

# United Nations condemns excessive Israeli force against Palestinians

by The Region - 14/06/2018 08:30



The U.N. General Assembly condemned Israel on Wednesday (June 13) for excessive use of force against Palestinian civilians and asked U.N. chief Antonio Guterres to recommend an "international protection mechanism" for occupied Palestinian territory.

The General Assembly adopted a resolution with 120 votes in favour, eight against and 45 abstentions. It was put forward in the General Assembly by Algeria, Turkey and the Palestinians after the United States vetoed a similar resolution in the 15-member U.N. Security Council earlier this month.

The General Assembly text condemned the firing of rockets from Gaza into Israeli civilian areas, but did not mention Hamas, the Islamist group that controls Gaza. General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding but carry political weight.

"The nature of this resolution clearly demonstrates that politics is driving the day. It is totally one-sided. It makes not one mention of Hamas, who routinely initiates violence

in Gaza," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley told the General Assembly before the vote.

The United States failed in a bid to amend the resolution with a paragraph that would have condemned violence by Hamas.

"If you support this resolution, you are supporting Hamas. A vote for this resolution is a vote for Hamas," Israel's U.N. Ambassador Danny Danon told the General Assembly before the vote.

Australia, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Solomon Islands and Togo joined Israel and the United States in voting against the resolution.

More than 120 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in Gaza border protests since March 30. The largest number of deaths occurred on May 14, the day the United States moved its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv.

Amid international condemnation of its use of lethal force, Israel said many of the dead were militants and that the Israeli army was repelling attacks on the border fence between Israel and Gaza. Washington has maintained Israel's right to defend itself and refrained from joining calls for Israeli restraint.

Palestinians and their supporters said most protesters were unarmed civilians and Israel used excessive force against them.

"We need the protection of our civilian population," Palestinian U.N. envoy Riyad Mansour told the General Assembly before the vote, adding that the resolution was "intended to contribute to a de-escalation of the volatile situation."

"We cannot remain silent in the face of the most violent crimes and human rights violations being systematically perpetrated against our people," Mansour said.

The resolution asked Guterres to report back within 60 days on proposals "on ways and means for ensuring the safety, protection and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation, including ... recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism."

In December 128 countries defied President Donald Trump and voted in favour of a U.N. General Assembly resolution calling for the United States to drop its recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.