

U.S. Blocks UN Security Council Action on Israel, Gaza Conflict

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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UNITED NATIONS — The United States on Tuesday blocked a UN Security Council statement condemning the escalating conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, setting the scene for a possible showdown between Washington and Russia on the issue.

The United States opposed the statement, which had to be approved by consensus, because it "failed to address the root cause" — missile attacks by Hamas — of the escalation in fighting between Israel and Hamas militants in Gaza, said Erin Pelton, spokeswoman for the U.S. mission to the United Nations.

Israel said it was these Hamas rocket attacks that prompted its major offensive against the militants in Gaza on Wednesday.

"We made clear that we would measure any action by the Security Council based on whether it supported the ongoing diplomacy toward de-escalation of violence and a durable outcome

that ends the rocket attacks on Israeli cities," Pelton said.

"By failing to call for the immediate and permanent halt to rocket launches from Gaza into Israel, this press statement failed to contribute constructively to those goals," she said.

Russia said on Monday that if the 15-member council could not agree on a statement then it would put a resolution — a stronger move by the council than a statement — to a vote later on Tuesday to call for an end to the violence and show support for regional and international efforts to broker peace.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton headed to the region on Tuesday to try to calm the conflict, while Egypt was trying to broker a truce between Israel and Hamas. Israeli air strikes and Palestinian rocket fire continued on Tuesday for a seventh day.

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