

# UNGA EMERGENCY SPECIAL SESSION ON GAZA – UK

## STATEMENT

*Word count: 565*

Mr President, Excellencies,

I would like to begin by expressing the UK's support for the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic in the name of the European Union.

Mr President,

The UK welcomes the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1860 which the UK drafted and sponsored last week. We regret that its provisions have yet to be implemented by the parties. Resolution 1860 is very clear in its call for an “immediate durable and fully respected ceasefire”. This requires an urgent need for a halt to Hamas rocket attacks and an end to Israeli military operations.

We welcome ongoing Egyptian efforts to deliver this ceasefire on the ground. This work is vital and we hope it succeeds. There is a real urgency with which this needs to move forward: every day that goes by without a ceasefire sees the death of more Palestinian civilians, including children, and the continued threat to Israeli civilians from rocket

fire. We cannot afford another week of this tragic conflict. We need a ceasefire immediately.

Making such a ceasefire durable will also be a challenge, but one to which the parties and the international communities need to rise. There needs to be practical action to improve security and halt the illegal traffic of arms and their components into Gaza. In parallel, we must reopen border crossings in Gaza, to allow the movement of people and goods.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains desperate. The UN continues to do an outstanding job there under very difficult circumstances. We applaud the courageous work of UNRWA staff, in particular given the impossible position they are put in by the military activity of Hamas and the damage done by Israeli shelling. We condemn the fact that UN Headquarters in Gaza was hit yesterday by Israeli shelling.

The UK has already made available an additional US\$10m to help address urgent humanitarian needs. We will continue to support the United Nations, and other international agencies, which have the infrastructure and expertise to lead the humanitarian response.

However, only a permanent ceasefire and the opening of border crossings can deliver sustained progress.

Mr President,

While we would not seek to limit freedom of debate within this Hall and are engaged in negotiations to try to deliver a GA resolution that will command widespread support across the membership, we nevertheless feel obliged to underline the limits which Article 12 of the United Nations Charter places on action that can be taken in the General Assembly on matters on which the Security Council is exercising its functions.

The Security Council's work on the situation in Gaza is clearly ongoing. The adoption of resolution 1860 a week ago has been followed by further discussion in the Council. We were briefed by the Secretary-General ahead of his current visit to the Region and were able to give him our views then. The Council met again yesterday to receive a further briefing on the situation following the attack on UN facilities, after which the Council President spoke to the press on the Council's behalf. The Security Council remains seized of the matter and ready to consider what further action is necessary in the light of the Secretary-General's

findings on his return. It cannot therefore be doubted that the exercise by the Council of its functions is ongoing,

Mr President,

Above all, we should take care that the General Assembly acts in support of the provisions of Security Council Resolution 1860, which provides the right framework for our collective action. I call on all parties to implement it urgently.