

**The 59th, 60th and 61st plenary meetings of the General Assembly during its 78th session
under agenda item 63 entitled “use of the veto”**

4 – 5 March 2024

Summary by the Office of the President of the General Assembly

On 26 February 2024, the President of the Security Council submitted a Special Report of the Security Council to the President of the General Assembly, in accordance with resolution A/RES/76/262 of 26 April 2022. According to the Special Report, on 20 February 2024, the Security Council held its 9552nd meeting to take action on a draft resolution contained in document S/2024/173, proposed by Algeria. The meeting was held under the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”. The draft resolution received 13 votes in favour, one vote against and one abstention. The draft resolution was not adopted due to the negative vote cast by the United States, a permanent member of the Security Council.

On 4 and 5 March 2024, following the use of the veto during the 9552nd meeting of the Security Council and in accordance with resolution A/RES/76/262, the General Assembly held a plenary debate under agenda item 63 entitled “use of the veto”. A statement was delivered by the President of the General Assembly, available [here](#). Representatives of 70 delegations took the floor, including eight speaking on behalf of groups of States. The veto casting State also participated in the debate.

The following is a brief summary of statements delivered during the debate.

- Many delegations criticised the use of the veto by the United States on the draft resolution in the Security Council. It was further noted that the draft had garnered strong support from Council members, receiving 13 votes in favour.
- It was recalled that the Security Council acts on behalf of the membership of the UN and is thus accountable to it. The inability of the Security Council to demand an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, despite the unequivocal and widely supported demands contained in the resolutions of the General Assembly’s 10th emergency special session, was therefore deeply regrettable.
- It was further noted that while the UN Charter confers primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security on the Security Council, it does not confer exclusive responsibility. The role of the General Assembly, in line with its powers and functions under the UN Charter, was highlighted in this regard.
- Delegations expressed deep concern regarding the death toll of over 30,000 civilians and the devastating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. Reports of starvation were referenced and the urgent need to avoid famine was also raised. The need for Israel to urgently scale up and maintain humanitarian access to Gaza was highlighted by numerous speakers.
- Many speakers strongly condemned the killing of over 100 civilians gathered to collect flour in the south-west of Gaza City on 29 February 2024 and called for an immediate investigation and accountability for the perpetrators.

- Delegations expressed deep concern regarding the prospects of an Israeli ground invasion into Rafah. Forced displacement of civilians and the collective punishment of Palestinians were also strongly rejected.
- Many Member States reiterated the demands of the General Assembly for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, that all parties comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians, and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as ensuring humanitarian access.
- Many Member States condemned the 7 October 2023 attack by Hamas, including reports of sexual violence, use of human shields and the taking of hostages.
- Several speakers expressed support for the mediation efforts led by Egypt, Qatar and the US. It was noted by some, however, that such efforts do not run counter to efforts and resolutions progressed at the UN.
- Numerous delegations reaffirmed the critical role played by UNRWA in the Gaza Strip and countered attempts to dismantle or discredit the Agency. Several speakers called on Member States who had suspended their financial contributions to reverse their decisions.
- Several practical measures, such as sanctioning illegal settlers, halting the sale of weapons and ammunitions to Israel and the admission of the State of Palestine as a Member State of the UN, were raised by several speakers.
- While the urgency of an immediate humanitarian ceasefire was highlighted by many speakers, support was also expressed for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on the two-State solution with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace within secure and recognised borders, consistent with international law and relevant UN resolutions.
- Some delegations recalled their positions on Security Council reform, including their opposition to the use or threat of use of the veto. Several Member States referenced and called for the implementation of the France/Mexico Initiative on the suspension of the veto in cases of mass atrocities as well as the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. Reference was also made to the ongoing proceedings in the International Court of Justice.

In addition to the present summary, and when available, a verbatim record of the debate will be transmitted to the Security Council.
