

## Speech Geert Wilders, Tel Aviv, December 5 2010

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Shalom chaveriem,

Let me start by saying that it is with great sadness that I share your grief over the deaths of more than 40 brave Israelis who lost their lives - many while trying to save others in the great fire near Haifa. My country, the Netherlands, is amongst other countries helping to put down this fire, which is threatening the lives and property of thousands of your compatriots. I offer my heartfelt condolences to the families of those who perished. My thoughts are with them.

Israel is an immense source of inspiration for me. When I came to your country for the first time as a teenager, I lived here for a year.

I am not ashamed to stand with Israel, but proud. I am grateful to Israel. I will always defend Israel. Your country is the cradle of Western civilization. We call it the Judeo-Christian civilization with good reason.

Israel is often being treated unfairly. The world looks at the plight of the Palestinians in refugee camps in Lebanon, Gaza, and other places, and many blame Israel. The UN claims that there are over 4.7 million Palestinian refugees, and many blame Israel. These voices say the Palestinians should be allowed to return to "Palestine." But where is Palestine? Many say Israel must solve the problems of Palestine. But is Israel guilty of the plight of the Palestinian refugees?

My answer is "No." The Arab leaders are to be blamed - and Islam is to be blamed. Let me first tell you why, and then I will tell you where Palestine can be found.

At the end of World War II, there were 50 million refugees. Today, all the refugee problems dating from before the 1950s have been solved. All, except one - the problem of the Palestinians.

Why did this problem not get solved? The reason is simple: Because the Arab countries did not allow it to get solved. And because Islam does not allow it to get solved.

In May 1948, the number of Jews in the Arab countries was estimated to be close to 1 million. Today, fewer than 8,000 Jews are left in the entire Arab world. In 1948, the Arab countries forced the Jews out and confiscated their properties. More Jews fled the Arab countries than Arabs fled Israel. Where are the Jewish refugee camps? There are none.

So, why are there refugee camps for Palestinians in areas surrounding Israel? Because the Palestinians were not welcomed in the neighboring Arab countries. There was no Arab solidarity; the refugees were forced into camps and slums, where many of their descendants still linger today.

Under international definitions the status of refugee or displaced person only applies to first generation refugees. However, the UN makes an exception for Palestinians. Descendants of Palestinian refugees are granted the same refugee status as their ancestors. Consequently, the number of so-called Palestinian refugees registered with the UN increased from 711,000 in 1950 to over 4.7 million in 2010. These refugees are being used as a demographic weapon against Israel.

Instead of blaming the inhospitable Arab regimes, many blame Israel.

My friends, the blame should be laid where it belongs: with the Arab world. The Jewish refugees built new lives for themselves. They did what millions of refugees have done in the course of history, including, in the 20th century, the Germans who had to leave Sudetenland and the lands east of the Oder and Neisse rivers, the Hungarians who fled Transsylvania, the Greeks who were ejected from the Aegean coast of Anatolia, the Hindus who fled the Punjab.

With each generation, the resentment of these refugees and their descendants slowly fades away. Time heals all wounds. Acceptance of the new situation is the norm.

Islam, however, conditions Muslims to hate Jews. It is a religious duty to do so. Israel must be destroyed because it is the homeland of the Jews.

Influential Islamic scholars, such as Muhammad Tantawi, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in Cairo, the most prestigious center of Muslim learning, call Jews "enemies of Allah." Tantawi, who died last March, was generally considered a moderate by the Western media and policy makers. But how did this "moderate" address a delegation of Palestinian Muslims who visited him in 2002?

He urged them to intensify suicide attacks against Israelis, stating that every so-called "martyrdom operation" against - I quote - "any Israeli, including children, women, and teenagers, is a legitimate act according to [Islamic] religious law, and an Islamic commandment, until the people of Palestine regain their land." - end of quote.

Nizar Qabbani, one of the most revered poets in the Arab world, praised the madness of those who are blinded by an ideology of hatred. In his poem Ode to the Intifada, he wrote: "O mad people of Gaza, A thousand greetings to the mad. The age of political reason has long departed. So teach us madness."

That is the nature of the Islamic enemies confronting the Jews - sheer madness.

Israel, on the other hand, is a beacon of light; it is like a Hanukkah menorah whose lights have been kindled in a region that until 1948 was engulfed by darkness.

Friends, Israel is not to blame for the situation in the Middle East. The problem is Islam's rejection of Israel's right to exist. Only last month, Fatah concluded its convention in Ramallah by declaring its blatant refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

The problem is also our Western leaders' refusal to understand that Israel is the West's canary in the coalmine: If the Jews are denied the right to live in freedom and peace, soon we will all be denied this right. If the light of Israel is extinguished, we will all face darkness. If Israel falls, the West falls. That is why we are all Israel.

But as long as the West refuses to understand how the Palestinians are used as a weapon against Israel, it will not be able to see who is truly to blame; it will not be able to see that it is not Israel's duty to provide a Palestinian state - for the simple reason that there already is a Palestinian state and that state is Jordan.

Indeed, my friends, Jordan is Palestine. Take a look at the map of this part of the world after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following World War I. Both contemporary Israel and contemporary Jordan were part of the British Mandate of Palestine.

In 1922, the British partitioned Palestine into Cisjordan and Transjordan - the latter comprising 78 per cent of the territory of Palestine. The British handed that territory over to their ally, the Hashemite strongman Abdallah ibn Hussein. Abdallah was the son of the emir Hussein bin Ali, guardian of the Islamic holy city of Mecca. The Hashemites belong to the Quraish tribe - the tribe of Islam founder Muhammad. They are a foreign body in Palestine.

In 1946, Transjordan became an independent state under Hashemite rule. In November 1947, the United Nations proposed to partition the remaining 22 per cent of Palestine. The territory between the Jordan River and the sea was divided into a Jewish and an Arab part. The Jewish representatives accepted the UN partition plan, but the Arab representatives refused. In an attempt to "drive all the Jews into the sea," they began the 1948 war - which they lost.

They took revenge, however, on the Jews in East Jerusalem and the rest of Cisjordan - the ancient provinces of Judea and Samaria - held by the Arab forces. This entire region was ethnically cleansed of all Jews. Even the names of Judea and Samaria were wiped off the map and replaced by the ridiculous term "West Bank." A river bank of over 40 kilometers wide. I come from a country full of rivers, and there the river banks are only a few dozen meters wide.

Israel, including Judea and Samaria, has been the land of the Jews since time immemorial. Judea means Land of the Jews. Never in the history of the world has there been an autonomous state in the area that was not Jewish. The Diaspora of the Jews, which began after their defeat by the Romans in AD 70, did not lead to the departure of all the Jews from their ancient homeland. Jews had been living in the Jordan Valley for centuries until the Arab invaders drove them out in 1948, when the provinces of Judea and Samaria were occupied by the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan, which abbreviated its name to Jordan in 1950.

And until 1967, when Israel regained the ancient Jewish heartland of Judea and Samaria, no-one, not a single Islamic scholar or Western politician, ever demanded that there be an independent Palestinian state in the so-called West Bank.

Must Israel trade land for peace? Should it assign Judea and Samaria to another Palestinian state - a second one, next to Jordan? My friends, let me be very clear: The conflict in the Middle East is not a conflict over territory, but rather an ideological battle.

People are mistaken when they assume that giving up Judea and Samaria and East Jerusalem and letting the Palestinians have it, will end the conflict between Israel and the Arabs. In 2005, Israel sacrificed the settlements in Gaza for the sake of peace. Did it get peace?

On the contrary, because the conflict is essentially ideological, the situation worsened. Because the conflict is ideological, territorial concessions are counterproductive. Ideologies cannot be defeated by concessions. They are encouraged and emboldened by it.

Ideologies must be confronted with the iron will never to give in, "never, never, never, never - in nothing, great or small, large or petty." That is the lesson which the world learned from Winston Churchill when he confronted the evil ideology of nazism.

This conflict here in the Middle East is not about land and borders, but about Islamic jihadism opposing Western liberty.

From the moment that Israel was founded, the Arab leaders have rejected every partition plan and every initiative for a territorial settlement. The Islamic ideology simply does not accept the concept of a Jewish state. Neither Hamas nor Fatah are willing to recognize the right of the Jewish people to a state of their own in their historic homeland. No territorial concession on Israel's part can ever change that.

Israel's ideological enemies want to wipe Israel out as a nation. They simply deny the Jewish state the right to exist and to live in peace, dignity and liberty.

For the sake of its own survival and security, Israel needs defensible borders. A country that is only 15 kilometers wide is impossible to defend. That is the strategic reason why Jews need to settle Judea and Samaria.

Therefore, the Jewish towns and villages in Judea and Samaria are not an impediment to peace; they are an expression of the Jewish right to exist in this land. They are tiny outposts of freedom, defying ideological forces which deny not only Israel but the entire West the right to live in peace, dignity and liberty.

Let us never forget that Islam threatens not just Israel; Islam threatens the entire world. Without Judea and Samaria, Israel cannot protect Jerusalem. The future of the world depends on Jerusalem. If Jerusalem falls, Athens and Rome - and Paris, London and Washington - will be next.

Thus, Jerusalem is the main front protecting our common civilization. When the flag of Israel no longer flies over the walls of Jerusalem, the West will no longer be free.

However, a peaceful solution must also be found for the many Palestinians in the refugee camps in Lebanon, Gaza and elsewhere. Each year, hundreds of millions of euros and dollars are spent on the Palestinian refugees in international aid.

The financial assistance, however, did not provide the refugees a new home, a place to live and build a future for their children and grandchildren. It is obvious where this place should be. It should be Palestine, just as, after the Second World War, the obvious place for the German refugees from the East to go to, was Germany. Since Jordan is Palestine, it is the duty of the Jordanian government to welcome all Palestinian refugees who voluntarily want to settle there.

Until the late 1980s, Jordan's Hashemite rulers did not deny that their country was Palestine. They said so on numerous occasions. In 1965, King Hussein said: "Those organizations which seek to differentiate between Palestinians and Jordanians are traitors." As late as 1981, Hussein repeated - I quote - "Jordan is Palestine and Palestine is Jordan."

In March 1971, The Palestine National Council, too, stated that - I quote - "what links Jordan to Palestine is a national bond [...] formed, since time immemorial, by history and culture. The establishment of one political entity in Transjordan and another in Palestine is illegal." - end of quote.

By the late 1970s, however, the Arab authorities began to differentiate between Jordanians and Palestinians. What was previously considered to be treason and illegality suddenly became the propaganda line.

In March 1977, PLO executive committee member Zahir Muhsein admitted in a candid interview in the Dutch newspaper Trouw: - I quote -

"Only for political and tactical reasons do we speak today about the existence of a Palestinian people, since Arab national interests demand that we posit the existence of a distinct 'Palestinian people' to oppose Zionism. For tactical reasons, Jordan, which is a sovereign state with defined borders, cannot lay claim to Haifa and Jaffa, while as a Palestinian, I can undoubtedly demand Haifa, Jaffa, Beer-Sheva and Jerusalem. However, the moment we reclaim our right to all of Palestine, we will not wait even a minute to unite Palestine and Jordan." - end of quote.

In 1988, as the first Intifada raged, Jordan officially renounced any claim of sovereignty to the so-called West Bank. In recent years, the Jordanian authorities have stripped thousands of Palestinians of their Jordanian citizenship. They do so for two reasons.

First, because the alien Hashemite rulers fear that the Palestinians might one day take over their own country. And second, because stripping Palestinians of their Jordanian citizenship supports the falsehood that Jordan is not a part of Palestine. And that, consequently, the Palestinians must attack Israel if they want a place of their own.

By arbitrarily reducing thousands of their citizens to statelessness, the Jordanian authorities want to force the Palestinians to turn their aspirations towards the establishment of another Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria. This decision is a great injustice committed by the Hashemite rulers of Jordan - this foreign clan which the British installed.

I am not naïve. I am not blind to the possibility that if Jordan were to be ruled by the Palestinians, this might lead to political radicalization in Jordan. However, a continuation of the present situation will most certainly lead to radicalization. We need a paradigm shift. If we keep thinking along the same lines as we have done so far, no peaceful solution of the Palestinian problem is possible without endangering the existence of Israel and disrupting the social and economic fabric in Judea and Samaria. Resettling millions of Palestinians in these small provinces is simply impossible and is not going to happen.

To the skeptics, I say: What is the alternative? Leaving the present situation as it is? No, my friends, the world must recognize that there has been an independent Palestinian state since 1946, and it is the Kingdom of Jordan.

Allowing all Palestinians to voluntarily settle in Jordan is a better way towards peace than the current so-called two-states-approach (in reality a three-states-approach) propagated by the United Nations, the U.S. administration, and governing elites all over the world. We only want a democratic non-violent solution for the Palestinian problem. This requires that the Palestinian people should be given the right to voluntarily settle in Jordan and freely elect their own government in Amman. If the present Hashemite King is still as popular as today, he can remain in power. That is for the people of Palestine to decide in real democratic elections.

My friends, let us adopt a totally new approach. Let us acknowledge that Jordan is Palestine.

And to the Western world I say: Let us stand with Israel because the Jews have no other state, while the Palestinians already have Jordan. Let us stand with Israel because the history of our civilization began here, in this land, the homeland of the Jews. Let us stand with Israel because the Jewish state needs defensible borders to secure its own survival. Let us stand with Israel because it is the frontline in the battle for the survival of the West.

We must speak the truth. The truth that Jordan is Palestine, the truth that Samaria and Judea are part of Israel, the truth that Jerusalem may not fall, the truth that Israel is the only democracy in a dark and tyrannical region, the truth that Israel is the linchpin of the West.

Of course, I am just a foreign guest and should be modest. Israel is a democracy and I respect every decision which its people and government will make. But I am proud to be here and grateful for the opportunity to share my thoughts and beliefs with you.

Because it is here that our civilization is under attack as we speak. It is here that we, men and women of the West, must show our resolve to defend ourselves. It is here that Israel has lit the light of freedom and that Europeans and Americans must help the Israelis to keep that light shining in the darkness. For Israel's sake and for the sake of all of us.

Toda raba... And shalom to all of you.