



# Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

**8950**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Wednesday, 19 January 2022, 3 p.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Ms. Juul . . . . . (Norway)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Mr. Macaj
Brazil . . . . .	Mrs. Espeschit Maia
China . . . . .	Mr. Tian Bingxu
France . . . . .	Ms. Feriaud
Gabon . . . . .	Ms. Oye
Ghana . . . . .	Mrs. Hackman
India . . . . .	Mr. Setia
Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Cahalane
Kenya . . . . .	Ms. Nthoki
Mexico . . . . .	Mr. Ochoa Martínez
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Frolov
United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Mrs. Alhefeiti
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Mansfield
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Turner

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of Security Council members dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372), which was agreed in light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this official record of the Security Council will be supplemented by a compilation of annexes (S/2022/39) containing the statements submitted by interested non-members of the Council.



*The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.*

**The President:** I now give the floor to Mr. Arrmanatha Nasir, Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

**Mr. Nasir:** At the outset, and on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I would like to congratulate Norway on its able leadership of the Security Council this month. We are grateful this meeting is taking place at the ministerial level.

We would once more like to call the attention of the Council to the critical situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and highlight the need for a swift and just resolution of the question of Palestine, on the basis of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. On 7 December Ms. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, briefed our Committee on the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, describing it as disastrous, with severe violations, some of them killings and arbitrary detentions — including of children — as well as restrictions on fundamental freedoms and discrimination affecting millions of Palestinians. On 10 November, human rights experts expressed alarm at the rising incidence of violence directed by Israeli settlers at Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, alongside growing tensions related to Israel's ongoing settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, threatening the contiguity and viability of the Palestinian State. The Committee remains concerned about the resulting increase in injuries and fatalities, with six Palestinians reportedly killed and 1,138 others injured between 19 October 2021 and 14 January 2022. There are also deeply disturbing reports of new rules of engagement for Israeli security forces regarding the use of live ammunition in the West Bank, which could lead to an even larger number of injuries and fatalities among Palestinian civilians.

Palestinian families are facing expulsion from homes they have lived in for decades and across generations in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods of occupied East Jerusalem. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, since October 2021 232 Palestinian-owned homes and structures have been demolished across the occupied

West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 283 people and affecting 5,329 women, children and men. The Committee calls on Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law and to cease forthwith the demolition and seizure of Palestinian property throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The economic situation in the State of Palestine also continues to be seriously worrying. In November 2021 Ms. Lynne Hastings, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, highlighted the urgent need to address the continuing economic and fiscal crisis facing the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people. For that reason, the Committee supports the \$510 million humanitarian response plan launched by the United Nations Resident Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory in support of 1.6 million of the most vulnerable people in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, during 2022.

At the November 2021 Advisory Commission meeting, Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, also highlighted the drop in the resources available since 2013, despite the growing humanitarian needs of Palestinian refugees. The welcome return of the United States as a partner and donor to the Agency has been offset, however, by reduced funding from other large donors and a lack of new sources of funding. The Committee reiterates its call to the international community to ensure that the Agency has sufficient and reliable funding so that it can deliver its crucial services to more than 5.8 million Palestinian refugees and maintain its vital contribution to regional stability.

The Palestinians living in Gaza need humanitarian relief and economic assistance urgently if they are to have dignified lives and a sustainable future. Since the deadly escalation in the Gaza Strip last May, the needs remain acute. Hundreds of families remain displaced, and thousands of homes and structures require reconstruction and repair. Let me reiterate, however, that Gaza requires not only economic support for reconstruction but also a complete lifting of the illegal Israeli blockade, in line with resolution 1860 (2009), as well as the legitimate Palestinian Government's return to Gaza. Gaza remains an integral part of the Palestinian territory that has been occupied since 1967 and must be

part of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State. As much as we agree on the need to focus on improving Palestinians' livelihoods, the Committee ultimately believes that it cannot really happen without a political horizon that can ensure justice for the Palestinian people and their exercise of their rights, including the right to self-determination, as well as bringing a definitive end to the occupation and establishing an independent Palestinian State.

Palestinian civil-society organizations continue to face restrictions on their freedom of expression, assembly and association. The bureau of the Committee has joined the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Union and many international human rights organizations in publicly expressing deep concern about Israel's decision on 22 October to designate six human rights and humanitarian Palestinian civil-society organizations as terrorist entities. Some of those organizations are long-standing, reliable partners of the Committee, and of the United Nations, in advocating for the protection and promotion of the human rights of the Palestinian people. At an event organized by the Committee on 7 December, representatives from Palestinian and Israeli civil society called on Member States to hold Israel accountable for its actions and to continue providing a platform for the voices that the Government of Israel is trying to suppress. The Israeli authorities have yet to make public any substantive evidence against those Palestinian organizations. We reiterate that civil-society organizations must be allowed to work unhindered in the implementation of their mandates.

The Committee calls for the implementation of the provisions in resolution 2334 (2016), as well as of all the relevant United Nations resolutions and the internationally agreed parameters, in order to justly and sustainably resolve the question of Palestine. We are grateful to Norway for convening this open debate, and in that connection we hope that a ministerial meeting of the Middle East Quartet will soon relaunch the peace process. The current course of action must be diverted and redressed without delay, with the aim of ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and implementing a just solution based on international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions that enables the two States of Israel and Palestine to live side by side in peace and security along the pre-1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State. The

Committee stands ready to assist in the process and garner the support needed to advance it.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

**Mr. Keçeli (Turkey):** We thank the President for convening this open debate and welcome the briefings by Special Coordinator Wennesland and the civil-society representatives.

As we listened to the briefings, we reflected on the fact that 75 years have passed since the United Nations accepted the responsibility of finding a solution to the Palestine issue. After three quarters of a century, there is still no solution. For all intents and purposes, the only thing that has changed is our attitude to the Palestinian question. We no longer debate a political solution to this enduring conflict. We speak of peace only in theory. The Security Council has lost its ambition. As we saw last spring, the conflict comes to the fore only when there is an escalation. Messages urging restraint have replaced the calls for lasting peace. That is not good enough. The normalization of the occupation is simply unacceptable.

We condemn all unilateral steps, including arbitrary arrests, illegal settlements, forced evictions, the demolition of houses and attempts to change the status quo of Jerusalem and Haram Al-Sharif. Such actions are detrimental to the prospects for a two-State solution. We note the Israeli Government's decision to halt the plans for illegal settlements in Atarot and postpone the construction of an illegal settlement in the West Bank's Area E-1 to an unknown date. These are indeed steps in the right direction. Sadly, Israel's decision to list six Palestinian civil-society organizations as terrorist entities is a prime example of taking one step forward and three steps back. It constitutes yet another violation of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, and we expect it to be revoked immediately.

We firmly believe that the intra-Palestinian reconciliation process is integral to seeding peace in the region. Turkey will continue to support unity among the Palestinian parties and urges other Member States to do the same. Furthermore, the international community should support the Palestinian economy. To that end, we thank Norway for hosting the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting last November. However, that alone is not enough. Millions of Palestinian refugees rely on the life-saving assistance of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near

East (UNRWA). It is essential to ensure that the Agency can continue to provide its services in a sustainable, uninterrupted manner. Turkey will continue to support UNRWA's vital work both financially and politically.

The lives of children on both sides of the border are equally important and the side they are born on should not matter. They should have an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential. No child's future should be stolen because of an accident of birth. The Palestine-Israel conflict is not a frozen conflict, nor should it be treated as one. Turkey will continue to support a two-State solution leading to the establishment of an independent, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Returning to the path of peace negotiations is a priority. To that end, the work of the Quartet must be revitalized, and we must work for a two-State solution. We hope that today's open debate rouses those who have grown tired of the Palestinian question, because we can assure them that the people of Palestine are far more tired than any of us and deserve better than what we have done for them so far.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

**Mr. Alateek** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on Norway's leadership of the Security Council this month and to wish your delegation every success. I also wish the incoming members of the Council all the best during their terms.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stresses its commitment to the constants that make up the question of Palestine, that is, ending the occupation, establishing an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital and guaranteeing the right of return for Palestinian refugees. We also stress that achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East is a strategic option for ending one of the longest and most complex historical conflicts that the modern world has seen. It must be done on the basis of a two-State solution and in accordance with the international terms of reference and the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, which guarantee the establishment of a Palestinian State along the 4 June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, along with ensuring the return of refugees and an end to Israel's occupation of all Arab territories, including the Arab Syrian Golan and Lebanese territories.

The occupation authorities, which are still using fraud and desecration as part of their approach, continue to violate international resolutions and norms in occupied Palestine, committing the most heinous crimes of injustice and aggression against the Palestinian people. The stark violation of the Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron by the President of the Israeli entity is only one example. The time has come for the international community and the Security Council to assume their responsibility for championing the Palestinian people and settling the Palestinian question by finally ensuring the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people to establish their own independent State as guaranteed them by international resolutions, and firmly confronting Israel's ongoing practices and violations of international law and the relevant Council resolutions.

Day after day, the Iran-supported terrorist Houthi militia demonstrates its disregard for the aspirations of our brother people of Yemen and their country's stability and emphasizes its subversive role in threatening international peace and security, as shown by its continuing threats to international navigation and its use of civilian facilities and Yemeni ports to undermine regional security and attack civilians in Saudi Arabia and our sister country the United Arab Emirates. In a recent and cowardly assault, the Houthi militia attacked Abu Dhabi International Airport and hijacked the United Arab Emirates ship *Rawabi*. My country fully supports the United Arab Emirates against any threats to its security and stability. It is important to address the danger caused by this terrorist group and its continued threat to stability in the region and the wider world. My country stresses its right to take every possible measure, based on its obligations and international law in order to respond to the activities and terrorist acts of this Iran-supported terrorist militia.

Saudi Arabia stands by its efforts to resolve the conflict in Yemen. We call on the international community and the Security Council to take decisive measures against the terrorist militia that is obstructing every effort to reach a peaceful and comprehensive political solution sponsored by the United Nations in line with Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 2216 (2015), the Initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the outcome of the national dialogue. We stress that the lack of decisive steps to combat this militia has emboldened them to inflict harm on the Yemeni people and destabilize the security

and stability of the region and has a huge impact on international peace and security.

Saudi Arabia supports our brother people of Lebanon and urges Lebanon's authorities to prioritize their people's welfare, meet their aspirations for security, stability and well-being and end the terrorist organization Hizbullah's control over their State.

**The President:** I would again like to remind speakers that we strongly encourage all participants to wear a mask even when speaking. I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

**Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*):** I would like to once again congratulate you, Madam President, on Norway's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and to thank you for holding this meeting. I welcome the five newly elected members of the Security Council for 2022 to 2023. We look forward to working with all parties within and outside the Security Council to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

We condemn the Houthi attack on our sister country the United Arab Emirates, and we stand in full solidarity with it in every step it takes to protect its security and defend itself. I would also like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine.

The Security Council is meeting again today to discuss the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, at a time when we urgently need to take effective steps to find a political solution in order to achieve a just and comprehensive peace, based on a two-State solution, leading to the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State along the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The alternative would be a continuation of the occupation, entrenched by constant violations of the rights of the Palestinian people and illegal steps that undermine every opportunity for peace. The region will not know peace until the occupation and the current unsustainable status quo come to an end. We must therefore intensify efforts to end the deadlock in the peace process, support confidence-building measures and prevent any escalation or violations that undermine the prospects for peace, including illegal and illegitimate Israeli settlement activities, the confiscation of land, the demolition of houses and the displacement of Palestinians from their homes.

Jordan condemns today's forced displacement and eviction of a Palestinian family from their home in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in the early-morning hours. It is yet another clear violation of international law and international humanitarian law. We stress that according to international law, Israel, the occupying Power in East Jerusalem, must protect the rights of Palestinians in their homes. Israel cannot implement its own laws in occupied Jerusalem. It must implement the international law pertaining to occupation, which is a very clear provision of the Hague Convention. It is also important to provide all the necessary support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and its mandate until a just and comprehensive solution is reached that addresses all final-status issues and preserves the rights of Palestinians in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, foremost of which is General Assembly resolution 194 (III), in order to guarantee Palestinian refugees the right of return and the right to compensation.

At a time when we must intensify our efforts to reach the political solution, we need to achieve a just peace, we must also work to find an economic solution to end the suffering of the Palestinian people. In that regard, we stress the need for the international community to support the Palestinian National Authority so that it can meet its obligations and responsibilities towards the Palestinian people. It is also essential to eliminate all the obstacles hindering the growth of the Palestinian economy and open the door to trade and investment opportunities. I want to stress that an economic solution will create a political environment that is not a substitute for a two-State solution but that can enable its achievement. In that regard, I would like to thank Norway for its efforts to support the Palestinian economy through its chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians.

The continuing settlement building and its expansion are violations of international law and various Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), and they undermine the prospects for peace and a two-State solution. The international community should firmly reject settlement activities and stress that they are illegal, null and void. Settlements cannot change the legal status of the Palestinian territories, because those territories are occupied. Likewise, the continuing violations of the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque/



Al-Haram Al-Sharif and the obstruction of the efforts of the Jordanian Islamic Endowment Department in Al-Quds — the only party authorized to manage all the affairs of the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque — are a violation of Israel's legal obligations as the occupying Power. Such provocation leads to escalations of the kind we witnessed in May 2021 or that are perhaps even more destructive. The international community must adopt a firm position and take the steps necessary to stop such violations and provocations in order to protect peace and prevent any recurrence of the cycle of violence. Jordan will continue to protect the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and preserve its Arab, Islamic and Christian identity as well as their legal and historical status. Under the direct guidance of the custodian of those holy sites, His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, we spare no effort in that regard.

In conclusion, the international community must work together to restore hope in the peace process, prevent any frustrations or exacerbation of the conflict, meet the aspirations of the region and its peoples for genuine peace and enable efforts to be focused on development and building a future full of opportunities and achievements. The Middle East Quartet has a fundamental role to play in those efforts.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

**Mr. Pedroso Cuesta** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on Norway's assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month.

We endorse the statement made by the Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The Security Council has still not acted, in accordance with resolution 2334 (2016), to end the Israeli military aggression and occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Over 74 years, Israel has consolidated its policies on the annexation of the occupied Palestinian territories and increased its illegal colonization activities, including through the construction and expansion of settlements, punitive demolitions, the forced displacement of hundreds of civilians, the blockade of the Gaza Strip and plans to annex the Palestinian territories in the Jordan Valley and other parts of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The United States' repeated

obstruction of Security Council action on the issue has enabled Israel's impunity and hindered the Council's ability to discharge its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations.

We reaffirm our full support for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Palestinian people must exercise their right to self-determination and to an independent and sovereign State based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, that guarantees the right of return for refugees. We reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with the people and the Government of Palestine. We also express our support for the State of Palestine's entry to the United Nations as a full member and President Abbas's call for convening an international peace conference.

We reiterate our rejection of the so-called deal of the century, which ignores the concept of a two-State solution historically supported by the United Nations, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other international actors. The unilateral decision of the United States Government to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and to establish its diplomatic representation there, disregarding its historical status, as well as its decision to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Syrian Golan, constitutes a serious violation of the Charter, international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. The current United States Administration has not reversed those decisions, pushing the possibility of a negotiated solution further out of reach.

We call for Israel's full and unconditional withdrawal from the Syrian Golan and all occupied Arab territories. We demand an end to external interference in Syria and full respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we also support efforts to find a peaceful and negotiated solution to the situation imposed on that sister nation.

The United States' aggressive, unilateral and unjustified actions in the Middle East continue to severely infringe on the legitimate interests of the Arab nations and provoke dangerous escalations in the region. We reiterate the call for an immediate and unconditional end to the arbitrary and illegal unilateral coercive measures imposed on sovereign nations. We also reaffirm our support for the Joint Comprehensive

Plan of Action with Iran, and for the inalienable right of States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In the face of continued violations of international law, including the use and threat of use of force in international relations, as well as acts of aggression against sovereign States and interference in their internal affairs, Cuba will continue to support multilateralism, peace and full respect for the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Mr. Sabbagh** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the presence in this open debate of my brother Mr. Riad Al-Malki, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Palestine.

My delegation would like to express its astonishment that Mr. Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, insisted on including no information in his briefing today about Israel's settlement activities and other illegal practices in the occupied Syrian Golan while also ignoring Israel's repeated aggressions against Syria's sovereign territories, most recently the commercial port of Latakia, which resulted in significant material losses. My delegation had sent several letters to the Secretary-General and to Mr. Wennesland directly to brief them on developments in the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan and to draw their attention to the repeated serious Israeli attacks on the security and stability of Syria and the region. However, today's briefing by the Special Coordinator was disappointing, as it lacked objectivity and balance and did not address these aspects of his mandate.

On 26 December 2021, in yet another dangerous new escalation, the Head of the Israeli Government took the provocative step of holding a cabinet meeting in the occupied Syrian Golan at which he approved a \$317 million plan to double the number of settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan and construct thousands of housing units in two new settlements, to be named Asif and Matar. That is a flagrant violation of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and all the relevant United Nations resolutions, especially resolution 497 (1981), and represents yet another failed attempt to perpetuate and prolong the occupation and obliterate the Syrian identity of the occupied Golan. The Syrian Arab Republic strongly condemns the grave

provocations and flagrant violations committed by the Israeli occupation authorities in the Syrian Golan, which include confiscations of land and property, the imposition of demographic changes and the looting of natural resources.

The Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its established right to a full recovery of the Syrian Golan, occupied since 4 June 1967, by every possible means under international law. That is an eternal right that is not governed by any statute of limitations. We stress that all decisions and measures taken so far by Israel, the occupying Power, with the aim of changing the natural and demographic character of the Golan or imposing its laws and administration on it under any pretext, are null and void and have no legal effect under international law or the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981). That resolution considers Israel's decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan as null, void and without legal effect. The Syrian Arab Republic calls on Member States to refrain from recognizing any illegal status resulting from Israel's illegitimate practices in the occupied Syrian Golan, and to condemn and seek an end to them.

The continued Israeli attacks on Syria's sovereignty, which have recently been hysterically repeated, represent a flagrant violation of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement and the United Nations resolutions pertaining to the occupied Syrian Golan. They are clear evidence that Israel supports terrorists and fuels the war in Syria and constitute another escalation that threatens peace and security in the Middle East. The Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes that Israel's reckless and provocative behaviour and aggressive practices would never have reached this level had it not been for the protection and cover-up for its violations that successive United States Administrations provided to Israel, the occupying Power. We call on the Security Council to end its silence, uphold its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations effectively and immediately and implement its mandate to maintain international peace and security, which would deter the Israeli occupation force from continuing its violations, ensuring accountability for its rogue behaviour and impunity. It would also compel Israel to end its occupation of the Syrian Golan and to withdraw completely from it to the line of 4 June 1967, pursuant to various Security Council and General Assembly

resolutions as well as the relevant international terms of reference.

The Syrian Arab Republic strongly condemns Israel's settlement policies in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially in the West Bank and Jerusalem, the most recent of which happened today in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood. We remain steadfastly committed to supporting the inalienable rights of our brother people of Palestine. We stand with them in their legitimate struggle to defend their land and holy sites and to recover their occupied territories and all their legitimate rights, especially the right to establish their own independent State on their territory, with Jerusalem as its capital, while being granted full membership in the United Nations, as well as the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland, in line with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, notably resolution 194 (III) of 1948.

Before concluding, I would like to refer to the statement made earlier today by the observer of the European Union (EU). The statement included a repetition of the same hostile positions on the situation in Syria, even though this has nothing to do with the topic of today's meeting. The statement was a clear example of political blindness, with many biased points. Despite the fact that the statement claimed to respect our sovereignty, the EU representative found no place in it to condemn Israel's continued aggression against Syria's sovereignty. There was no call for an end to Israeli settlement activities in the Golan, which run counter to the resolutions of international legitimacy, despite the speaker's call for respecting them. Can there be a more glaring example of political hypocrisy and double standards?

Perhaps the most hypocritical event today occurred earlier, when the representative of Israel called for condemning a defenceless people who defy occupation with stones. He urged the world to pay no attention to his authorities' repeated, decades-long attacks with missiles, heavy weapons and live ammunition on the Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

**Mr. Koba** (Indonesia): I would like to begin by conveying my appreciation to Norway for holding this open debate of the Security Council at the ministerial level. The fact is that the reality on the ground

continues to be concerning and warrants the highest level of attention.

We are saddened by the fact that the Palestine issue remains the longest-standing issue on the Security Council's agenda and that despite many efforts and resolutions, the people of Palestine have yet to realize their inalienable right to independence and self-determination. We deplore the continued violations by Israel, the occupying Power, including demolitions, evictions, violence and policies that have deprived Palestinians of their legitimate rights. We have urged the Council on many occasions to uphold its responsibility and act decisively to address the core of the problem, which is the Israeli occupation that has gone on for more than half a century. I am here today to reiterate that call and to highlight three points.

First, we have repeatedly heard about the ongoing aggression, provocations and violations perpetrated by Israel. The Security Council must put a stop to them. Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) clearly states that settlement activities constitute a flagrant violation of international law. They also undermine the prospects for a just peace. As we continue to witness this, the Security Council must resolve to bring it to an end, including by ensuring Israel's accountability for its actions. It is the only way to dispel the perceptions of impunity.

Secondly, the Security Council must ensure that Palestinian civilian populations are protected. It must take concrete steps to ensure the safety of the Palestinian people and to safeguard the status quo of the holy sites. It is also imperative to continue to ensure unimpeded humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts in Gaza. Indonesia calls for the complete lifting of the Israeli blockade of Gaza, which has resulted in a grave humanitarian situation and the continued suffering of Palestinians. We also urge the international community to support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East with sustainable and predictable funding.

Lastly and most importantly, the Council must support and actively revive the stalled peace process under the auspices of the Middle East Quartet in order to achieve a just, comprehensive and durable resolution, based on a two-State solution and in line with internationally agreed parameters. It is high time for the Security Council to take action to restore and ensure a political horizon for this long-standing crisis.



I hope that this meeting, held at a high level, will result in such concrete action.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Indonesia's unwavering commitment and support for the people and the State of Palestine. We stand ready to support the Palestinian people and all efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to this issue.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

**Mr. Abd Aziz** (Malaysia): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this open debate.

The situation on the ground in Palestine remains deeply concerning. In 2021, 345 Palestinians were killed, including 86 children. Israel's illegal settlements, home demolitions, evictions and forced transfers have also continued unabated. Last year 902 homes were destroyed and 1,203 Palestinians were displaced, the highest figures since 2016. So far in 2022 Israel has demolished 35 structures, displacing 53 Palestinians in violation of international legal obligations. Those numbers are appalling. Malaysia is also extremely concerned about the increase in violent attacks by Israeli settlers. As the occupying Power, Israel has an obligation under international law to protect Palestinians and their property from violent attacks. Continued inaction on the part of the international community has emboldened the occupying Power and the settlers. Malaysia calls on the international community, particularly the Security Council itself, to act by ensuring accountability for the perpetrators.

Israel's systematic and continued oppression of Palestinians, and its discriminatory policies, are tantamount to crimes of apartheid. Its continued attacks on civil-society organizations reporting on human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territory are an affront to international law, international human rights law and peace. The international community must protect and continue to support human rights defenders in carrying out their important work of protecting the rights of the Palestinian people living under military occupation. Israel must be made to fully comply with all its obligations as prescribed by the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Malaysia maintains its firm position that only a negotiated political solution based on internationally agreed parameters, international law and the relevant

United Nations resolutions can lead to durable peace. In that context, Malaysia urges the Security Council, especially the Middle East Quartet, to relaunch and create the necessary conditions for peace talks between the relevant parties. Malaysia's resolute support and full solidarity with the Palestinian people in their realization of their inalienable rights to self-determination and freedom will never waver.

Let me conclude by reiterating Malaysia's urgent call to the Council to discharge its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security and make full use of the tools at its disposal to address this long-standing conflict and end the occupation.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

**Ms. Squeff** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the delegation of Norway for convening today's open debate.

Argentina continues to believe that the only solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is through negotiations between the two sides aimed at reaching agreement on the final-status issues identified in the Oslo Accords — Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders and security measures. My delegation supports a peaceful, definitive and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question on the basis of a two-State solution within the 1967 borders, the agreement of the parties in the negotiation process and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

We affirm our support to the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and an independent and viable State recognized by all nations, as well as the right of the State of Israel to live in peace alongside its neighbours, within secure and internationally recognized borders. We also reiterate our concern about the persistent and continuing growth of illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and urge Israel to cease expanding them. The Security Council has recognized the gravity of the situation in its resolution 2334 (2016), which we fully endorse.

Argentina also condemns the indiscriminate firing of rockets from Gaza against civilians in Israel, as well as all violent actions by Hamas and other armed groups. Palestinian leaders must address Israel's security concerns in good faith. In that context, we recognize

Israel's right to self-defence, while emphasizing that its actions must be consistent with its obligations under international humanitarian law, particularly the principles of distinction and proportionality.

With regard to the situation in East Jerusalem, Argentina affirms Jerusalem's special status, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 478 (1980). We therefore reject all unilateral attempts to modify that status, particularly with regard to the Old City, which has special significance for the three great monotheistic religions. My country believes that the Holy City should be a place of gathering and peace and that Jews, Muslims and Christians should be guaranteed free access to the holy sites. Any attempt to deny or relativize the historic ties and profound significance of those places for any of those three religions is totally unacceptable and does not contribute to the goal of finding a solution to the conflict but rather strengthens prejudices and foments distrust between the parties. Argentina considers Jerusalem one of the final-status issues that must be defined by the parties in bilateral negotiations.

My country spoke out on several occasions during the escalation of violence in May 2021, with the specific goal of achieving an immediate end to the hostilities and a ceasefire to stop the attacks on civilians, which had resulted in dozens of victims. Thanks to the international community's efforts, a truce was reached after 11 days of violence.

In view of the financial difficulties facing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Argentina wishes to reiterate its full support for the work of the Agency, which is helping to prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. We also affirm the need for the international community to make appropriate efforts to secure the funds needed to ensure that UNRWA's services can continue uninterrupted.

Concerning the Syrian Golan, Argentina maintains a principled position regarding the illegality of the acquisition of territory by force and respect for the territorial integrity of States. We firmly believe in the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, and therefore consider it important to seek a negotiated solution to the conflict between Syria and Israel in order to put an end to the occupation of the Golan Heights as soon as possible, in accordance with Security Council

resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

In conclusion, Argentina once again urges Palestinians and Israelis to act in good faith and resume peace talks, with flexibility and in accordance with international law and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, in the quest for an agreement on the pending issues relating to the final status of Palestine in all its aspects.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

**Mr. Skoknic Tapia** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this open debate and thank the briefers for their interventions this morning. We also welcome the presence of Mr. Riad Al-Malki, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Palestine, and of the delegation of Israel.

Chile believes firmly that this region needs and deserves peace, and we therefore reiterate our conviction that the solution to the situation in the Middle East, in particular the Palestinian question, lies in the establishment of two free, autonomous, sovereign and independent States able to live in peace within safe and internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the United Nations decisions and resolutions that should serve as the basis for a direct agreement between the parties.

Chile has always affirmed the importance of helping to reaching a peaceful solution as a priority of its foreign policy and has consistently expressed its support for a just and lasting solution for the Middle East. Our commitment to peace goes back many years, to the early twentieth century, when what is now the largest Palestinian community outside the Middle East began arriving in Chile and integrating into every level of our society. Chile also shares strong historical and brotherly ties with Israel and a dynamic and active Jewish community is a key part of our country.

In 2011 Chile recognized the State of Palestine, and we believe that strengthening its capacities can create the conditions for greater institutionalization of the State. We believe that the holding of local elections in the West Bank in December was a step in the right direction and trust that the second round of elections will be held in March as scheduled.

We emphasize the importance of respecting international law and the principles of the Charter of the

United Nations. We therefore call for dialogue to enable Israel and Palestine to achieve prosperity, harmony and security for their citizens. We believe in both nations and in the international community's responsibility for supporting them in achieving that long-overdue goal.

We all know that the cycles of violence and instability in the Middle East affect the entire international community. For that reason, nearly three decades after the Oslo Accords — and we would like to take this opportunity to remind the Council of Norway's commendable role in that process — we urge the parties to choose a path of reconciliation, set aside radical elements and extremist discourse and, of course, reaffirm respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. That requires the political will to put an end to illegal settlements, unilateral acts of war such as the indiscriminate firing of rockets that endanger the lives of innocent civilians, and disproportionate military responses. Chile condemns any action that threatens life, international peace and the right to live in peace and security.

In conclusion, Chile would like to express its wish for a resumption of peace talks so that Jewish and Palestinian youth can look to the future with confidence.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Bahrain.

**Mr. Alrowaie** (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway and thank her for presiding over this meeting. I also welcome Mr. Riad Al-Malki, Minister for Foreign Affairs of our sister State of Palestine. In addition, I want to thank Mr. Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his thorough briefing.

Based on the established principles and values that have shaped our cultural identity as a country that values tolerance, coexistence and respect for others, and that encourages peace and harmony among the peoples of the world and upholds international conventions and laws, Bahrain stresses the importance of supporting peaceful ways to resolve disputes and conflicts, with a view to eliminating causes of tension and enabling the international community to work more effectively and on a basis of integrated policies in order to address the problems that have brought about suffering in the Middle East. We believe in the importance of efforts on the part of the international community to develop a comprehensive vision for addressing the challenges on

the security, political and economic fronts. Improving the humanitarian situation starts with efforts to achieve peace and create conditions of security and stability for every country in the region, particularly considering that today the Middle East is facing unprecedented challenges that demand more active cooperation among all stakeholders if it is to achieve lasting peace and fulfil its potential through close cooperation across all areas of common interest. We emphasize the importance of intensifying international efforts related to the peace process in the Middle East and resuming negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis aimed at resolving the Palestinian question on the basis of a two-State solution and the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy.

Bahrain stands firm against the Houthi militia's continuing terrorist attacks targeting civilians, infrastructure and vital facilities and undermining security and stability in the region. In that context, we have condemned their terrorist attacks on the territory of our sister Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, some of which resulted in civilian casualties. We also strongly condemn the Houthi aggression against civilian installations in Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates, which left three civilians dead and several people injured, as well as the hijacking of a civilian cargo ship that flies the flag of our sister nation of the United Arab Emirates. We consider those Houthi attacks on civilian installations and people to be war crimes, as they constitute acts of aggression and a flagrant violation of all international laws against the two countries. We support Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in taking every measure necessary to preserve their stability and security as well as the safety of their citizens and residents. Bahrain calls on the international community to take firm steps against this militia, whose criminal acts demonstrate that it is a terrorist organization that gravely threatens security and stability in the region and the entire world.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain reiterates the importance of intensifying efforts to establish the foundations of peace and security in the region on a basis of good neighbourliness, in order to develop the common interests of the countries of the Middle East with a view to achieving security, peace and prosperity for their peoples.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

**Mr. Ishikane** (Japan): At the outset, I would like to stress Japan's commitment to supporting a two-State solution based on the relevant Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters. Discussing the outstanding issues and building trust among the parties are the necessary first steps to achieving that solution. In that regard, Japan takes a positive view of meetings between Palestine and Israel, such as that in the final week of 2021 between President Abbas of Palestine and Mr. Benjamin Gantz, Minister of Defence of Israel. On the other hand, in recent months we have witnessed violent exchanges between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank, and the settlement activities in the West Bank, as well as those reported in the Golan Heights, remain a serious concern. Those acts jeopardize efforts to build trust among the parties and could lead to re-escalation. Japan calls on all parties to halt any activities that would hinder progress towards the realization of a two-State solution and reiterates that a solution can be achieved only through negotiations and mutual trust, not violence. Japan also encourages all Palestinian stakeholders to start constructive discussions as soon as possible on realizing intra-Palestinian reconciliation, including through the renunciation of violence by Hamas and other Palestinian militants.

Japan is committed to continuing its support to the people of Palestine as long as the humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges in Palestine remain. Last month we decided to extend \$2.85 million in fresh grant aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for its activities in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. That is in addition to our \$40.8 million contribution to UNRWA for 2021. On top of that, Japan is finalizing its supplementary budget processes to extend \$15.2 million to the Agency. We call for further international efforts, particularly on the part of the countries in the region, to support UNRWA, which continues to face chronic financial difficulties.

Lastly, I would like to remind the Council of two initiatives that Japan has long promoted. The first is the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity, which aims to catalyse regional investment cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, Israel and Jordan, and the second is the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development, whose aim is to mobilize the experience and resources of East

Asian countries for the development of Palestinians' institutional and human resources.

Let me conclude by expressing Japan's determination to spare no effort to achieve a two-State solution.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait.

**Mr. Alotaibi** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to congratulate you, Madam President, and to wish you a happy new year, as well as wishing the Council members every success in their tasks. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Riad Al-Malki, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine, and his participation in this meeting. I once again congratulate Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana and the United Arab Emirates on beginning their non-permanent membership in the Security Council.

I would also like to express Kuwait's appreciation for the significant efforts made by Norway and its permanent delegation during their presidency of the Council for the month of January. We wish you and your permanent delegation every success for the remaining meetings this month, Madam President.

The State of Kuwait condemns and denounces the terrorist attacks last Monday that targeted civilian areas and installations in our sister State of the United Arab Emirates. The Houthi militia launched drones in a flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law and all humanitarian values and norms, and represents a serious threat to the security and stability of the region. We stress in that regard Kuwait's support for the United Arab Emirates, as well as our support for any measures it may take to maintain its security and stability. We express our condolences for this act of terrorist aggression to the victims and their families and wish the injured a speedy recovery.

The State of Kuwait has been eager to participate in today's open debate, despite the enormous challenges and complicated circumstances the world is currently facing as a result of the coronavirus disease pandemic. We are here today because we consider the Palestinian question to be a central issue for the Arab and Muslim nations. I have listened attentively to the statements by Member States and to all our briefers, including the valuable insights from Mr. Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. In that regard, I would like to reiterate our support for Mr. Wennesland's efforts and for all the international



attempts to calm the situation, restore stability in the occupied Palestinian territories and ensure the provision and delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people affected by Israeli crimes and acts of aggression.

It is extremely regrettable that we are starting the new year where we left off last year, with Israel, the occupying Power, continuing its aggressive policies towards the defenceless Palestinian people and pursuing its plans to annex more Palestinian territories in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Council briefings and recent United Nations reports have confirmed the expansion of settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Israeli authorities continue to issue permits to build hundreds of new housing units in the illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The reports have also warned of high numbers of violent acts by settlers against the Palestinian people, including the elderly, women and children, as well as the confiscation of their property and lands and the destruction of their homes, without any accountability for those crimes. The reports emphasize the urgent need to counter those acts in order to avoid another devastating round of violence and human suffering such as we witnessed in May 2021. Last year was the deadliest for the Palestinian people since 2014, with 324 Palestinians killed, 850 homes destroyed and more than 1,000 people displaced. We have not seen such numbers since 2016.

Those Israeli plans and crimes, which have been condemned by the international community, not only harm the prospects for resuming negotiations but, as everyone knows, seek to Judaize the city of Jerusalem and undermine the possibility of a two-State solution and Palestinians' ability to establish a contiguous, viable, sustainable, independent and sovereign Palestinian State. Kuwait once again condemns those Israeli plans and violations and emphasizes the special status of the city of Jerusalem. Any measures aimed at changing the demographic nature of the city are null and void. We need to see an end to such illegal Israeli practices, which violate human rights law, international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. We urge Israel to implement all the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016).

It is important to note that our participation in today's open debate is not merely for the purpose of recalling the list of Israeli violations of international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. We

also want to reaffirm our belief in the importance of multilateralism within the United Nations and the vital role that the Council plays in maintaining international peace and security and supporting international efforts to resume negotiations and the peace process. The State of Kuwait, whose foreign policy is focused on upholding the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles of international law, reaffirms its principled and firm position in support of the Palestinian people's choice to exercise their legitimate rights. We call for reviving the peace process based on the resolutions of international legitimacy, and we urge all international stakeholders, including the Middle East Quartet, to take practical steps to launch credible negotiations within an agreed timetable to address all final-status issues and establish an independent and sovereign Palestinian State on Palestinian occupied territories, with East Jerusalem as its capital, along the 4 June 1967 borders, in accordance with international law, the relevant Security Council resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative. We once again emphasize that we value all international efforts to resume the peace process and seek an end to this protracted conflict.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

**Mr. Sithole** (South Africa): My delegation expresses its appreciation to Norway for convening this open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, especially since it enables the participation of the wider United Nations membership in engaging on this pertinent matter.

We would like to focus today on three points. The first is the issue of crimes against humanity, apartheid-like policies and persecution. The second is the fact that the only viable answer to the Palestinian question is a two-State solution whereby Israelis and Palestinians live side by side in harmony, and the third is about adherence to the rule of law and the resolutions of the Security Council.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territory remains of grave concern to South Africa. There is overwhelming evidence to support the fact that the State of Israel, the occupying Power, enforces a set of laws that treat Israelis and Palestinians differently in all aspects of life. The systemic subjugation that Palestinian men, women, children and the elderly endure under Israeli occupation is inhumane and

in stark violation of fundamental human rights and internationally adopted norms and principles. We cannot stand silently by and bear witness to this reality, which is regularly cited as evidence of an apartheid-like system by the United Nations Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, as well as prominent international civil-society organizations.

South Africa maintains that international efforts must be geared to restoring the dignity of all who live on the land. That can be achieved only through the realization of a two-State solution that is supported by the United Nations and the parties concerned. The Oslo Accords were a stepping stone towards establishing a formal peace treaty between both sides that could end decades of conflict. However, a two-State solution remains the only path to ensuring that Palestinians and Israelis can both realize their legitimate aspirations and live side by side in peaceful and secure States, based on the 1967 borders, and with Jerusalem as the capital of both States. However, a two-State solution can be achieved only if both parties engage in bona fide negotiations and place the interests of all who live on the land above all other objectives. At the risk of stating the obvious, the intent to control a people through illegal occupation violates the very letter and spirit of living peacefully side by side.

The Security Council has convened extensively to discuss the situation in Palestine over the past seven decades. Israel's continued disregard for the

decisions of the Council reflects a blatant disregard for multilateralism as it is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We continue to raise a pragmatic concern: how long will we bear witness to the State of Israel's flagrant violations of Security Council resolutions without taking any action? Today we want to state in no uncertain terms that the failure to act in response to Israeli violations perpetuates the argument that some Council members are not even-handed when it comes to this matter, which undermines the Council's credibility.

The Security Council has taken action on resolutions in other cases where its resolutions are violated, as it is mandated to do. The voice of the Council must be congruent and consistent if the Council wishes to maintain its integrity and appear impartial in discharging its mandate efficiently. It is therefore imperative for the Council to hold all those who violate Security Council resolutions accountable without fear or favour.

In conclusion, as Members of the United Nations, we are tasked with the responsibility to oppose oppression. Our morality compels us to use our voice in these international platforms to fight oppression wherever it attempts to creep into the fabric of any society and plague it with tyranny, domination, autocracy, segregation, denial of basic human rights, destruction and disregard for international law.

*The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.*