

**Mr. Roet (Israel):**

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and Sweden on joining the Security Council and presiding over its activity this month. I would also like to welcome the other new Council members and to wish them success in fulfilling their important role.

In 2016 the international community experienced an increasing threat of global terrorism, which indiscriminately claims innocent lives from Brussels to Baghdad and from Paris to Istanbul. In Israel, Palestinian terrorists have been responsible for numerous attacks. Men and women on their way to work, as well as children and the elderly waiting for their buses home, have all fallen victim to shootings, stabbings and other horrendous acts of terror. Just a few days ago, a terrorist drove his truck into a group of cadets gathered on a Jerusalem promenade, taking the lives of Yael Yekutiel, who was 20 years old, Shir Hajaj, 22, Shira Tzur, 20, and Erez Orbach, 20. Blessed be their memory. We thank the Secretary-General, the Council and the many countries that have expressed their condolences. Despite the evils of hate and terrorism that we face, Israel is, and will always remain, committed to the way of peace.

Our history has taught us that courage, impartiality and seeing reality for what it is are important elements in preventing conflict. More important, they are essential to establishing the ground for a durable peace. We believe that they are also vital to the work of the Security Council in its pursuit of global peace and security.

While it is clear that courage is needed in the conflicts that take place on the battlefield, courage is even more important in preventing them. For the Security Council, courage should mean not turning a blind eye to actions that pave the way for future conflict. For the Council, courage should mean its equal application of moral values and standards to all, without allowing politics and special interests to interfere in its work.

Sadly, that is not the case when the Council examines the actions of those who systematically try to harm the State of Israel. As a matter of fact, since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), Hizbulah, which is internationally acknowledged to be a terrorist organization, has multiplied its missile stockpile tenfold and has amassed more than 150,000 rockets and missiles. We continue to see increases in the number of Hizbulah operatives, described in reports relating to resolution 1701 (2006) as “civilians”, in possession of unauthorized weapons. The situation serves only to heighten tension in an already volatile environment.

It seems that political considerations undermine the Council’s ability to receive accurate reports on the real situation on the ground. If conflict between Israel and Hizbulah is to be prevented, the Security Council must acknowledge Hizbulah’s dangerous buildup in southern Lebanon and demand that the Governments of Lebanon and Iran fully comply

with the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006).

Time and again we have warned the Security Council that, where the Middle East is concerned, we can be sure that wherever and whenever there is terrorism, there is Iran. We urge this new Council to put an end to Iran's destabilizing actions in our region and around the world.

For centuries, justice has been depicted as a woman wearing a blindfold, which represents the basic legal element in maintaining peace and order: impartiality. Unfortunately, on too many occasions this institution has lifted the blindfold where the State of Israel is concerned. Biases, hypocrisy and double standards — the same double standards that Secretary-General Guterres spoke of earlier today — have unfortunately become honorary members of the long debates and meetings condemning Israel. The Council's latest initiative, resolution 2334 (2016), epitomizes its failure to address all sides of a conflict equally. Its condemnation of Israeli actions and attempt to portray them as the one major obstacle to a two-State solution portrays the type of bias that hinders real diplomatic progress. It is clear that these biases are paralysing the Council and holding it back from playing a constructive role in conflict prevention.

Courageous and impartial actions to achieve sustainable peace must be based on facts, not on mere perceptions. Like the prisoners in Plato's famous allegory of the cave, some members of this institution refuse to see the facts, while indulging themselves in the comfort of the lies presented to them. One dire consequence of that dangerous behaviour is the failure to effectively identify the real aggressor. Almost every time the Council has condemned terror attacks against Israelis, it has avoided answering the most basic questions: who is the terrorist, and who is the victim? If we cannot make that simple differentiation, how can we even begin to solve the problem?

A new year offers us an opportunity to have a fresh start and to stand together for the true values of the Organization. It provides us with an opportunity to have the courage to face the facts, to call the aggressor by its name, to be impartial and to apply equally standards to all aspects of every conflict we face.