



Statement to the Diplomatic Community on incitement

A horrible murder of children has occurred. The killing of three innocent Israeli children by an unknown assailant should not and must not be condoned by anyone. To exploit the deaths of these children for political purposes is abhorrent. However, that is exactly what the extreme religious movements, some national parties, and the Israeli leadership within Israel are doing by calling for the expansion of settlements. They are using the deaths of these children to justify the building of more illegal settlements.

Political exploitation of children and engendering racist attitudes amongst children are being encouraged within the Israeli state and appear to be the norm than the exception these days. For instance, the results of a poll conducted by an Israeli research institute (Maagar Mochot) indicated that over half of all Israeli high school students support Jews having more rights than Palestinian citizens living within the State of Israel. These discriminatory views were supported by eight out of ten Israeli students who were enrolled in religious high schools. These racist and extremist views are being encouraged within the Israeli educational system and do not provide positive indications that the Israeli establishment is serious in its effort to support a peace building agenda or milieu.

The Palestinian Authority has shown its commitment to non-violence by achieving a sustained period of stability which has been acknowledged by the whole international community as a major contribution to peace. Nobody who is genuinely committed to a lasting peaceful co-existence between Palestinians and Israelis would question the seriousness of this commitment by Palestinian leaders, by the security forces, and by Palestinian society in general.

The Israeli Prime Minister has no justification whatsoever for saying that incitement 'prompts the murder of children'. We call on the Israeli government to show responsibility, and to avoid inflammatory rhetoric which is itself an incitement. If it genuinely wanted to lower tensions and deal with incitement it would respond to our long-standing suggestion of a joint committee, with an international presence, to investigate and prevent statements and actions likely to incite hatred and violence, based on an agreed definition of incitement, and monitoring of possible breaches. The Palestinian Authority has acted against incitement in ways that have been commended by the international community, for example in schools. A joint committee on incitement would be able to ensure that efforts are being made on both sides, including in Israeli schools. A genuine effort to end incitement to hatred and violence would examine the situation on both sides and treat cases of incitement equally seriously.

It must be recognized that the greatest incitement is the Israeli Occupation itself. The humiliating actions by Israeli forces, the leniency shown to settlers who desecrate mosques and burn olive groves, the binding restrictions placed on the lives of law-abiding Palestinians, the Israeli policy is building towns, cities and roads for Israelis only, on



Palestinian land: this is incitement, to which the Palestinian people respond daily with non-violence.

The Palestinian leadership has condemned these brutal murders. Just as they condemned the brutal murder of 342 Palestinian children in Gaza by the Israeli military in December 2008/January 2009. The deaths of these children should be lamented by all. They have been denied their right to life. It is incumbent on all parties to protect all children's right to life and liberty. Occupation denies Palestinian children and adults their rights to liberty and freedom. Ending occupation, ending incitement, and instilling a respect for two peoples and two states is the future that all of us must focus on.

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