molotov cocktails, explosive devices and meat-cleavers," adding that "It is regrettable that so many Member States allowed themselves to be misled by the false narrative of so-called 'peaceful protests.' By supporting the convening of this session they unwisely embolden the Hamas terror organization".

"This special session, the resolution before you, and its call for a commission of inquiry are yet again politically motivated and won't change the situation on the ground by even one iota," she said.

**11:25 UNHRC special investigator Michael Lynk on Gaza protest**

Lynk: Yes, some threw Molotov cocktails or threw burning kites, but the overwhelming majority were non-violent, armed only with the most human of aspirations, to live free in one's own land.

International community responsible for ensuring that Israel respects international law. Israel obligated to uphold and respect human rights of Palestinians, including the right to peaceful assembly.

Lynk warns that Israeli actions against Gaza fence protestors is a war crime. An attempt to cross the fence does not constitute a threat to life or seriously injury that would justify the use of lethal force.

**UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad al-Hussein**

"Israel, as an occupying power under international law, is obligated to protect the population of Gaza and ensure their welfare," Human Rights Chief Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein stated at the UNHRC special session in Geneva on Friday. "But they are, in essence, caged in a toxic slum from birth to death; deprived of dignity; dehumanised by the Israeli authorities to such a point it appears officials do not even consider that these men and women have a right, as well as every reason, to protest."

**UNHRC launches 'war crimes' probe into Israeli actions in Gaza**

The United Nations Human Rights Council has launched a “war crimes” probe into Israeli actions to quell violent riots along the Gaza border over the last seven weeks, which led to the death of 102 Palestinians.

The UNHRC is convened to vote to dispatch “an independent commission of inquiry” during a special session in Geneva on Friday.

The commission of inquiry is mandated to look into “alleged violations and abuses including those that may amount to war crimes and to identify those responsible,” according to the text of the resolution submitted on Thursday night.

The commission should look at “ending impunity and ensuring legal accountability, including individual criminal and command responsibility, for such violations,” states the resolution, which details the investigation’s mandate.

The resolution asks the commission of inquiry to “provide recommendations to protect civilians against any further assaults.”
The commission will also have a very wide mandate to probe Israeli actions in the West Bank and east Jerusalem during that period.

The inclusion of east Jerusalem into the probe’s mandate implies that the US opening of its embassy in Jerusalem this week could also be included in the investigation.

But the text said the focus would be “particularly in the occupied Gaza Strip, in the context of the [IDF] military assaults on large-scale civilian protests that began on 30 March 2018.”

The resolution charges that Israel used disproportionate force along the Gaza border and called on it to end “its illegal closure of the occupied Gaza Strip.”

The resolution refers to the Palestinian demonstrators and “peaceful” and makes no mention of the violent Palestinian acts that took place during those events.

These include burning tires, Molotov cocktails and the launch of flaming kites over the border into Israel. Nor it did it focus on the numerous attempts by the Palestinians to infiltrate Israel by cutting through the border fence.

Israel has charged that many of the dead were Hamas members, and even Hamas has acknowledged that this is correct.
The bloodiest days of the protest, dubbed the Great March of Return that began on March 30, occurred on Monday of this week when 60 Palestinians were killed. Since then the international community, including Canada, has called for an international probe into the killings.

Earlier this week the US quashed an attempt to by the UN Security Council to order such a probe.

UN Secretary General António Guterres on Thursday reiterated his call for such an investigation in a statement that was read in his name at the UN Forum on the Question of Palestine in New York.