28TH SPECIAL SESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

General Debate
Call on situation which requires Council attention
Speaker: Derek Brett

The report of the Chilcot Inquiry into British involvement in the 2003 invasion of Iraq was scathing about the failure to estimate in advance the scale of civilian casualties which would result-- Those who understand the consequences of volunteering to take part in armed conflict know that these may include their own death. By contrast, IFOR argues that NO non-accidental deaths of non-combatants are legitimate.

IFOR strongly supports young Israelis who refuse to serve in an army conducting an illegal occupation. That does not mean that we condemn the individual Israeli soldiers involved in these incidents, even though they may be criminally liable for not refusing to obey manifestly illegal orders, a concept eloquently expressed by Israel’s own courts. ¹ Most Israeli soldiers are unwilling conscripts, men and women in their late teens, whose entire education has programmed them to despise and fear Palestinians.

What IFOR condemns is the Israel Defence Force, which gave the orders the Israeli Government, in whose name these atrocities were perpetrated, but above all the administration in the United States of America which by retreating from the nuclear weapons accord with Iran and simultaneously moving its embassy to Jerusalem led directly to these events while signalling to Israel that the USA would continue to treat it as above international law.

¹ in sentencing the soldiers responsible for the Kafr Qasem massacre in 1956 referred to orders as having “a black flag of illegality” flying over them which “rescinds the soldier’s duty to obey and charges him with criminal accountability for his actions” (as quoted by Kidron, P. (Ed) Refusenik!: Israel’s Soldiers of Conscience (Zed Books, London, 2004) p.88.