



# **MEI INDIA SPEAKS**

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## Special: The Gaza War, 2008-09

Compiled by

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### **1. Statement by Official Spokesperson on recent disturbances in Hebron and other areas in occupied Palestinian territories, 5 December 2008**

The Government of India is concerned at the violence against Palestinians in Hebron on 4 December as well as attacks against Palestinian religious places and property. The Representative of India has been briefed on the situation today, by His Excellency Mr. Riad Al-Malki, the Foreign Minister of the Palestinian National Authority. India expects that the Israeli authorities will take necessary steps to prevent the recurrence of further violence against Palestinians in the affected area.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi*

<http://www.mea.gov.in/pressbriefing/2008/12/05pb01.htm>

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### **2. Statement by Official Spokesperson on the situation in Gaza, 27 December 2008**

The Government of India has been closely monitoring developments that have been unfolding in the Gaza Strip. While India is aware of the immediate cross-border provocations resulting from rocket attacks particularly against targets in southern Israel, it urges an immediate end to the use of force against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip that has resulted in large numbers of casualties. India hopes that on-going efforts within the region to restore peace would be supported.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/speech/2008/12/27ss01.htm>*

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### **3. Official Spokesperson's Statement on situation in Gaza, 29 December 2008**

The Government of India had hoped that military action by Israel against targets in the Gaza strip would abate. It is disappointing to note that the use of disproportionate force is resulting in a large number of civilian casualties on the one hand and the escalating violence on the other. This continued use of indiscriminate force is unwarranted and condemnable. The Government of India urges utmost restraint so as to give peace a chance as the peace process may well get derailed irreversibly by Israel's attack in the Gaza strip and continued violence.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi*

<http://www.mea.gov.in/pressbriefing/2008/12/29pb01.htm>

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### **4. Statement by Official Spokesperson about assistance from Government of India in response to Gaza Flash Appeal, 2 January 2009**

In response to the Flash Appeal made by United Nations Relief & Works Agency (UNRWA), Government of India has decided to extend an assistance of US\$ 1 million for use by the Agency to provide shelters, cash assistance, essential household items etc., to affected families in Gaza.

Government of India urges an immediate end to the violence witnessed in Gaza and its environs, so that further casualties amongst civilians are averted. This would help create an atmosphere for the peace process to resume.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi*

<http://www.mea.gov.in/pressbriefing/2009/01/02pb01.htm>

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### **5. Statement by Official Spokesperson on Situation in Gaza, 04 January 2009**

The Government of India condemns the on-going incursion into Gaza by Israeli ground and other forces. It urges an immediate end to military action by all concerned. The suffering of civilians in the region must end. India supports all efforts aimed at securing an immediate ceasefire.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi*

<http://www.mea.gov.in/pressbriefing/2009/01/04pb01.htm>

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### **6. Prime Minister Inaugurates the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (Indian Diaspora Day) 2009, 8 January 2009**

...We are therefore concerned at the rise in tensions in the region as a result of the attack in Gaza that has led to the needless loss of lives of many innocent men, women and children. India has strongly

condemned these incidents and it is our hope that the international community would get together and help restore peace in the region as soon as possible. I wish to reiterate our unstinted and unwavering support for the just Palestinian cause...

*Source: Prime Minister's Office, New Delhi*

<http://pmindia.nic.in/speech/content.asp?id=776>

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## **7. Prime Minister Inaugurates Naval Academy at Ezhimala, 08 January, 2009**

... We have a vital interest in the Indian Ocean and a close relationship with countries of the Indian Ocean Rim, and specially the Gulf region.

The Gulf is part of our extended neighbourhood, separated only by the Arabian Sea, of which the Indian Navy is one of the sentinels. India and the countries of the Gulf have a shared view of peace and prosperity in the region. Many of the Gulf countries look upon India as a friendly and benign neighbour on which they can depend in times of difficulty and need. Nearly five million people of Indian origin live here. I strongly condemn the hostilities taking place in Gaza and express dismay at the unfortunate killing of hundreds of innocent civilians. We call for the immediate cessation of hostilities so that a settlement based on dialogue can be arrived at. I reiterate our unstinted and unwavering support to the just Palestinian cause. This is an area of special priority for India and over the next decade and more this focus would only intensify further.

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*Source: Prime Minister's Office, New Delhi*

<http://pmindia.nic.in/speech/content4print.asp?id=778>

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## **8. Official Spokesperson's statement on Gaza situation, 09 January 2009**

The deteriorating situation in Gaza has drawn the attention of the Government of India and the plight of the population has become heart rending. The daily time table of a three hour cease fire does not appear to be producing any favourable change in the situation. The situation on the energy front appears extremely grim as nearly three-fourths of the Gaza population is now without any electricity and the prospects with no fuel oil available appear even more serious. The situation on the food front in Gaza is no better. Some 750,000 people are without access to food.

It is indeed strange that while talks are going on in Cairo among representatives of all concerned under the guidance of the French and the Egyptian officials, there is no sign of sorrow or concern about the plight of the million and half Gaza civilians living in a permanent state of fright.

The Government of India looks forward to an early end to the suffering of the people of Gaza and a return to a dialogue and resumption of the peace process.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi*

<http://www.mea.gov.in/speech/2009/01/08ss02.htm>

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## **9. Israeli Aggression in Gaza, 18 February 2009**

**Question:** Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of Palestinians including civilians especially children were reportedly killed in the latest Israeli- Palestinians armed clashes;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the efforts being made by the Government to restore peace in the region?

**Answer:** The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

(a) Yes.

(b) In the period 26.12.2008 to 18.1.2009, over 1200 Palestinians, including civilians and children, were killed. 13 Israelis are also said to have been killed.

The Government of India closely followed the above developments. On 27.12.2008, 29.12.2008, 2.1.2009, 4.1.2009 and 9.1.2009, the Official Spokesperson made statements on this matter calling, inter alia, for an immediate end to the disproportionate and condemnable use of force, particularly against civilians, and for the restoration of peace.

(c) India has consistently supported the peaceful resolution of the conflict in West Asia resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel. India has also supported United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397 and 1515. India has also supported the Arab Peace Initiative. India had also called for an end to the expansion of Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories and for an early and significant easing of restrictions on the free movement of persons and goods within Palestine. Over the past year, the Government of India has been in consultations with countries in the West Asian region on the matter. India has consistently supported the Palestinian cause at various international fora including the United Nations and the Non-Alignment Movement.

During the recent conflict, in response to a 'Flash Appeal' from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), on 2.1.2009 the Government of India announced an assistance of US Dollars one million to the UNRWA to provide shelters, cash assistance, essential household items, etc. This amount, which has since been transferred, is in addition to on-going Government of India assistance to the Palestinian National Authority including the construction of the Palestinian Chancery-cum-Residences complex in New Delhi as a gift of the Government of India, and the contribution made by the Government of India to the UNRWA each year.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 224, asked by Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta.*

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult14.aspx?qref=70663>

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## Goldstone Report

### **10. Statement by Mr. B. K. Hariprasad, Member of Parliament and Member of the Indian Delegation, on the Report of the Human Rights Council, at the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations general Assembly, 04 November 2009**

We are convinced that the unqualified adherence by all the concerned parties to the relevant instruments of international humanitarian law and human rights law is imperative, and further that any refusal by the concerned parties to do so should rightly receive the strongest possible opprobrium of the international community.

Mr. President,

We note that the “Goldstone Report” has been discussed by the UN system a number of times prior to our meeting today. This Report which was prepared under the express mandate of the President of the Human Rights Council has been discussed at the Council in a special session in the middle of last month. Let us, therefore, be clear that what we are discussing is the report of the Human Rights Council at its 12th special session which was held in Geneva last month.

While participating in the Special Session, we had noted that the Fact Finding Mission had produced a comprehensive report that merits careful consideration. It had documented violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by all the sides involved. This is a matter of serious concern. We also pointed out that it was important not to lose sight of the weaknesses of the Report, including the fact that the Report itself admits that its findings do not necessarily reach the standard of proof applicable in criminal trials and that the Mission should have addressed its recommendations to the Council and not to other institutions in the UN and multilateral system.

The Report was also among the major issues discussed by the Security Council on 14 October. We had carefully watched this discussion in the Security Council as well as the events which led to its convening and followed it up with a serious analysis of the developments that have since unfolded.

Mr. President,

India's deep association with, and continuing commitment to, Palestine is rooted in our modern history that goes back to our struggle for independence.

We believe that the solution to the Palestine issue should be based on the relevant UN Resolutions, the Arab Peace Plan and the Quartet Roadmap resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders, side by side at peace with Israel.

India will continue to do all within its capacities to assist Palestine in its endeavors in capacity and institution-building, as exemplified, among other things, by the recent enhancement in our contribution to UNRWA. Mr. President, The continuance of an atmosphere of distrust and refusal to talk is fast becoming a major obstacle to peace and security in the West Asia region. Terrorism and an escalating humanitarian crisis are adding obstacles to any resumption of the dialogue process.

We are convinced that all the concerned parties involved in the Gaza conflict nearly a year back need to introspect and take firm action against those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in a credible and speedy manner as has been recommended by the Goldstone Report. The international community, especially the countries in the region must play a positive role in creating an enabling atmosphere for such investigations and follow-up actions.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I wish to emphasize that while we welcome the various efforts at documenting the injustices and atrocities committed during the Gaza conflict, we have reservations in making an unqualified endorsement of the various recommendations as well as of some of the procedures adopted by the Goldstone Report, including on involvement of the International Criminal Court and that of the Security Council. Thank you.

*Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York*

<http://www.un.int/india/2009/ind1638.pdf>

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## **11. Endorsing Goldstone Report, 25 November 2009**

**Question:** Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether India had expressed its reservations over endorsing the findings and recommendations of the Goldstone Report on Israel at the United Nations General Assembly recently;
- (b) If so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore;
- (c) Whether there has been any change in India's stand on Israel issue; and
- (d) If so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore?

**Answer:** Minister of the State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Dr. Shashi Tharoor)

(a) & (b) India voted in favour of the relevant resolution at the United Nations General Assembly, recently. However, after the voting, we made an Explanation of Vote, because we did not want our support for the resolution to be construed as our endorsement of the referrals to the United Nations Security Council, and the International Criminal Court, recommended in the Goldstone Report.

(c) No.

(d) Does not arise.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 1131, asked by P. Karunakaran*

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=76831>

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The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views/positions of the MEI@ND.

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