

*Speech*

From: FOREIGN.MINISTRY (GPO250) Delivered: Sun 27-Feb-94 20:59 Sys 5005 (164)

Excerpts from remarks by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to the Fifth International Conference of the Jewish Media

JERUSALEM, FEBRUARY 27, 1994

PLO, after the PLO committed itself to certain terms, that the most important of them was stopping terrorism, denying, denouncing. And so far they have stood by their commitment. There are dissidents, there are opposing elements among the Palestinians to the peace process, and they initiated and tried to escalate terrorism to kill Israelis, with the purpose of killing the peace negotiations.

In Israel, there was also opposition to peace. But it was opposition as a legitimate opposition in a democracy. Until Friday morning. On Friday morning, an atrocity was carried out. A person, a killer, took upon himself the decision to open fire against innocent people in a holy place to Jews and Muslims, in Hebron, in a way that, as a Jew, as an Israeli, I am ashamed of. And I expect every Jew to condemn such an atrocity. It is a shame to the Jewish people, it is a shame to Israel.

No doubt its purpose came from political fanaticism and personal lunacy. So far, we know that he did it on his own. But I am also ashamed about others that came out publicly and supported his act. I believe that they represent a very small number of the people of Israel, even a small number among the settlers that oppose the policy of the present government of Israel. He tried not just to kill innocent Palestinians while they are praying in a holy place. He joined with the HAMAS and the Islamic Jihad in the purpose to kill the peace negotiations, the peace process.

I hope and I believe that as we, on one hand, thwart the terrorism of the HAMAS, of the Islamic Jihad, and the ten Palestinian rejectionist organizations, that their declared policy was to escalate terrorism, with the purpose not only to kill Israelis and Palestinians, but mainly to kill the possibility of finding a solution to the 100 years old Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

We, the present government of Israel, made it clear that on one hand we will fight this terrorism, but we will not allow it to stop, to delay the need to find a solution. And this can be done only through the continuation of the negotiations, based on the Declaration of Principles that was signed in Washington -- the continuation of the negotiations to

bring about the implementation of phase number one: Gaza and Jericho first.

We expect that regardless of the tragic events that took place in Hebron on Friday, the Palestinians, the PLO, will take this position too. It is to say, to realize that the only way really to solve the problem is to accelerate the process of negotiations, to find a solution, to establish what we both are committed to in accordance with the DOP.

The United States has invited our delegations to come to Washington and to continue the negotiations there, in addition to the negotiations that are being carried out by Israel and the three Arab countries' delegations. We responded positively, even though I must admit that the negotiations in Cairo, in Taba, went well. We reached agreement in Cairo that covers the principles of all the security arrangements for t"Gaza-Jericho first", and I believe that in the continuation of the talks in Taba and Cairo that followed the Cairo agreement, we were nearing to reaching an agreement about these issues, and also about the issue of transfer of authorities from the civil administration of a military government to the Palestinian authority that will take over in these areas...

We, the government of Israel, cannot ignore our responsibility as a military government, a civil administration, in the territories -- not only to the security of the Israelis. By international law, by the Geneva Convention, we are committed also to protect all those who reside there -- the Palestinians and the Israelis. No doubt, this massacre that took place in the holy place, in Hebron, created a new reality that I didn't believe that a Jew and an Israeli will bring it about.

The government today, in its meeting, decided to take the following measures:

First, to use administrative detention orders against those who instigate or might create by their actions danger to the public security.

Second, to put limitations on instigators and those that endanger the security of the people who reside in the territories -- either from reaching the territories if they are residents of the State of Israel, or to prevent those who reside in the territories from reaching Hebron, and we will decide also on other places; to put limitations on their freedom of movement to certain areas.

Thirdly, we approved through the Ministry of the Interior, licenses to carry weapons for self-defense for those who reside or work in the

territories. Part of the arms are supplied by the Israel Defense Forces. We decided to take arms from those who might use them not for self-defense, but also for offensive, unjustified action against Palestinians. We will do it in a selective way, based on the behavior of the people that might be suspected, and after checking with all the legal advisers that we have.

In addition, we asked the Attorney General to check and to propose how to outlaw the Kach and Kahane Chai movements.

In addition, I decided, as Prime Minister and as Minister of Defense, to release 800 Palestinian prisoners and detainees that don't belong to the Palestinian organizations that continue to preach and to carry out terror activities. This number may be increased to 1,000.

The last decision that the Cabinet took, is to create a commission of inquiry in accordance with the Law of Commissions of Inquiry, which is appointed by the Chief of the Supreme Court in accordance with terms of reference that are decided by the Cabinet.

We have taken these decisions knowing our responsibility under international law, by our laws, to the well-being of all those who reside in the territories. The territories, since 1967, are under military government by the decision of all the governments of Israel, regardless which party was the major party in these governments. There were different views what will be their future, but all the governments decided to do so because they wanted to show their readiness to negotiate peace, and not to take decisions that can undermine the possibility to achieve peace with Jordan, with the Palestinians.

I know, it's a very crucial period of time. There are enemies of peace among the Palestinians and among the Israelis. We had to be in a position that those on the part of the Palestinians and those on the part of Israel, the government of Israel, that decided to embark on the course of peace and the course of negotiations with the Palestinians, should be in a position to realize that there is an opposition, and to take measures -- on one hand, to cope with this opposition within the limits of the law. And it is first and foremost Israel's responsibility to do so, because we are the government and the power in the territories. At the same time, regardless to attempts of terror, brutality, atrocities by those who oppose peace, to continue the peace negotiations.

We are not going to change what we took upon ourselves in the DOP. We are not going to change what was agreed on in the Cairo Agreement. We will continue in the negotiations, bearing in mind that first and

foremost we have to take care of the security of the Israelis, while at the same time allowing the Palestinians to have self-rule, to run their daily lives, as it is written in the DOP.

I know that to take these measures, to continue to stick to our commitment to make peace, is a very difficult task. There are many obstacles -- not only objective obstacles, but also obstacles and opposition, and acts that attempted, aimed to stop the peace process, to undermine the agreements that have been reached...

It is legitimate to argue about policies, but to take a weapon that was given for self-defense and to carry out the kind of atrocity, massacre, that was carried out against innocent praying people -- this is a new reality in the life of Israel, in the life of the Jewish people. It will take time to mend the damage that one person inflicted on the Jewish people, on the State of Israel and the people of Israel.

I don't know now when the negotiations will be resumed. But I hope that not we, not the Palestinians, not the delegations of the three neighboring Arab countries, will be deviated by this terrible event from the continuation of our efforts -- and even to accelerate them. Let we and the representatives of the Arab countries and the Palestinians be strong enough not to give in to terrorists on both sides, who would like to put an end to the peace negotiations. It will be a major mistake to delay and not to accelerate the peace negotiations. It will serve only those who carry out terrorist acts and atrocities, on both sides, with the purpose to undermine the agreements and put a hold on the negotiations.

This is my hope, and I believe that after a few days, negotiations will be resumed with greater determination to reach an agreement and to implement it. This is way that I believe in, this is the policy of the government of Israel, and we will stick to it.