



Statement by H.E. Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Mohamed,
Permanent Representative of the Maldives at the 9th Special Session
of the Human Rights Council

9th January 2009, Geneva

Thank you Mr. President,

The Maldives wishes to express its grave concern at the widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law caused by Israel's bombardment and invasion of the Gaza strip; violations that have drawn widespread criticism and protest around the world, including in the Maldives.

The Maldives condemns the massively disproportionate use of force, in which Israel's powerful modern army is inflicting collective punishment on one and a half million innocent and defenseless Palestinians in retaliation for the actions of a few.

The Maldives particularly condemns the targeting of civilian areas in what is one of the most densely populated stretches of land in the world. Such targeting, which this week resulted in the shelling of mosques and schools and the death of a large number of civilians including children, represents a complete and callous disregard for human lives, human rights, human values and international humanitarian law.



As always in such a conflict, it is the most vulnerable who suffer the most. Of the over 750 Palestinians who have been killed so-far, around a third are children. Moreover, such statistics, while deeply shocking, mask stories of individual human suffering such as that of a two and a half year old boy from northern Gaza who was taken lifeless to a local hospital even though he had no obvious injuries. In fact, he had died from shock at the sound of the shelling.

Mr. President,

The Maldives urges all parties to agree, honour and maintain a ceasefire; to avoid any additional civilian casualties and to protect those fundamental human rights, including the right to life, with which every man, woman and child is endowed. The Maldives strongly believes that a negotiated outcome based on the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions is the only way to ensure long-term peace, security and stability in the region.

The Maldives therefore calls for a final, just and comprehensive settlement with the realisation of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and within secure and recognized borders.

Thank you Mr. President.