

Statement by Ambassador Shamshad Ahmad, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations on "The Situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian question" at the Security Council, 18 April 2002

Mr. President,

We are meeting in this Council, the fourth time in almost as many weeks to discuss, yet again, the ever worsening situation in the Middle East. It is indeed a matter of concern for the international community that Israel persists in its defiance of the successive Resolutions adopted by this Council in its recent meetings. The tragedy in Middle East continues to pose a mounting threat to regional peace. It also represents a serious humanitarian crisis which the Secretary-General has aptly described as an "appalling" humanitarian situation.

2. The recent massacre in Jenin was as excessive as it was inexcusable. According to the UN Special Coordinator who visited the camp, Jenin, looks like a calamity stricken area. Jenin is yet another chapter written in the blood of innocent people while the memories of Srebrenica and Rwanda are still fresh in our minds and prick the conscience of humanity. Nothing could have justified the wanton killing of dozens, if not hundreds, of Palestinians. This event happened in spite of, and in defiance of, UN Security Council resolutions. There is a need for an immediate, comprehensive and impartial international inquiry. While Chairman Arafat has demonstrated commendable respect for humanitarian law by denouncing all terrorist attacks which target innocent civilians, Israel too must be expected to abide by international and humanitarian law.

3. On its part, the Security Council cannot be unmindful of its special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It must not allow selectivity and double standards in the implementation of its resolutions. The Council must take decisive and effective measures under Chapter VII, to ensure the immediate cessation of all Israeli military action and the total withdrawal of its forces from the Occupied territories as well as urgent resumption of the political process for the settlement of the Palestinian issue in accordance with its own resolutions. The Council's very credibility and moral authority now depends on this.

4. Pakistan deplores the killing of innocent civilians in that region. We welcome the Secretary-General's call for deployment of an international force to ensure safety and provide an opening for diplomatic moves. The need and urgency for international intervention to save the situation from further deterioration has been adequately highlighted in his statement before the Council. We support his proposal and believe that immediate deployment of an international force in the region would not only create a secure environment through cessation of violence but also pave the way for putting the peace process back on track. The deployment of this force must be immediately authorized by the Security Council.

I thank you, Mr. President

New York
18 April, 2002