



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

13 June 2018

Tenth Emergency Special Session

Resolution on 'Protection of the Palestinian Civilian Population'

Explanation of Vote by H.E. Gillian Bird Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

(Check against delivery)

Australia expresses its deep regret and sadness at the loss of life and injury that occurred during the protests in Gaza. Australia remains extremely concerned about the situation in the Gaza Strip, particularly the humanitarian outlook.

We encourage member states to provide certainty and predictability for UNRWA to enable it to deliver continued services in the Gaza Strip. Australia agrees with aspects of this resolution. We support the right to peaceful protest, and respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. We agree that the firing of rockets from Gaza towards civilian areas of Israel is reprehensible and completely unacceptable. However, this resolution fails to refer to some significant matters.

It is a significant concern that the resolution fails to mention Hamas by name and address concerns about Hamas' role in the Gaza protests. The failure to pass an amendment referring to Hamas' role reflects the one-sided nature of the current resolution. The resolution also fails to mention Israel's legitimate security concerns or its need to protect its own population.

We are also concerned that the resolution's request for a report into civilian protection options is expressed vaguely, and that the possibility of an international mechanism may raise expectations unrealistically.

For these reasons, Australia has voted against this resolution. However, we are steadfast in our vision for peace: Australia remains committed to a two-state solution, a future where Israel and a Palestinian state exist side-by-side in peace and security, within internationally recognised borders.