

Address by Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Allon in the United Nations General Assembly- 3 October 1974

Israel is cognizant of the existence of the question of Palestinian identity. It holds that it can and should be solved, in the context of the settlement of the dispute with her neighbour to the east. It is there, on both sides of the Jordan, that the great majority of the Palestinian population is concentrated. Moreover, most of the citizens of Jordan are Palestinians and most of the Palestinians are Jordanian citizens. It is also a fact that the area east of the Jordan is an integral part of the historic Land of Israel or Palestine and that it is already the national home of the Palestinians. If there is any ethnic significance to the Palestinian concept it applies equally to the peasant, to the townman and to the Beduin east of the Jordan as it does to the peasant, townsman and Beduin to its west. It is in the light of these considerations that the Israel Government on 21 July 1974 resolved that:

..."The Government will work towards negotiations for a peace agreement with Jordan.

"The peace will be founded on the existence of two independent States only - Israel, with united Jerusalem as its capital, and a Jordanian-Palestinian Arab State, east of Israel, within borders to be determined in negotiations between Israel and Jordan. In this State, the independent identity of the Jordanian and Palestinian Arabs can find expression in peace and good-neighbourliness with Israel".

However, the Palestinian community in general must in no way be equated with the terrorist organizations. From my own personal acquaintance with this community I refuse to identify it, or at least its great majority, with the terrorist grouping known as the PLO, which is not a national liberation movement but the roof organization of disunited and splintered terrorist groups whose pretensions and support do not spring from the broad masses of the Palestinian population. It is a fact that more Arabs than Israelis have been killed by these organizations. It is also a fact that more terrorists have been killed in the armed clashes between regular Arab forces and the terror gangs, and between the rival terror gangs themselves, than by the Israeli security forces.

These facts are obvious to anybody who cares to examine them. We refuse to recognize the PLO and we will not recognize it, because of its doctrines and of its deeds alike. The Palestine Charter which embodies the political ideology of

the PLO stands in direct contradiction to the Charter of the United Nations. It denies absolutely the right of Israel to exist and postulates its destruction as a principal objective.

This ideology is accompanied by the criminal methods of warfare used by the organizations which make up the PLO, such as indiscriminate terror and deliberate murder of women and children, pupils and teachers, athletes at the Olympic Games, passengers on a Swiss airliner, chance visitors and Jewish and Christian pilgrims at airports, Arab women workers in Galilee. In reality the situation here is not that of a subject people trying to liberate itself with its own underground forces, but of gangs of desperadoes imposing themselves on a people and attempting to form and dominate it by means of the destruction of another people: this at a time when there is ample room for two states, Jewish and Arab, to co-exist in peace in the historic Land of Israel or Palestine on both sides of the Jordan, their common border being determined by negotiations.

Mr. President, It is of course no secret that with the parliamentary situation existing in this General Assembly, the preconceived ideas held by a great number of those taking part here, and the irrelevant considerations which guide many delegations, a majority might concede the PLO demands. A resolution that would concede such demands will be regarded by Israel as an arbitrary resolution impinging on its fundamental rights, as illegal and not binding in any way. Every delegate here would reject a negative resolution which strikes at the foundation of his country's being. One cannot ask of any nation to agree to its own elimination or to commit suicide.

Understanding for the needs of the Palestinians-certainly; satisfaction of the demands of arch-murderers who appoint themselves as saviours - decidedly not!

I regret that many members of the United Nations do not delve into this problem thoroughly, with the consequence that, either deliberately or through misunderstanding, they reward these murderers and in so doing stoke the fires in the Middle East. Israel will not submit to violence and terror. Terrorism is an infectious disease which knows no national frontiers. Many states have already paid the price of submission to terrorism and I am afraid that the last word has not been said on the subject. Following the latest terrorist attacks in Paris and at the Hague, President Valéry Giscard D'Estaing said: "Violence, which is sometimes presented and justified as an avantgarde act is nothing but the rise to the surface of those depths of barbarism and primitive cruelty of which humanity has devoted all its efforts to rid itself." These are trenchant words, but there is need for action and for courageous co-operation in order to put an end to manifestations of terror before further disasters occur. The essence of the PLO is terror. It is no coincidence that whenever a concrete proposal for a political solution is put forward, the PLO leadership rises up against any such peace initiative. Their insistence on inscribing the question of Palestine on the agenda of this General Assembly is designed above all to destroy the prospects of the political efforts at the very beginning. A debate on this matter cannot fail to

poison the international atmosphere. Acceptance of PLO demands may well condemn the prospects of the negotiating process to failure - just when the first ray of light has been glimpsed on the horizon.

Palestinians who wish to give constructive expression to their independent identity can be helped to do so in the context of the negotiations with Jordan. Moreover, I would not agree to a general settlement without including in it satisfaction of the needs of the Palestinians. It is after all not Israel which has prevented the crystallization of what is known as "Palestinian identity." To the extent that such a desire existed among the Palestinians it is the Arab states that have frustrated it during all these years. If not, how can one explain the fact that during 19 years of Arab rule in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank, this identity never achieved any definite form or full expression?

The joint communique by Egypt, Syria and the PLO in Cairo on September 21, 1974, also deals a blow to the prospects of a constructive solution to the issue of Palestine identity. In the same way that the PLO bends all its efforts to prevent political progress in the area, certain Arab states are whittling down the hopes for a solution of the Palestinian question by granting the terrorist organizations the monopoly of representation of the Palestinians, when they know perfectly well that these organizations are not able to be a party to negotiations because of what they are.

Mr. President,

There is no sadder example of the heartless attitude of the Arab governments than the freeze which they have imposed on the status of the 1948 refugees. It is true that many of them have been absorbed in the economies of the Arab states in which they now live, but there has been a deliberate policy to prevent a constructive solution to this sore problem in order to exploit human suffering for political and propaganda ends. If the problem in itself were not so sad I would say that there is nothing more ludicrous than the annual fund raising efforts of UNRWA to make up the deficit in its budget - at a time when the Arab oil states command the biggest monetary reserves in the world. Israel did not adopt this course: not towards the 600,000 Jewish refugees who fled the Arab states stripped of all their possessions, and not towards the survivors of the millions of Jews destroyed by the Nazis, with the blessing of the Mufti Haj Amin el Hussein who found refuge among his own kind in Nazi Berlin and Fascist Rome. All of these were fully absorbed in Israel economically, socially and culturally.

In the light of the vast economic opportunities which now exist in the Middle East, the refugee problem must, and can, be solved. Far more difficult refugee situations in other parts of the world have been solved long ago. Given good will, without which no problem can be resolved, the question of compensation for both Arab and Jewish refugees can be settled. Israel is contributing, and will continue to contribute, its share in the solution of this painful human problem.

Mr. President,

There are those who foresee the approach of war on this or that front in the

Middle East. As far as Israel is concerned we shall faithfully observe the Cease-Fire and the Separation of Forces Agreements, on a reciprocal basis, until they are replaced or supplemented by new agreements. But in the same way as we shall display the utmost good will in seeking to achieve balanced and constructive progress in the political sphere, we shall neither submit nor lend ourselves to the blackmail of threats of war or even of war itself.

We want to see progress in the efforts to achieve a political solution, both as an end in itself and as a means of avoiding war. In the face of the rapid rearmament of the other side we will strengthen our forces in order to prevent war or to gain victory if, God forbid, it should break out anew. At the same time, we will continue to seek a settlement of the conflict by peaceful means. In other words we shall prepare for the worst, and hope and work for the best.

In one of his recent speeches President Sadat said that our generation must be satisfied with the end of belligerency and that the treaty of peace would be signed by the coming generation. I am astonished that so distinguished a statesman should renounce the great and historic opportunity to bring about peace and cooperation. I trust that this was not his last word. Peace should not be postponed to the next generation. It is the duty of the generations which have taken part in the war to overcome their differences and to assure peace for their descendants. Let us all do our best to secure peace speedily in our time. It is possible. In order to achieve it one needs perhaps more courage than is needed for the decision to go to war. Let us all demonstrate both wisdom and courage for the benefit of all the peoples of our region.