STATEMENT MADE BY HON. FRANK ANNOH-DOMPREH MP FOR NSAWAM ADOAGYIRI AND CHAIRMAN FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, ON THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT, CLAIMING LIVES OF THE MOST VULNERABLE IN SOCIETY

1. Right Honorable Speaker, I rise to make this statement, in sincere expression of our empathy to affected persons in a half century-long conflict that has claimed the precious lives of men and women, as well as children who perhaps have not had a single opportunity to experience peace and stability.

2. Regrettably Mr. Speaker, Israel and Palestine have entrenched themselves in a retaliatory venture, that continually claims the lives of people, especially innocent civilians. Affected families express their condemnation of the ongoing hostility and while the international community seeks a definitive solution, a full scale war gnaws at both states.

3. Mr. Speaker, it is nearing two decades since Ghana stepped into the global space in 2002, to call on Israel and Palestine to bring an end to unjustified attacks. Not only for the fact that it had subsisted for far too long, but primarily because innocent persons were, and are still being killed.

4. Death tolls have continued to rise Mr. Speaker, and it is indeed disheartening to look back only 18 years ago and realize that, women and children are still among the unfortunate because of this conflict. More so after several political
leaders have entreated cessation of hostilities. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) reported in 2018 that, over 2,500 Palestinian and Israeli children have been killed since the year 2000.

5. Mr. Speaker, Aljazeera in the forenoon of Tuesday 12th November 2019 reported the death of about 3 persons. By sunset that same day, the death toll increased to 7, with about 45 people severely injured.

6. News reports also indicated that some attacks were directed at officials in both territories but since they are often uncontrolled, many innocent people suffer injuries while others lose their lives in the process. News updates on the air strikes last night, reported the death of a Palestinian Islamic Jihad official, in an air raid that killed his son and one other person when the attack was carried out on his home inside Gaza. That is one more child being added to the death toll rising on a daily basis.

7. This has triggered the launch of rockets from Gaza into Southern and Central Israel. The missiles have landed in the city centers and within settlements and other public places. Many innocent civilians have been injured and properties have been destroyed. The firing of rockets on civilian populations is totally unacceptable and must cease immediately. An immediate and comprehensive
resolution, following total de-escalation is required to safeguard the lives and security of Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

8. As expected, concerned states have backed the intervention of international bodies ever since the conflict made airwaves. Egypt are no exception and their efforts in mediating between both sides has been instrumental in causing the tragedies to last only under a few days, through some ceasefire proposals brokered in May 2019 and even as far back as 2014.

9. The international organizations like the European Union (EU) that have the onus to advocate the protection of vulnerable groups of people within the conflict-stricken region, have also expressed their disapproval of the back and forth attacks between Israel and Palestine. Indeed, the European Union has issued a statement to fully support the efforts of Egypt in this regard.

10. It is clear that this is no longer about choosing sides. The European Union has consistently reiterated that only a political solution can put an end to these continuous cycles of violence, and I can only add my voice to that call. The world wants the conflict to end, and further attacks are not making the situation any easier to achieve, not forgetting the fact that the conflict is costing the world money.

11. What needs to be understood by Israel and Palestine is that, the turbulent history spilling over from the 20th century is displeasing, and it cannot
continue to go on. At this point, there is a need to put all issues impeding ceasefires aside, and chart a new course to protect life and property.

12. Mr. Speaker, The killing of innocent persons cannot continue unending. The world cannot look on helpless. Yes, there are complexities inherent, but the lives of children and women must be spared. The world cannot give up on the Middle East, we need to resolve it together or it remains an albatross on our neck.

We cannot remain silent.

13. I thank you for the opportunity Mr. Speaker.