



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

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Intervention of H.E. Ambassador Philippe Kridelka,
Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United
Nations

Emergency Special Session - UNGA

New York, 27/10/2023

- *Unofficial translation* -

Mr. President,

Belgium voted in favor of this resolution. However, we deeply regret that some elements, which we had put forward and which are fundamental, have not been included in the final text.

Nevertheless, there are many reasons why we voted in favor:

1. **Humanitarian access to Gaza** must be guaranteed and hindrances of all kinds lifted. Belgium supports (as does the whole of the EU) the establishment of **humanitarian pauses and corridors**, in the hope that they may lead to humanitarian ceasefires, in response to calls from the United Nations. This is the main reason for our vote.
2. Our international action is based on **respect for international law and international humanitarian law**, in this particularly complex and emotional case, as in others. As the Secretary General rightly reminded us, "even wars have rules". We wish therefore to express our support for the general objectives of this text, while being well aware of its shortcomings.
3. The **protection of civilians** - of all civilians - must be our main concern and the object of a greater effort on our part, even if it remains the primary responsibility of the parties to the conflict. In this respect, I would like to remind you that Belgium does not support attempts to impose total blockades, forced displacement or the use of civilians as human shields, either in this context or in any other.
4. Mr. President, **we regret**, however, that this resolution, whose primarily humanitarian character we are well aware of, has not taken the following points on board:

- *Check against delivery* -

- A clear condemnation of the atrocious **acts of terrorism** perpetrated in Israel by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Terrorism must be fought in all circumstances! These acts cannot be ignored. They should have been condemned more explicitly in the Security Council. By default, the current resolution could have denounced them more clearly. They will be the object of reinforced attention on our part.
 - Belgium also calls for the unconditional and immediate release of all **hostages**. Such an act, that violates international humanitarian law, could have been dealt with more explicitly. I salute those who are working for the release of the hundreds of innocent people currently held by terrorist groups.
 - Belgium unequivocally recognizes **Israel's right to defend itself**. This indisputable right under international law, which must be exercised in compliance with international humanitarian law, deserved to be explicitly affirmed in this forum.
5. In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to reiterate that we do not consider Israel's security and the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to be mutually exclusive, quite the contrary.

The current situation demonstrates, once again, the absolute necessity of defining a **political horizon** towards a lasting and sustainable solution to this conflict, that would provide Israel with the possibility of living in peace and security, and that would realize the Palestinians' right to self-determination. To this end, it is necessary to create a conducive environment that could lead to a negotiated solution. This is what the "**Peace Day Effort**" is all about, which has the full support of Belgium.

For the time being, diplomatic efforts must focus on de-escalating tensions in order to avoid further human suffering. Belgium welcomes and supports all constructive efforts undertaken in order to avoid a **conflagration in the region**.

The Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs is in the Middle East at this very moment, and is multiplying her contacts in order to listen to the regional actors. Our message is one of dialogue - a dialogue that must be based on truth - a message of peace, a message of respect for international law.

I thank you.

Context :

- Belgium did co-sponsor and vote in favor of Canadian amendment [A/ES-10/L.26](#).
- Belgium did vote in favor of resolution A/RES/ES-10/2.1 (cf. draft resolution [A/ES-10/L.25](#))