

## **Human Rights Council – 21<sup>st</sup> Special Session**

**23 July 2014**

### **Statement by Ireland**

I would like to add some remarks to those made on our behalf in the statement of the European Union.

Irish people have been appalled by the upsurge of violence in Gaza, and especially the very high and unacceptable level of civilian casualties. Ireland condemns both the firing of missiles from Gaza into Israel by Hamas and other militant groups, and the killing of hundreds of civilians in military attacks by Israel on targets in Gaza which fail to respect the requirement under international law for any military action to be proportionate and discriminate. It is clear to us that neither side is paying adequate regard to the cost of their actions on innocent civilians.

We call for an immediate ceasefire by all parties, and we support and commend those international actors who are working to bring this about, especially the Government of Egypt.

We have been here before, discussing exactly the same thing. Ireland has repeatedly underlined that no ceasefire will last without a serious political effort to address the causes of the disastrous situation in Gaza. It is imperative to bring about an end of the restrictions imposed on the people by the continuing Israeli blockade and the general closing off of Gaza. This should begin with the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1860. The continued absence for people in Gaza of any political or economic perspective for the future is a breeding ground for extremist action.

Ireland fully accepts that the Government of Israel has the right to defend its people, but this right does not negate the rights of others. Any use of military force in self defence must be in accordance with international humanitarian law, and in particular must be both discriminate and proportionate. In view of the casualty figures, we do not believe that this has been the case.

We would also stress that the firing of missiles against Israeli civilian targets is without doubt contrary to international law.

In view of the very high casualty rate and the many allegations of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law arising from the current conflict, we would support the conduct of an appropriate investigation into breaches of international law.