



General Assembly

Tenth Emergency Special session

42th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 31 October 2023, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 5 (continued)

Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Mrs. Narváez Ojeda (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to note that, three weeks into the crisis in the Gaza Strip, as the Security Council has thus far been unable to make decisions on international peace and security that affects thousands of civilians, especially women and girls, that responsibility falls on the General Assembly. It is therefore essential that all members of the Organization be able to agree on a clear message to put an end to this distressing situation.

Chile supports the efforts of the Secretary-General and various actors to enable a solution to this conflict. We highlight the work on the ground that he and the United Nations system agencies have carried out on the ground to guarantee peace and security for the entire population. Likewise, we highlight the diplomatic efforts that friendly countries and organizations are carrying out with a view to achieving a peaceful solution through dialogue between the parties involved.

Chile has maintained a historic and consistent position regarding the peaceful resolution of disputes and the recognition of the two States, Israel and Palestine, as well as the right of both to coexist in harmony, within secure and recognized international borders and with full respect for the human rights of all their inhabitants. That solution, however, is very

far from being a reality, and the situation has taken a new turn since the terrorist acts perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October. We unreservedly and unequivocally condemn the actions of Hamas and all terrorist acts, acts of violence and hostilities against the civilian population. We therefore also call for the unconditional release of all hostages held by that organization, which has committed terrorist acts, with a view to ensuring their well-being and that they are treated in accordance with international law.

Moreover, we are concerned about Israel's military operation in Gaza. The exercise of force within the framework of the legitimate defence of a State that has been attacked must be guided by the principles of proportionality, distinction and precaution. However, as shown by the facts on the ground, those principles are not being observed. Since 7 October, public infrastructure, civilian homes, and education and health centres, including United Nations Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) facilities, have been bombed. We are concerned about those recent attacks and the upsurge in violence in terms of intensity and frequency, given their impact on human lives, the injuries caused, the destruction of families, the creation of orphans, the isolation, the hopelessness and the loss of meaning and of faith in life itself. There is no doubt that this will mark several generations, and once the bullets stop, other consequences will begin to be felt, because war is not rational. Violence is certainly not solved with more violence.

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Likewise, Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip has prevented the entry of sufficient food, water, medical supplies and energy sources, all of which are essential for human existence. In addition, its issuance of an order to evacuate the northern area of the Gaza Strip is an exercise in forcible displacement of the population. All those acts violate the provisions of international humanitarian law and human rights. We urge that they be investigated by the competent international entities in order to determine the responsibility of the actors involved and to hold them to account.

Within the United Nations, Chile, in accordance with the consistent principles of its foreign policy, has adhered to the decisions concerning respect for international law, the preservation of peace, the exercise of the self-determination of peoples and respect for and the promotion of human rights. We have therefore developed a position that is consistent over time that supports the Palestinian people's right to establish a sovereign State on the basis of the provisions of United Nations resolutions, including resolutions 181 (II) and Security Council 242 (1967).

We also urgently call for full and swift compliance with Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), which reaffirms that the establishment of settlements by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

Chile strongly supported resolution 77/247 and made a written submission to the International Court of Justice with respect to the request for an advisory opinion on the implications of Israel's continued violations of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. We hope that the Court can assist the international community by clarifying the legal obligations that can serve as the basis for seeking a definitive solution that guarantees the human rights of all inhabitants of the area.

Based on Chile's commitment to human rights and international humanitarian law, and in the interest of helping innocent victims of the conflict in the Middle East, my Government has decided to make a contribution to the humanitarian efforts to assist the civilian population in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories. That contribution will come from the Chile Fund against Hunger and Poverty and

will be channelled through UNRWA. It is Chile's third contribution to this cause.

We call on the parties involved for an immediate ceasefire. It is also urgent for Israel to end its blockade and to allow the entry of humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population. We urge for the international community's dialogue mechanisms to be improved in order to prevent an escalation of violence in the region, which would only bring more harm to the civilian population and additional loss of human life. It must be recognized in general that there have a series of complaints that predated the current situation in Gaza — which Chile has referred to in various multilateral forums — including, in addition to those previously mentioned, forced evictions; the revocation of residence permits; the arbitrary detention of Palestinians, including children; and the imposition of an intricate system of checkpoints that not only restricts freedom of movement but also seriously affects the rights to education, work and health.

Chile reaffirms that the region needs and deserves peace, and that a solution to the conflict can be achieved only through negotiations between Palestine and Israel and through the political will needed to abandon radical positions. However, given the current context, it is essential for the international community to take an active role in contributing to de-escalating the conflict, which has already claimed thousands of lives, most of them innocent people, and which, like all conflicts, disproportionately affects women and children.

We watch the events that are unfolding with great sorrow, and it is a moral imperative of humankind, in line with international humanitarian law, to contribute to the cessation of indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population. In that regard, Chile has and will continue to express its views clearly and consistently in bilateral and multilateral forums, seeking cooperation mechanisms with other States to promote the conditions for a cross-cutting agreement aimed at contributing to finding a political solution to the conflict.

We reiterate the need to support the economic and social empowerment of women who are affected by this chilling conflict. We also call for the promotion of women's leadership at all levels as a strategic necessity for achieving a sustainable and inclusive peace.

In view of the aforementioned, last Friday, Chile voted in favour of the resolution on the protection

of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations (resolution ES-10/21).

Finally, my country, Chile, extends its condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims and expresses its deepest and most sincere solidarity with the injured.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica regrets that none of the draft resolutions considered by the Security Council in recent days have been adopted, after significant efforts to address the extremely grave humanitarian situation. We do however appreciate that the General Assembly, through this emergency special session, has come together to find lasting solutions to the emergency and crisis in the Middle East, which the Council once again seems incapable of offering.

Nevertheless, we deeply regret that the Canadian amendment (draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26), seeking to specifically condemn Hamas, whose criminal actions initiated this crisis that has brought so much suffering to the peoples of Israel and Palestine, was not adopted. My delegation voted in favour of the resolution (resolution ES-10/21) only because, given the Council's inaction and the urgent need to protect innocent civilians, the international community could not wait any longer.

But let me be very clear. Costa Rica reiterates its strongest condemnation of the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October, which cannot be justified in any way. Hamas has proven to be a terrorist organization with no regard for the most basic principles of human rights. We stand in full solidarity with Israel and all the victims of those attacks. We recognize Israel's legitimate right to defend itself against the horrendous acts of the Hamas group, which does not represent the Palestinian people. Hamas must release all hostages and lay down its arms, and all those involved in the acts of 7 October must turn themselves in and be brought to justice for their genocidal acts. We also condemn Hamas's use of civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, as shields, in violation of international humanitarian law.

Deeply concerned by the escalation of violence, we recall the obligation to respect international law, in particular international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions and the protocols thereto, and customary international humanitarian law. Even in conflict situations, there are rules, the most sacred of

which is respect for and protection of the life and safety of all civilians.

The fundamental principles of international humanitarian law provide clear guidance in times of war. The principles of distinction and proportionality are fundamental. Ensuring access to humanitarian aid is mandatory and urgently needed. The protection of civilians and persons hors de combat is essential. The particular vulnerabilities of the civilian population must be taken into account. A person with a physical disability cannot respond to an evacuation warning in the same way as an able-bodied person. The same goes for children, whose vulnerability increases as the conflict spreads.

Costa Rica notes with immense concern the humanitarian tragedy derived from the conflict, expressing solidarity with all the innocent victims of both Israel and Palestine. In accordance with the above, we wish to make the following urgent appeals.

First, we once call again for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas. Taking hostages in an armed conflict is a clear violation of international humanitarian law. The fact that the victims include children and the elderly makes the situation even more serious.

Secondly, safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access must be ensured. Humanitarian actors need clear, practical and permanent guarantees of access to assist a population in desperate need, including through humanitarian pauses and safe passage when necessary. Neither of those elements can be conditional upon the other. Both are humanitarian imperatives in their own right.

Finally, we urge for an immediate ceasefire for the protection of civilians. Our priority must be to avoid the loss of more innocent human lives and greater suffering.

Moreover, Costa Rica calls for a halt to the transfer of conventional weapons to the conflict zone in accordance with articles 6 and 7 of the Arms Trade Treaty, given that those weapons can be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. The only path that can lead us closer to a lasting peace is one that spares any further innocent victims and prevents a further escalation of the conflict.

Costa Rica emphasizes that the only sustainable solution to the crisis is the establishment of two States

living in secure conditions and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. Peace is possible, but it requires a firm commitment by all.

Ms. Hussain (Maldives): We gather here under the “Uniting for peace” resolution adopted by the Assembly in 1950 (resolution 377 (V)). Each time that we have gathered under that resolution to address the issue of illegal Israeli action in occupied East Jerusalem and the occupied Palestinian territory, it is with profound shock that we are confronted with unrelenting images of human suffering.

We welcome the adoption by the Assembly last Friday of a resolution advocating for an immediate, enduring and sustainable humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza (resolution ES-10/21). We strongly urge the Security Council to unite and take resolute action to halt the violence against innocent civilians.

The reality on the ground is that, of the 2 million residents in Gaza, half are children. Thirty per cent of those children are under the age of 10. Today it is those young children who are suffering the most. Accepting the loss of those young lives as mere collateral damage is a severe breach of universally accepted ethical principles. It is a severe breach of international law, including the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child — the standards that reflect the global consensus that the lives of innocent children must be safeguarded at all costs. It is a severe breach of our shared human values and diminishes the moral integrity of any society that chooses to tolerate it.

The Maldives was accepted to the United Nations in 1965 as its smallest Member State. In our very first statement to the Assembly, our Permanent Representative stated that whatever the size of a country or its population, a free State can make a contribution to the cause of coexistence (see A/PV.1355). Those words, our commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and our commitment to the rule of law continue to guide our work at the United Nations.

That is why, though oceans apart, Maldivians remain resolute in our support for the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause. In the recent conflict, the Maldives has donated 2 million cans of tuna to the people of Palestine. Though modest, it is a gesture that underscores our enduring commitment to and unwavering solidarity with the people of Palestine. The people of the Maldives are also making financial

contributions and organizing fundraisers to provide support to our brothers and sisters in Palestine.

We will continue to speak up for the Palestinian people, for the Palestinian cause and for peace in the region. Our support is driven not only by our principles, but also by a moral obligation. We once again reaffirm our unwavering support for the Palestinian people in their legitimate quest for their inalienable rights, including self-determination. We are resolute in our belief that enduring peace can materialize only through the creation of a Palestinian State, founded on the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

What we are witnessing today is not a conflict that started earlier this month, but a continuation of decades of oppression of the Palestinian people that have shattered multiple lives and suffocated the hopes of innocent people over several generations. We firmly believe in the equal application of the rule of law among all States. Accountability must be enforced for violations of international and humanitarian laws, eschewing selective justice. The conflict is therefore not merely a legal issue — it is a fundamental matter of justice. But we have witnessed selective justice in play throughout the crisis. The evident double standards in the global narrative of the protracted conflict are concerning. Partiality, whether knowingly or unknowingly, serves to dehumanize and minimize, enabling and even justifying indiscriminate violence and further marginalizing the Palestinian perspective.

The settlement of the Israel-Palestine conflict is one of the major issues in which the United Nations Security Council has repeatedly failed. It has failed to take a unified stance against the acts of violence and hostilities directed at civilians and for the protection of medical and humanitarian personnel, as stipulated by international humanitarian law. Those failures undermine the Council’s legitimacy. We take this opportunity to emphasize the urgent need for reform of the Security Council to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in upholding global peace and security. We reiterate our call on the Security Council to act decisively, building upon the Assembly’s efforts to halt the violence against innocent civilians.

The rapidly escalating crisis in Gaza has reached an alarming point, demanding urgent and immediate action. As air strikes increase and the death toll — now over 8,000 — climbs, a ground invasion has commenced, even as the Assembly calls for a ceasefire. The situation gravely threatens to expand

the conflict further. The Government of Maldives strongly condemns the attacks on medical facilities, including Al Ahli Arab Hospital and, most recently, the continuous bombardment surrounding the Indonesian hospital, Al Shifa Hospital, the Turkish Hospital and Al-Quds Hospital. We condemn the unacceptable attack on residential areas of the Jabalia refugee camp just this morning, the attacks on places of worship and humanitarian workers. Those actions not only cause irreversible damage to essential infrastructure, but also place the lives of thousands at dire risk, violating international law and basic human decency.

We urgently call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and for strict adherence to international mandates, safeguarding civilian infrastructure and personnel.

United Nations agencies are sounding the alarm about a dire humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza. We extend our heartfelt condolences to all families affected. Our thoughts are also with the humanitarian workers who have sacrificed their lives in service, including the loss of more than 60 United Nations staff in Gaza.

The Maldives is grateful to the United Nations, Egypt and others for facilitating the entry of humanitarian aid through the Rafah border crossing. However, that is insufficient. We urge Israel to collaborate with its neighbouring States to ensure uninterrupted humanitarian assistance and the delivery of essential services at the required scale. The blockade of Gaza must end to mitigate the acute humanitarian crisis.

We echo the calls for respect for the rule of law and genuine political engagement to find a diplomatic, sustainable and lasting solution. The Palestinians have placed their hope in international law, the Charter of the United Nations and other multilateral systems for their survival. It is abhorrent that we have allowed that hope to be met with nothing but hollow words. The sanctity of innocent life, particularly that of children, is non-negotiable.

Tonight, when I go home, I can hold my son as he falls asleep in my arms. But how many Palestinian mothers and fathers are mourning the loss of their children? We implore the members of the Assembly to act with courage, not as a matter of political convenience, but as a moral duty that transcends borders and politics for the sake of a more peaceful world. The lives of innocent children and families in Gaza hang in the balance.

War is indeed not an answer. This emergency special session must continue to unite us. It must fuel our collective conscience to bring justice, dignity and security to the Palestinians and to the Middle East.

Mr. Hachem (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation welcomes the adoption of resolution ES-10/21, entitled "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations", presented by the Group of Arab States, which is the first serious step by the United Nations to end the humanitarian suffering in Gaza.

Today we come to the General Assembly under exceptional circumstances, because the natural forum for addressing crises that threaten international peace and security is the Security Council. However, some Council members decided to grant time to Israel so that it would be able to complete its military battle, as if 75 years of conflict were not enough to complete the Israeli plan to displace Palestinians from their land and replace them with other illegal settlers.

We have demonstrated unity today by adopting a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire, an end to the senseless aggression, the establishment of safe corridors to deliver essential goods for the relief of civilians in besieged Gaza, rescuing the wounded and saving the lives that can be saved, in addition to preventing any forced displacement of the Palestinian people. Palestine is the only natural place for its people.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict, for which multiple international resolutions have been adopted without being implemented by Israel, is not a new conflict. Its repercussions will not end if there is not genuine will to resolve it. Experience so far has shown that this conflict will not be resolved unless the international community assumes its responsibilities by placing pressure on Israel to implement the relevant international resolutions and compel it to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, while letting Israel recognize the right of the Palestinian people to exist and live in their own independent State, within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Otherwise, this conflict will continue for generations to come.

The ongoing Israeli acts of aggression against Lebanon affecting peaceful villages along the Lebanese border have forced more than 20,000 Lebanese to flee their homes in search of safety and security. Moreover, the repeated acts of aggression against positions of the Lebanese army and the United

Nations Interim Force in Lebanon do not discriminate between military personnel, civilians, journalists and aid workers, and internationally banned substances such as white phosphorus are used in flagrant violation of international resolutions, resolution 1701 (2006) and international humanitarian law.

Those Israeli violations, which Lebanon has been witnessing for three weeks, are in addition to Israel's long record of violations against Lebanon's sovereignty and land, part of which is still occupied, including Kafr Shouba Hills, Sheba'a Farms and the outskirts of the town of Al-Mari, which partly includes the urban expansion of the town of Al-Ghajar. Today we call on the international community to put pressure on Israel to stop its destructive aggression, repeated violations and continued occupation.

Israel is launching a major aggression against the Gaza Strip by air, land and sea, which will result in certain death for thousands of innocent civilians. We, and in particular the members of the Security Council, must act to put an immediate end to that aggression. That is a responsibility shared by all countries, namely, to stop the bloodbath which does not distinguish among infants, mothers and older persons. We must beware of any plans aimed at creating internal strife in the Middle East that will spread beyond the region.

Today the world is facing two choices: either remain silent about Gaza being transformed into a mass grave of more than 2 million Palestinians or immediately end this war and choose a political settlement based on United Nations resolutions.

From this international rostrum, Lebanon loudly calls to stop the killing, stop the destruction, stop the forced displacement and stop the massacre before it is too late.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for the resumption of the tenth emergency session of the General Assembly, under the resolution entitled "Uniting for peace" (resolution 377 (V)).

My country's delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Jordan, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and by the representative of Mauritania, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (see A/ES-10/PV.39).

This session is being held after the failure of the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, for the maintenance of international peace and security — at a time when the brutal aggression on Gaza continues and daily massacres are being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against innocent and defenceless citizens, women and children. That aggression and brutality constitute a war of genocide against the Palestinians.

The Republic of Yemen condemns and denounces in the strongest terms the continuous Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, the destruction of infrastructure, the targeting of unarmed civilians, especially women and children, as well as the cutting off of water, electricity, food and medication to the civilian population. That constitutes a full-fledged war crime, a crime against humanity and a flagrant violation of international law, human rights law, international humanitarian law and all international and ethical norms and standards. We wish to express our deep condolences to the families of the martyrs and our wishes for a speedy recovery for the wounded. We warn that those actions will have serious consequences that will not only disrupt the peace process in the Middle East, but will also exacerbate acts of violence and chaos, increase feelings of anger in the region and provide terrorist and extremist groups with more reasons to spread their destruction in the region and the world.

We meet today as Gaza has paid in blood, with more than 7,000 martyrs, including 3,400 children and 1,000 missing and most likely to be buried alive under the rubble, along with more than 2,000 women and 20,000 wounded, 70 per cent of whom are children and women. There are also more than 2,000 people under the rubble.

There was a new massacre perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces today in the Jabaliya camp, in the Gaza Strip, which led to approximately 400 martyrs and wounded, the majority of whom were women and children. As we meet today, Israel, the occupying Power, has destroyed hospitals, health facilities, schools, churches and mosques. It has destroyed half of the Gaza Strip, razing its buildings to the ground. We meet today as Israel has prevented the provision of food, water, electricity and fuel to 2.5 million people. Despite all that destruction, aggression, massacres and ethnic cleansing, some still hesitate to call things by their name and condemn those crimes against humanity and egregious violations of human rights, international

law and international humanitarian law. That is a flagrant expression of the double standards that prevail in our world today.

Yesterday many delegations of States lectured us from this rostrum about the principles of human rights, the Charter, international law and human conscience. They tried to preserve high ethical grounds and condemned wars and brutal violations due to the killing of civilians and the siege of cities. Today they are either silent or biased for violating those same principles. We in Yemen understand well those double standards, as many have lectured us on human rights and the protection of infrastructure. This is a dark time for the international order and for all humankind.

The worsening of the humanitarian catastrophic crisis in Gaza and the failure of the international community to stop that disaster, which has exceeded all limits, and to stop the war constitute a moral failure and a failure in applying international law, safeguarding common human values and protecting innocent civilians. The silence on the part of the international community is complicity in the crime and its cover-up. Today we wonder if the destruction of infrastructure, the brutal killing of children and women and the extermination of entire families can be self-defence. Has international law or international humanitarian law become optional according to colour, gender and religion? Has the application of those standards ceased at the borders of Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories? All of those questions need answers. We are at a crossroads. We can either achieve victory for humanity and the human conscience or we will lose our humanity.

We reiterate the call for an immediate ceasefire, unfettered access to humanitarian aid and the protection of civilians, civilian facilities, including hospitals, places of worship and medical staff. Israel's acts of blocking the delivery of urgent humanitarian aid into Gaza and forcing its citizens to flee their homes are grave violations of international law and international humanitarian law. We also reject the forced displacement or threat of forced displacement of Palestinians outside their homeland, which are a flagrant violation of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

What happened on 7 October is the result of continued Israeli occupation over the course of 75 years. Therefore, a just and comprehensive peace is the only way to end this conflict, enhance security and

stability in the region and establish an independent and sovereign Palestinian State on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace initiatives. Without that solution, the region will not enjoy stability.

I wonder how longer the Security Council and global conscience need to stop the bloodshed of women and children in Palestine and to bear their responsibilities. If the global conscience is unable to support innocent Palestinians, it must at the very least support what remains of humanity in the twenty-first century. I ask everyone how they would respond if their children and women ask them what they did to stop the massacre against the children and women of Gaza? With all the supporters of truth, the international community, the Charter and the principles of the United Nations, we stand today on the right side of history, and history will record on which side each person stood.

In the face of the genocide and war crimes committed by the Israeli occupying Power against civilians in the Gaza Strip, including women and children, we demand today that the Israeli occupation be held ethically and legally accountable for committing those crimes, along with the perpetrators. They must not enjoy impunity.

We affirm the unwavering and steadfast conviction that the living conscience of humanity, justice, independence and the principles of international law will prevail and triumph, and that force will not triumph over the power of what is right.

In conclusion, we thank all Member States that voted in favour of the General Assembly resolution (resolution ES-10/21), which stressed the need to stop the war, protect civilians, allow the immediate entry of humanitarian aid and uphold legal and international obligations.

Mr. Yusuf (Somalia): I express my deep appreciation for the prompt and timely reconvening of the General Assembly's tenth emergency special session on the question of Palestine, at yet another time marked by tragedy in the long history of the Palestinian people, who have remained under occupation for half a century.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation by the representatives of Jordan and Mauritania, respectively (see A/ES-10/PV.39).

The ongoing conflict has resulted in the loss of countless lives and a humanitarian crisis that can no longer be ignored.

At the outset, I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt condolences to the Palestinian people and government over the loss of thousands of innocent civilian lives, including women and children at Al Ahli Arab Hospital, and offer my wishes to the injured for a speedy recovery. I pray that Almighty God bestow his strength and resilience on the people of Palestine.

The protection of civilians is a fundamental principle of international law and a moral imperative that should guide our actions. Regardless of the political complexities and historical context, we must prioritize the safety and well-being of innocent men, women and children caught in the crossfire of this protracted conflict.

In the occupied Palestinian territories, civilians have endured years of violence, displacement and a constant state of fear under a ruthless occupation. They face daily challenges that threaten their basic human rights, such as the rights to access to clean water, health care, education and a sense of security. The indiscriminate use of force by the occupying force — including the bombing of schools, the shelling of hospitals and missile attacks on residential areas and camps — has taken a devastating toll on innocent Palestinian lives.

It is incumbent upon the international community to act swiftly and decisively to ensure the protection of civilians. First and foremost, it is crucial to establish safe zones and humanitarian corridors to provide essential aid and assistance to those in need. I commend the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East on its vital role in coordinating relief efforts and emphasize the need for generous donors to provide the Agency with sufficient, predictable and sustained funding. Furthermore, we encourage the neighbouring countries, civil society and the private sector to redouble their efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinians inside and outside the occupied territories.

Secondly, all parties involved must commit to an immediate unconditional ceasefire and adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law, which prohibits the targeting of civilians, United Nations staff, journalists, civilian infrastructure and safe zones. Accountability for violations must be pursued through

impartial investigations, and those responsible for war crimes must be held accountable for their actions.

Thirdly, there is a need to intensify diplomatic efforts to find a lasting and just solution to the conflict. Dialogue, negotiations and a commitment to a two-State solution are essential to achieving a peaceful coexistence. The international community must actively revive these efforts and encourage all parties to engage in meaningful dialogue with the aim of reaching a comprehensive and lasting peace agreement.

Finally, education and raising awareness are also crucial components of addressing the conflict. By raising awareness about the plight of the Palestinian people, we can counter misinformation and the monopolization of the narrative in order to foster empathy and understanding about their legitimate national aspiration to self-determination. Educating ourselves and future generations about the historical and political context of this conflict can help break down stereotypes and prejudices while achieving a more balanced and nuanced understanding of the situation.

In conclusion, the protection of civilians is an urgent and pressing issue that demands our immediate attention at this critical juncture. We must advocate for the respect of international law and the establishment of safe zones, raise awareness about the plight of the Palestinians and pursue diplomatic solutions to end the conflict. I reiterate that the only viable option for the resolution of the long-standing conflict is the end of the occupation of the Palestinians and the full recognition of a free, sovereign and independent Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The Somali Government and its people will continue to support and stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and Government in their unwavering pursuit of their legitimate rights, including the right to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): It has not yet been two years since the adoption of resolution 76/262, and already on six occasions the General Assembly has had to convene a meeting in response to the exercise of the veto on seven occasions by the permanent members of the Security Council.

On this occasion, our meeting is convened, first of all, in response to the veto exercised on 18 October

(see S/PV.9442) by the United States of draft resolution S/2023/773, a draft resolution that obtained 12 votes in favour with two abstentions. The draft resolution was essentially humanitarian in nature, its aim being to end the suffering of the civilian population both in Israel and in Palestine.

Mexico considers the use of any veto to prevent the Security Council from acting to be unacceptable, and this most recent case is no exception.

Since 1945, Mexico has maintained its unwavering position against the exercise of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council. That power has been exercised in contravention of the solemn commitment undertaken by four of the permanent members on 7 June 1945 at the San Francisco Conference, on which occasion they declared:

(spoke in English)

“It is not to be assumed, however, that the permanent members, any more than the non-permanent members, would use their “veto” power wilfully to obstruct the operation of the Council.”

(spoke in Spanish)

Unfortunately, the reality has been very different. We recall on this occasion that, in his speech during the high-level debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session, President Biden stated the following from this rostrum:

(spoke in English)

“Members of the Security Council, including the United States, should consistently uphold and defend the Charter and refrain — I repeat — refrain from the use of the veto, except in rare, extraordinary situations, in order to ensure that the Council remains credible and effective” (A/77/PV.6, p. 20).

(spoke in Spanish)

It is regrettable that the veto of draft resolution S/2023/773 has called into question precisely the credibility and effectiveness of the Council, especially at a time when its action is so urgently needed. The draft resolution in question was a balanced text, which contained the most important and pressing elements under the prevailing circumstances, and which would have indeed ensured that the Security Council would remain credible and effective. Given the seriousness and fragility of the situation on the ground, there was no justification for preventing the adoption of the draft

resolution, the first version of which was co-sponsored by Mexico.

In addition to that veto, there is the veto exercised by Russia and China on draft resolution S/2023/792, presented by the delegation of the United States. In that case, there were 10 votes in favour, 3 against and two abstentions. In my delegation’s view, unlike the Brazilian text, which was able to gain more support among Council members, this draft resolution was not based on a balanced approach. However, a veto is a veto, and my delegation recognizes that even though the draft resolution obtained enough votes to be adopted, the action of two permanent members once again paralysed the Council.

It is important to mention that the latter veto was followed immediately by the rejection of draft resolution S/2023/795, presented by Russia, which received only four votes in favour, two against and nine abstentions. This dynamic of mutual rejections, announced by both proponents in their statements during the debate on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” on Wednesday, 25 October (see S/PV.9453) — much as a chronicle of a death foretold — is also toxic and reflects the dysfunctionality into which that organ could fall. It also recalls the bad practices of paralysis during the Cold War era. My delegation therefore calls for an end to these political tactics, which amount only to an abuse of the Security Council at the expense of those who are suffering on the ground. We cannot and must not lose sight of the fact that human lives are at stake.

In that context, Mexico reiterates its call to those who have not already done so to join the French-Mexican initiative on the restriction of the use of the veto, which already has 106 signatories.

As we stated in the Security Council, Mexico strongly and unequivocally condemns terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whosoever, wherever and for whatever purposes. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the terrorist attacks against the people of Israel on 7 October by Hamas, and we recognize Israel’s right to protect its citizens and its territory and to ensure their security, provided that it does so in full compliance with international law and in full observance of the principles of necessity and proportionality that govern any use of force. Once again, we demand of Hamas the immediate and unconditional release of the hostages in its custody, among whom are Mexican nationals. We

are also concerned that, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Israeli response has so far resulted in more than 8,000 deaths, more than 21,000 injuries and incalculable damage to Palestinian infrastructure and other civilian Palestinian property. It is appalling that, for every day that has passed since this special emergency session resumed, we have had to add thousands of deaths to our statement. This must stop.

We condemn any indiscriminate or targeted attack against civilians under any circumstances, as well as against medical and humanitarian personnel or against civilian objects and essential infrastructure, which could constitute war crimes. Mexico reiterates its call for an immediate and sustained cessation of hostilities in all the occupied Palestinian territories, especially direct or indirect attacks against civilians by all parties to the conflict, and for the lifting of the state of siege in which the Palestinian population currently finds itself, bearing in mind that reprisals are contrary to international law.

We welcome the start of the entry of humanitarian convoys into Gaza, although it is still not enough. The provision of basic services is vital, as is the lifting of restrictions on the movement of people and goods, both in Gaza and in the West Bank. Similarly, civilians should be allowed to pass through the humanitarian corridor. We deeply regret the deaths of United Nations personnel and call for the reversal of the decision to withdraw visas from United Nations officials operating in Israel. We take this opportunity to reaffirm Mexico's full support for Secretary-General António Guterres and the entire United Nations system in their political and humanitarian efforts in these times of crisis. Aware of the grave humanitarian situation in the region, Mexico will increase its voluntary contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in recognition of its humanitarian work, which is now more necessary than ever.

Any occupation is illegitimate, breaks the international order and contravenes the Charter of the United Nations. Nor is there a right to indefinite occupation. Any acquisition of territory by force is null and devoid of validity. We demand that the occupying Power cease its occupation and all other acts affecting the territorial integrity of the State of Palestine, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Mexico supports a comprehensive

and definitive political solution to the conflict, on the basis of two States, which addresses Israel's legitimate security concerns and allows for the consolidation of the politically and economically viable State of Palestine living side by side with Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. As the Mexican Minister for Foreign Affairs pointed out on 23 September from this rostrum (see A/78/PV.12), we must recognize the rights of the people of Israel, but not at the expense of the Palestinian people.

Ms. Brandt (Kingdom of the Netherlands), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In conclusion, we hope that the Security Council will rise to the occasion, given the gravity of the situation, and act as soon as possible to prevent, above all, any further loss of life and to open a new chapter of humanitarian assistance and political dialogue. It is in the darkest times, when the outlook looks most uncertain and difficult, that we are obliged to redouble our efforts to end the cycles of violence and to relaunch and make viable the solution of two States for two peoples, ensuring both the security of being able to live in peace. Let us therefore make a reality of the principles that we all adopted 78 years ago.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): Fifty years ago this month, the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 began. Thirty years ago, the Oslo Accords were signed. Twenty-six years ago, the first meeting of the tenth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly was held. Who could have imagined that we would still be here today? The horrifying series of events that began on 7 October continues unabated, spiralling ever downwards, with far too many losses. Japan extends its sincere condolences to the families of the victims.

Japan once again unequivocally condemns Hamas's brutal terror attack on Israel and its taking of hostages. The international community should never tolerate such heinous acts. Every Member State has the right to defend itself and its people, and that right must be exercised in accordance with international law. Just recently, Israel announced an expansion of its ground operations in Gaza. The humanitarian situation in Gaza has never been worse. It is catastrophic, and the Palestinian people are in desperate need of food, water, fuel and medicine. We also extend our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and for the loss of United Nations staff members and personnel.

This meeting was convened because the Security Council has repeatedly failed to take action. The Security Council, which has the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, should urgently and genuinely address the worsening crisis and prevent the conflict from spreading across the region. As a current Council member, Japan is working tirelessly with other Council members, in particular with the 10 elected members, to craft a draft resolution acceptable to all. The world cannot wait for the Council to finally fulfil its responsibility and speak in a unified voice.

Several hostages have been released. More releases must follow immediately, as the families of more than 200 abducted victims are waiting in despair for news that their loved ones are safe. We demand the immediate and unconditional release of the remaining hostages. Japan fully supports immediate humanitarian pauses and the establishment of humanitarian corridors to ensure that humanitarian assistance can be provided. Full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access consistent with international humanitarian law must be allowed. While dozens of trucks have passed through the Rafah crossing, hundreds more must follow to meet the dire needs of more than 2 million people. We strongly hope for the early de-escalation of the situation, which will be an important step for durable peace and stability in the region.

In that vein, Japan recently approved a \$10 million aid package as part of its response to the humanitarian flash appeal of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. More is needed, given the gravity of the situation in Gaza. We call on all Member States and humanitarian partners to scale up their assistance to meet the urgent needs. But, for humanitarian aid to reach people in need, we need humanitarian pauses and corridors.

The international community needs to work together to restore hope and pave a path for peace and security in both Palestine and Israel. Japan supports a two-State solution whereby Israel and a future independent Palestinian State live side by side in peace and security. All parties must make serious efforts to that end. For now, we must all act to de-escalate the situation with a sense of urgency.

Mr. Muhamad (Malaysia): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting. Malaysia, together with a group of countries, supported the request by the Group of Arab States and

the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for the resumption of this session.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Mauritania on behalf of the OIC (see A/ES-10/PV.39).

We express our deepest condolences to the bereaved families who are mourning the loss of their loved ones in the horrific ongoing hostilities.

The magnitude of atrocities inflicted upon the population of Gaza defies all rational comprehension and has shocked our human sensibilities to the core. For more than three weeks now, we have witnessed indiscriminate bombings, the killing of civilians and the destruction of civilian objects and infrastructure. The sacrosanct principles of international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, continue to be violated. There is absolutely no precaution, distinction or proportionality in Israel's actions. More than 8,000 civilians have been killed, including more than 3,000 innocent children. Approximately 70 per cent of civilian fatalities in the ongoing act of collective punishment by Israel on the Gazan population are women and children. Water and electricity have been cut off, and the supply of fuel has been banned. To say that Gaza is facing a humanitarian catastrophe is an understatement. It is effectively a death sentence on the entire population. Under the Geneva Conventions, attacks on civilians, hospitals, places of worship and other indispensable civilian infrastructure are unlawful and tantamount to war crimes.

Malaysia condemns the heinous and barbaric attacks on the civilian population of Gaza, 40 per cent of whom are children. All civilian lives, regardless of race, religion and nationality, must be protected. We are also gravely concerned about the humanitarian calamity that continues to unfold. Malaysia joins others in demanding an immediate ceasefire. That is absolutely vital to stop the further loss of life and for necessary humanitarian work to be carried out. We call for the establishment of humanitarian corridors, and unhindered and unfettered humanitarian access, so that aid can reach those in need throughout Gaza without any impediment. The supply of electricity, water and fuel must be restored. They are life-saving essentials.

Malaysia also condemns the blackout of communication services. Communication services are a lifeline. Communication infrastructure and the right to communicate must always be protected. In Gaza,

1.4 million people, or 62 per cent of its population, have been internally displaced. Malaysia categorically rejects acts of forcible displacement of the population of Gaza. It is a flagrant violation of international law. In fact, those who heeded the warning to evacuate to the south continue to fall victim to indiscriminate bombings. Many have died. No place is safe in Gaza at the moment. The increase in settler violence in the West Bank, which has led, and is leading to, the forcible transfer of Palestinians, is also deeply concerning.

We pay tribute to all humanitarian heroes who continue to serve in Gaza. We salute their courage and commitment. Their safety and protection must be guaranteed. In the past 24 hours, three more staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have been killed, bringing the total to 67 since the war began. We join others in mourning the 67 UNRWA staff members. Malaysia has been a regular contributor to UNRWA. Noting the current extremely dire humanitarian conditions in Gaza, Malaysia has decided to allocate an additional emergency contribution to UNRWA. We appreciate the important role of the United Nations, under the leadership of the Secretary-General. We also acknowledge the important role played by countries in the region. Malaysia is ready to collaborate with all international partners to address the humanitarian needs of Gaza.

Malaysia shares the widespread disappointment with the Security Council expressed by many Member States. The Security Council, the organ entrusted with the maintenance of global peace and security, continues to be paralysed, owing to politicization based on the narrow self-interests of some of its members. They continue to abuse their great responsibility and privilege, turning the Council into an arena for one-upmanship and blame games instead of taking unified, swift and decisive action to stop the war and save civilian lives. Their actions have exposed their hypocrisy, selectivity and double standards.

The General Assembly has stepped up, where the Security Council has failed. We commend the 121 countries that had the courage to stand up for humanity and supported the resolution proposed by Jordan and co-sponsored by 46 countries, including Malaysia (resolution ES-10/21). The adoption of the resolution is a sign that we in the United Nations hear the resounding cry of people around the world demanding an immediate end to the massacre of innocent lives

in Gaza. The resolution is a breakthrough and carries great moral authority. It is an important first step taken here at the United Nations, bringing back a glimmer of hope, faith and trust in the multilateral process. We call on the Security Council to respond to this General Assembly resolution by taking prompt, unified and decisive actions. Further inaction means continuing to be complicit in the crimes against humanity committed by Israel in Gaza.

According to UNICEF, Gaza has become a graveyard for children. More than 420 children are being killed or injured in Gaza every day. How many more children have to be orphaned, killed or maimed? How many more parents have to go through the ordeal of burying their innocent children? What more does it take for some of us to wake up, open our eyes to the truth and stand up for humankind? Be warned, history will judge. More than half of the population of Gaza are children and youth. They deserve hope for their future, not gloom and despair. Killing people will not kill their ideals. Wherever there is occupation and oppression, there is bound to be resistance. As free nations, we must unite to end occupation instead of perpetuating it. We must support the right to self-determination instead of denying it. The only way to attain peace and security for everybody in the region is by ending the illegal and oppressive occupation of Palestine. The vicious cycle of violence that its many generations have been enduring must end. Malaysia remains resolute in its support for the self-determination of the Palestinian people through the establishment of a free and independent State of Palestine, in accordance with the two-State solution, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations (see A/ES-10/PV.40).

Nicaragua joined the initiative to convene this emergency special session, given the serious humanitarian situation in Gaza, and in solidarity with Palestine and all the civilians, women and children who are the victims of this terrible conflict, largely owing to the decades-long lack of action and the indifference by the Security Council. The latest tragic and barbaric events in Palestine and Israel have demonstrated once again that the Security Council owes a debt to humankind, to the international community and to peace and justice,

especially in the Middle East. It is reprehensible that this body has not adopted a simple humanitarian resolution that urgently demands a ceasefire and humanitarian assistance and access, especially given the fragile situation of the entire population in Gaza, which is worsening every day. We reiterate that the Security Council must fully discharge the responsibilities conferred upon it in the Charter of the United Nations and must do so urgently and without double standards.

In this universal forum, we continue to strongly condemn the worsening of the appalling Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which generates ever more victims and pain for so many innocent families. It is known worldwide that this conflict, in particular the explosive and inhumane situation to which the Palestinian people in Gaza have been subjected for more than 16 years and the occupation and illegal blockade that have been imposed, has turned this territory into a giant open-air prison, impoverishing a population of more than 2.3 million — half of whom are children. If it persists, it will only bring greater instability and insecurity to the Middle East and the world. Nicaragua believes that peace and stability in the Middle East will only be feasible through negotiations and the full implementation of all General Assembly and Security Council resolutions related to Palestine. Nicaragua supports and will support any effort that leads to a ceasefire. That is why we co-sponsored and voted in favour of the resolution presented by Jordan on behalf of the Group of Arab States (resolution ES-10/21), in which deep concern is expressed about the escalation of violence and the deterioration of the situation, in particular the large number of civilian victims. We emphasize that the priority at all times is to protect the civilian population.

The General Assembly has the imperative responsibility to demand respect for an immediate ceasefire and the protection of the population in Palestine as human beings, without double standards and under equal conditions, valuing all lives in the same way. The United Nations, the General Assembly and the Security Council are called to act, as soon as possible, to demand solutions in terms of the law and justice, to stop this senseless spiral of violence that has already become genocide.

We have also thanked the humanitarian agencies and Governments that are helping to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. We have witnessed with horror and condemned the attack on the hospital in

Gaza that claimed the precious lives of more than 700 people, most of them children.

The Government of Reconciliation and National Unity of Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan people have always supported the just cause of the Palestinian people. It is a matter of principle and of brotherly solidarity in struggle. Together with the rest of the international community, we believe it necessary to intensify international efforts to find a definitive and peaceful solution that culminates in the realization of a Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital and based on the borders recognized in 1967, as the only means to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, living next to the State of Israel, with peace and security for both States. It is a moral and historical obligation of all States to defend multilateralism, the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the peaceful resolution of disputes, and to refrain from the threat or use of force in international relations.

Our prayers are for the innocent people and families who suffer so much — Israeli families, Palestinian families, families of various nationalities, the families of United Nations personnel and the families of journalists. Our love and respect go to each one of them.

This situation of pain and suffering of the Palestinian people is tearing us all apart. In recent days, many thousands of people have died in Gaza. The attacks on medical facilities, and the cutting off of water, electricity, medical supplies, food and fuel are abhorrent and worsen the insecurity of a population of 2.3 million — half of them children — who do not have a safe place in which to be or to which to go. According to estimates by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than 1.4 million Palestinians in Gaza have already been displaced. More than 8,500 Palestinians have been reported killed, 67 per cent of whom are children, women and the elderly — including more than 3,800 children — and the suffering and loss of life is increasing every minute.

One thing is very clear, and it is being demonstrated in the General Assembly and in all the cities of the world: Palestine is not alone, the peoples of the world stand with Palestine. We have made that known through our adoption of the resolution (resolution ES-10/21) and through hundreds of protests by hundreds of thousands of people — a number that is growing every day — including protests in the cities of countries that obstruct the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people are

demanding peace, a ceasefire, an end to the suffering in Gaza and justice for the Palestinian people. It is time for us here at the United Nations to listen to the cry of the peoples of the world and to put an end to the historical injustice imposed on Palestine.

Peace must prevail at all costs and above all else, in order to enable the only just and genuine solution: the two States living in peace and security. That is well-known to everyone here today. That has been the historical responsibility incumbent upon the Security Council. It must enable, once and for all, the full establishment of the State of Palestine and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): The Government of Guyana supports the convening of this emergency special session of the General Assembly in the light of the deeply distressing levels of violence and hostility that have been unfolding in the Middle East, in particular in the Gaza Strip since 7 October.

The targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure and the resulting casualties and injuries, the mass displacement of persons and the concomitant challenges of such movements are worrisome to say the least. The strike on the Al Ahli Hospital was nothing short of an illegal act of savagery that should never happen in any civilized society. The evacuation order to those in the Al-Quds Hospital must also be seen in the same way. Guyana expresses its heartfelt condolences to those who lost loved ones in those tragic and undignified circumstances, and we pray for the speedy recovery of the injured. We also commiserate with the families and loved ones of the United Nations staff members who have been killed in the conflict, and we commend the United Nations staff and other humanitarian actors who continue to serve in these extreme circumstances.

Twenty-four days ago, the world woke to the shocking news of an infiltration of Israeli territory by Hamas, rocket attacks on the country and the killing and abduction of Israeli citizens. We condemn those events in the strongest possible terms and underscore that they were violations of international law. Since that attack, we have witnessed a military response by Israel unprecedented in scale and impact, which has created a catastrophic humanitarian crisis in the densely populated Gaza Strip. To compound the problem, the Gaza Strip was under complete siege for the next 13 days following the attack. There was no way out, and nothing could get in. Electricity, water, fuel and food supplies were cut off, and 1.1 million people were ordered to

undertake a massive evacuation exercise from the north to the south of the Strip. We are all aware of the abyss to which the people of Gaza have been driven on account of those developments, even as war continues. Hapless civilians continue to bear the brunt of those attacks. We were disheartened to hear the assessment that no place is safe in Gaza, since hospitals, schools and other buildings that should be safe spaces in accordance with international humanitarian law have also been struck in indiscriminate strikes.

Guyana emphasizes the responsibility of the parties to the conflict to fully and unconditionally respect and uphold the principles of international law, including international humanitarian law. Even wars have rules, and the principles of distinction, proportionality, humanity and necessity must be upheld. The protection of civilians is paramount, and we call for an immediate end to the indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. Moreover, Guyana calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all Israeli hostages and for the immediate release of all Palestinian civilians unjustly held. We demand their safety, well-being and humane treatment, in compliance with international law.

The creation of a humanitarian corridor into Gaza is now an existential question, and Guyana was pleased to learn that the first aid convoy entered Gaza on 21 October, after 13 days of a complete siege. But that is not nearly enough. Before 7 October, at least 500 aid trucks entered Gaza daily. Today it is a fraction of that. We call on those with influence on the relevant parties to exert all of it, so that there is an unhindered and continued flow of life-saving aid to the people of Gaza. A comprehensive ceasefire is crucial to the sustainability of the humanitarian intervention in Gaza. Guyana implores the parties to immediately cease the fighting and to choose the path of dialogue and peace. We also underscore the importance of avoiding further escalations of the violence to the West Bank and other parts of the region. We urge maximum restraint by all parties to that end.

True and principled leadership can never involve the overseeing of the killing of women and children. Shockingly, we have learned that more than 3,500 children have been killed in Gaza over these past 24 days — more than all those killed in conflicts in the world annually since 2019. They were children whose joys had already been curtailed, living in the constant shadow of war and displacement; children who, already

versed in the sounds of war, could tell when the hellish artillery was approaching, and not only since 7 October; and children who nevertheless dreamt, perhaps believed, that this world, this United Nations, would ensure that they and their families could live in their own country, in their own State, in peace and security. But even as we mourn those little ones, cut down before they could truly experience what it means to live in peace, we see their surviving brothers and sisters being denied food, water — yes, water — and other basic necessities. And the hospitals to which the battered and maimed turn for a chance at life are being denied fuel.

The international community has failed those children and many more before them. It has failed the people of Palestine for more than 50 years. Guyana underscores the special responsibility of the Security Council to act in the light of the threat that this situation poses to the maintenance of international peace and security. The current paralysis of the Council on the matter is therefore deeply concerning. We implore the Council to send a strong and clear message to the people of Israel and Palestine and the entire region that the rule of law will be upheld.

In that context, Guyana was encouraged by the fact that the General Assembly did not falter when called upon to stand up for the principles of justice and the rule of law. We were among those who supported the resolution adopted last Friday (resolution ES-10/21), and we reiterate the provisions of that resolution. We call upon the concerned parties to adhere to those provisions, as they are morally obligated to do.

Let me underscore the importance of the responsibility and involvement of us all — the international community — in finding a solution. In the words of the Guyanese poet Martin Carter, “like a web is spun the pattern, all are involved, all are consumed.”

The United Nations has a moral obligation to the people of Palestine and Israel to reinvigorate the peace process. It is the only way to guarantee the exercise of the inalienable right to self-determination by the Palestinian people and to address the security concerns of Israel. The Palestinian people continue to be pushed further and further behind, with their aspirations for development and peace strangled by cycle after cycle of violence and oppression for over seven decades. The urgent realization of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders is critical. The Government of Guyana is unwavering in its commitment to that objective and

is ready to contribute constructively to any genuine effort to that end.

Mrs. Kuzee (Namibia): I thank the President of the General Assembly for resuming its tenth emergency session under the “Uniting for peace” resolution (resolution 377 A (V)). This session resumes in the context of a world that is troubled — a world that looks to the Assembly, as an international parliament of humankind, to be bold and decisive and bring hope in these dark times.

Allow me to draw on a life lesson that all of us have learned, time and time again, through each phase of our lives: there are two sides to every story. With the conflict in mind, Namibia is quick to caution that viewing a story from a different perspective should not be seen as disregard for the pain of the other.

On 24 October 2023, during the open debate in the Security Council (see S/PV.9451), we witnessed an unwarranted attack on the Secretary-General when he stated that the attacks of 7 October did not occur in a vacuum. They did not, as the conflict predates that fateful day and the pain and horror for both Palestinians and Israelis did not start on that day.

Let me categorically clarify that Namibia views the current conflict through the prism of humanitarianism, international law and human rights. It is in that context that we call for the cessation of violence through a ceasefire, an end to the mass displacement of Palestinians and an end to the attempts to starve Palestinians of humanitarian aid, including water and fuel.

Last week, Mr. Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, stated that a binary view of the world rooted in the concept of “you are either with me or against me” is never going to advance peace. That is the message we have for the Security Council, which has failed to take action in these dire times, these times in which every minute lost has a direct impact on whether people live or die. We urge Council members to set aside their differences and, in the letter and spirit of the purposes and principles of the sacrosanct Charter of the United Nations, to save a generation that is on the verge of being wiped out from the scourge of war. History has taught us that war, wherever it happens, is the absolute worst experience for all affected. The wounds of war do not heal. Therefore, the unabated killing, wanton destruction and callous loss of lives in the conflict must come to an end.

Namibia voted in support of the resolution presented by Jordan (resolution ES-10/21) because we are sensitized to the pain and suffering of the Palestinian people. On Friday, the Assembly showed that indeed, as was stated by Martin Luther King Jr., the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.

With the utmost compassion, I want to say to the Permanent Observer of Palestine and his team that we feel the pain and suffering of the Palestinian people no less than we did when together we walked the corridors of the United Nations as oppressed peoples. We empathize with their protracted struggle for their inalienable right to self-determination. Namibia is with them on that journey, as it has always been. The injustices meted out against them should be enough to condition us all to put up the guardrails of international law and international humanitarian law and the compassion that embodies the very notion of humanity as the Palestinian people's protection from further brutality. Namibia will continue to push those frontiers in their name, using the systems, processes and institutions at our disposal.

Last year, the Assembly adopted an important resolution that requested an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the consequences of the legality of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem (resolution 77/247). While that consideration is sub judice, the continued escalation of violence, especially over the past 12 months, reminds us that we have a responsibility to reject the harmful rhetoric that dehumanizes the Palestinian people. Human animals do not exist. The Palestinian people, like all members of the human family, are entitled to the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights that form the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Those are the guarantees enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and we regard them as fundamental and indivisible.

The resilience of the Palestinian people in the face of collective punishment against an entire population, despite the use of indiscriminate and disproportionate force for decades, should invoke in us a sense of duty — a duty to bring to an end the grave escalation of violence and show that humanity and compassion are indeed an umbrella that unites us for the common cause of peace.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to thank the President of the General Assembly for responding to the request by the Group of

Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to resume the tenth emergency special session, which is being held in the context of an unprecedented crisis and serious events that could undermine peace and security in the Middle East region, with repercussions that could affect the entire world.

What we have seen over the past few weeks, namely, the targeting of all civilians and acts of violence against them, their facilities and properties, including hospitals and schools, violations of international law and international humanitarian law, and the military operations in the Gaza Strip, are the source of serious concern for the Kingdom of Morocco. In that regard, the Kingdom of Morocco stresses the following five key points.

First, we call for a de-escalation of the conflict, an end to the bloodshed and the cessation of military acts of aggression. The region must be saved from the scourges of a conflict that eliminates the remaining prospects and hopes for peace and stability.

Secondly, there is an urgent need to protect all civilians and to refrain from targeting them, pursuant to the principles of international law, international humanitarian law and the common values of humanity.

Thirdly, it is necessary to enable the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip quickly, smoothly and in sufficient quantities, as the human situation there has become unbearable.

Fourthly, there is a need to reject all ideas and solutions aimed at displacing or deporting Palestinians from their land, which threatens the national security of neighbouring countries.

Fifthly, there is need a to relaunch a genuine peace process that leads to a two-State solution, with a State of Palestine based on the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with the State of Israel.

Following the peace summit held in Cairo on 21 October, the Kingdom of Morocco and eight Arab countries issued a statement calling on the Security Council to commit the parties to reaching an immediate and sustainable ceasefire and to ensure and facilitate rapid, secure and sustainable access for humanitarian assistance into the Gaza Strip, without any hindrance.

Given the firm commitment of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, and under his instruction for the interest of the

Palestinian question, the Kingdom of Morocco has sent rapid and urgent humanitarian aid for the benefit of the Palestinian population, which was delivered to the Egyptian Red Crescent to ensure its entry into the Gaza Strip. His Majesty King Mohammed VI has also given royal instructions to the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Agency to send financial contributions to major medical facilities and social institutions responsible for addressing the emergency health and social needs resulting from developments in the Gaza Strip.

The Arab Group, the OIC Group and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries called for this special session after the Council failed to adopt a resolution to put an end to the tragic situation in Gaza. We hope that resolution ES-10/21, adopted last Friday, will provide a genuine opportunity to give hope to the peoples of the region and will constitute an important step towards finding a solution to the current crisis.

The Kingdom of Morocco reaffirms its steadfast and clear position on the just Palestinian question and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, the foremost of which is their right to establish an independent State of Palestine based on the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with the State of Israel. That is the only way to guarantee security, stability and peace in region.

The Kingdom of Morocco also stresses the need to stop all measures that would undermine the legal and historical status of the Holy City of Al-Quds, for the sake of peace and stability. Al-Quds must remain a city of encounter, a symbol of peaceful coexistence for the followers of the three monotheistic religions and a centre for respect and dialogue, as provided for in the communiqué of the Al-Quds call signed in Rabat on 30 March 2019 by King Mohammed VI and His Holiness Pope Francis.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate what was stated in the letter sent by His Majesty King Mohammed VI to the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,

“As much as we affirm that the state of the deadlock in the political process between the Palestinian and Israeli sides does not serve peace in the region, we are encouraged by the positive signs noted and praiseworthy initiatives undertaken to rebuild trust with the aim of launching genuine negotiations that would achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to

the Palestinian question in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and on the basis of the two-State solution as a realistic option”.

The Kingdom of Morocco, led by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, remains committed to the option of peace and reaffirms its readiness to coordinate with all partners to engage in any international efforts that would put an end to the current tragic and grave situation in Gaza.

Mr. Kim Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The ongoing extreme humanitarian crisis and crimes against humanity being committed in the Gaza Strip raise grave concern in the international community.

Last Friday, the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/21, which calls for an immediate and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hamas and demands that all parties immediately and fully comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. However, turning a blind eye to the unanimous demand of the international community, Israel has officially declared the launch of a military ground operation in the Gaza Strip. Gaza is therefore now hell, and there is no safe place at all.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea strongly condemns all indiscriminate attacks targeting innocent people and critical civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals and schools. The crimes against humanity being committed against innocent people in the Gaza Strip must be stopped immediately.

The current Middle East crisis is an inevitable result of illegal acts of Israel in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. However, some countries are further aggravating the situation in the Gaza Strip by disguising Israel as a victim and justifying its ongoing military aggression as an exercise of its right to self-defence.

At the Security Council meeting held on 18 October, the United States cast a veto on a draft resolution submitted by delegation of Brazil (S/2023/773) to allow humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip in Palestine for the mere reason that the right to self-defence of Israel was not mentioned in the draft resolution (see S/PV.9442). Due to the United States one-sided support for Israel, the painstaking efforts of the international community to put an end to armed conflict, save the lives of a great number of innocent people and defuse the

tense military situation in the Middle East have failed. That clearly shows that the United States is violating international humanitarian law and international human rights law and approving and encouraging crimes against humanity for the mere reason that Israel is its ally. That also proves once again that the United States determines justice and injustice on the basis of whether the performer of the act is pro-United States or anti-United States. It is a typical manifestation of the shameless double standards of the United States with regard to the right to self-defence.

What cannot be overlooked is that some Western countries are resorting to smear campaigns against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to forcibly link the Middle East crisis to us. Some mass media belonging to the United States Administration are spreading a groundless and false rumour that North Korea's weapons seemed to be used for the attack on Israel. They are also building up public opinion that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will make free use of the strategy of blackmail diplomacy and escalate the regional tensions by taking advantage of the United States' great interest in the Middle East and Ukraine.

The United States sinister intention is clear. It is nothing but a bid to shift the blame for the Middle East crisis, caused by its one-sided policy on Israel and its double standards, onto a third country, and thereby evade the international criticism of the United States. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is watching with vigilance the illegal acts of the United States, a country that has spawned war and armed conflicts in different parts of the world and shifted the responsibility for them onto independent, sovereign States. My delegation firmly believes that the current critical crisis in the Gaza Strip must end immediately and that all civilians must be protected through the full implementation of the resolution adopted by the Assembly.

In conclusion, my delegation once again expresses our unwavering support for, and solidarity with, the Palestinian people in their just struggle to regain their legitimate national rights, including the establishment of an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Pary Rodríguez (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the resumption of this tenth emergency special session in the face of the aggression and the heinous genocide that the Palestinian people are enduring at this time.

The Charter of the United Nations establishes with absolute clarity, in Article 1, that the first primary purpose of the Organization is:

“to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace”.

In that regard, we highlight the efforts deployed by the United Nations to attempt to resolve the situation of the Palestinian people. We recognize the diplomatic efforts that, at this very moment, are being undertaken by the Secretary-General, together with other international stakeholders.

However, we note that all of those efforts have been insufficient to bring the Palestinian people peace and the right to self-determination. Since the end of the nineteenth century, year after year, the Palestinian people have been displaced from their territory of origin for colonial ends. Our Organization, the United Nations, owes a debt to the Palestinian people because we have been unable to finalize the implementation of the envisaged solution for definitive and lasting peace in 1947. While our actions make slow progress, Israel benefited from resolution 181 (II), which gave them statehood. Since then, as an occupying Power, it has ignored all other decisions and resolutions of the United Nations, in a clear demonstration of disregard and contempt for the international community and all developments in international law and international humanitarian law, which are the foundation for international peace and security.

We reject the loss of life in any part of the world and the suffering of peoples, regardless of their nationality. We must therefore act with urgency and consistency. The lives of Palestinian people have the same value as those of all citizens of the world. In recent days, we have watched in astonishment the disproportionate and genocidal attack against Palestinian civilians in Gaza. As mentioned in this meeting, to date more than 8,500 Palestinians have lost their lives, 70 per cent of whom were women and children. We are at a turning point in the conflict, where Israel, as the occupying Power, has decided to apply collective punishment to the Palestinians in Gaza, whose existence it does not recognize; whose homes, schools and hospitals it is destroying; and whose most basic rights it is depriving — leaving them without food, fuel, electricity, medical treatment and water. The inhuman aggressiveness and the false arguments of the

State of Israel can no longer be sustained. How is it possible for the aggressor to now pose as the victim and call for the right to defence? This cannot be covered up. The occupying Power, the aggressor and the one responsible for genocide is Israel. Those responsible for these crimes against humanity and war crimes must be brought to international justice and held accountable.

We cannot continue to watch passively and indifferently as boys and girls, human beings, are trapped beneath the rubble and innocent lives are being torn apart among the devastation from Israeli bombs and weapons. United Nations could save thousands of lives. All States and actors concerned must therefore assume the responsibility of calling for peace and justice. To that end, my delegation co-sponsored resolution ES-10/21, presented by Jordan, which was adopted by an overwhelming majority of the international community in order to attend urgently to the humanitarian needs of the Palestine people and the citizens of other countries trapped in the region and to achieve an immediate ceasefire. There must be an end to the weapons and the deaths. Life is the most precious good that humankind has.

We regret the Council's inaction due to one of its member's blocking draft resolution S/2023/773, submitted by Brazil. That text was an opportunity for peace and represented a small light at the end of the tunnel for the Palestinians in Gaza. We call for the Security Council to act swiftly and send Israel a unanimous, clear and strong message — that it must immediately stop taking more innocent lives.

Bolivia has the utmost respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and we will go down on the right side of history. We are on the side of the rights of the Palestinian people. As a result, the people and the Government of Bolivia has taken the decision to break diplomatic ties, starting today, with the State of Israel because we consider it to be a State that does not respect life, peoples, international law or international humanitarian law.

We reiterate that the only way to truly guarantee peace and security in the region is the full recognition of the State of Palestine within the internationally recognized pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Furthermore, in accordance with its resolutions and decisions, the United Nations should incorporate the State of Palestine as a full-fledged Member States of the General Assembly as soon as possible.

Finally, achieving a free Palestine is not just a cause of the Palestinian people, but rather a question of global justice and peace. The liberty and dignity of human beings must be respected in all corners of the planet, and it is our duty to work together to achieve a future in which Palestine can, once and for all, be free. To our brothers and sisters in Palestine, we once again reiterate that they are not alone. Bolivia stands with them, and the peoples of the world stand with them.

Mr. Pérez Loose (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*):

“[I]t is equally necessary that the activities of the great Powers, that in one way or another support the different parties to the conflict in the Middle East, must be directed to finding solutions for the establishment of constructive peace and not stand in the way of possible formulas of agreement and understanding. The conflict in the Middle East, because of its explosive nature, obliges the United Nations to try unflaggingly to end it.” (*A/PV.2124, para. 145*)

Those words were pronounced before the General Assembly on 24 September 1973 by Mr. Antonio Lucio Paredes, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador. And, as I said a few days ago in the Security Council (see S/PV.9442), those words remain valid more than 50 years later.

As I thank the President for convening this meeting of the tenth emergency special session, I reiterate the strongest condemnation of the unjustifiable terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas, and I express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims of those heinous attacks. Our solidarity is with the people of Israel and with the other countries whose nationals have been affected.

We demand that the hostages taken by Hamas be released immediately and unconditionally. There is no justification for attacking civilians, let alone for using them as human shields.

Palestine has the inalienable right to self-determination and to legitimate aspirations to security, freedom, justice, opportunity and dignity. Unfortunately, painful and unacceptable deaths of civilians, including Palestinian women and children, continue to occur at this time. We reiterate our solidarity with their families and with the people of Palestine.

Israel has the right to defend its population and to exercise self-defence. Like all States, it must act

in accordance with international law and with strict respect for the principles of international humanitarian law of necessity, proportionality, distinction and humanity. Even in wars there are rules, and there is no justification whatsoever for causing pain to or killing innocent civilians.

Ecuador is convinced that, when acting in good faith, there is no contradiction between making every effort to protect innocent civilians, even in the course of armed conflicts, and States' duty to ensure the safety and security of their nationals. We therefore support and appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General and other actors to achieve rapid, sufficient and unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza for essential supplies such as water, food and fuel, and thereby prevent the ongoing humanitarian tragedy from reaching incalculable proportions. At this time, all actors must show restraint and avoid exacerbating tensions and prevent a spillover of violence to other areas. That would lead only to more death and more suffering.

Resolution ES-10/21, submitted by Jordan and adopted by the Assembly, unequivocally calls for respect for international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It condemns all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, which we understand includes the terrorist acts initiated by Hamas on 7 October. The resolution also establishes the two-State solution as the basis for a peaceful and negotiated settlement to put a definitive end to the Middle East conflict, in accordance with our historic position on the issue. From our point of view, the text omits necessary mentions, such as the explicit allusion to Hamas, whose responsibility for the terrorist attacks is not in dispute, and the word "hostages", which is desirable for the sake of clarity and truth. We therefore voted in favour of draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26, proposed by Canada, which would have corrected those omissions. However, the text's shortcomings are not greater than the urgency of the message sent by the resolution on the protection of civilians, which is so necessary at this time, and, for that reason, Ecuador voted in favour of the resolution.

Since 1967, the General Assembly has convened at least three emergency special sessions on the conflict in the Middle East. It has been 56 years since then. The tenth special session was initially convened in 1997, 26 years ago. Since then it has been resumed 17 times. The nearly eight decades of conflict, the thousands upon thousands of dead, the immeasurable pain and

suffering of entire generations are the clearest evidence that violence is not the solution.

It is time to stop the logic of looking for people to blame and focus on achieving, once and for all, a lasting solution to this issue. Therefore, I reiterate what my delegation has repeated on countless occasions in the Assembly, in the Security Council and in other forums. The only way to end the conflict is through a peaceful, negotiated, lasting and just solution for the parties, with two States — Palestine and Israel — on the basis of the 1967 borders and the relevant resolutions. Let us all work to that end. This is a collective responsibility.

I will end my statement as I began it, recalling a statement delivered nearly three decades ago but still fully valid. I am referring to the statement of 31 January 1992 of then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali before the Security Council, who said,

"With all the convulsions in global society, only one power is left that can impose order on incipient chaos: it is the power of principles transcending changing perceptions of expediency." (S/PV.3046, p. 11)

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina considers it a priority to urgently prevent the escalation of the conflict between Israel and the Gaza Strip. Moreover, every effort must be made to ensure that the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip does not continue to worsen and that humanitarian assistance reaches those who need it. It is essential that civilians be protected, regardless of their nationality. Hamas must release the hostages immediately and unconditionally. Argentina joins all calls for an immediate and sustainable ceasefire. For all those reasons, Argentina voted in favour of resolution ES-10/21, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 27 October.

Argentina condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and believes that terrorist acts are unacceptable, unjustifiable and should be deplored by the international community as a whole. In that context, I would like to reiterate emphatically and unequivocally, as my Government did on 7 October, Argentina's firm condemnation of the terrorist acts perpetrated by Hamas against Israel.

Argentina demands the immediate and unconditional release of the hostages of all nationalities, among whom are Argentine nationals. We hold their kidnappers directly responsible for their well-being.

My country recognizes Israel's right to self-defence and to protect its population and emphasizes the importance of measures taken to respect international law and international humanitarian law, in particular in relation to the principles of distinction and proportionality.

Civilians must be protected in all circumstances, in accordance with international law. Experience in the Middle East tells us that hospitals, schools and United Nations facilities are the places to which civilians most frequently turn for shelter. Those institutions must be respected without exception, and any attack on them constitutes a violation of international humanitarian law.

My country condemns the attack on the Al Ahli Arab Hospital, in the northern Gaza Strip, which resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries. As noted by various United Nations agencies, the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is catastrophic. The Palestinian population living in Gaza must be able to count on access to essential public services in order to meet their key basic needs. It is imperative to open safe humanitarian corridors so that international aid reaches those in need as quickly as possible. In that context, we welcome the reopening of the Rafah crossing for the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Nevertheless, the United Nations has made it clear that the crossing is operating at a very limited capacity as compared to prior to the conflict. We nevertheless hope that this is a first step towards the sustainable provision of essential supplies in a safe and unhindered manner.

Argentina is ready to collaborate with international humanitarian efforts through the White Helmets organization, and in that regard, we have conveyed our availability to both Palestinians and Israelis. My country is concerned about the increased tension on Israel's borders with Syria and Lebanon, which could lead to further deterioration of stability in the region. That is why we call on all parties to avoid an escalation of clashes with unpredictable consequences. My country is convinced that there is no military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or one imposed through terrorist attacks. On the contrary, it is only through good-faith negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians and on the basis of the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security within internationally recognized borders that definitive peace in the region can be achieved.

The United Nations and the international community as a whole must once again commit to the agenda of

peace in the Middle East. The risks of inaction are more than evident, and we have been witnessing them with horror over recent days. The Security Council and the General Assembly have a responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, and we must bear it. The credibility of the United Nations system depends on it. Neither should the international community lose sight of the fact that the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip will need significant and sustained international assistance for the reconstruction of basic infrastructure, homes and buildings that have been destroyed.

Thousands of people have died since the beginning of the crisis, and therefore, before concluding, I would like to convey on behalf of the Government and the people of Argentina our sincere condolences to the families of the victims, whether they be Israelis, Palestinians or of other nationalities. As it has done in the past, Argentina will continue to support all peace efforts and initiatives for the benefit of the peoples of Palestine and Israel and all the peoples of the Middle East.

Ms. Jiménez de la Hoz (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by expressing my country's condolences to the families and loved ones of all the victims of the escalating violence since 7 October, including the workers of the United Nations who lost their lives while carrying out their duty. It is very important that the General Assembly is meeting to discuss the grave situation in the Middle East and its humanitarian consequences. We fully support the efforts of the United Nations, led by the Secretary-General, to put an end to the crisis.

Following the Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel on 7 October, the situation in the region has been degenerating into a further escalation of violence with unforeseeable consequences for the region and the rest of the world. The Government of Spain has reiterated its firm condemnation of terrorism and violence and its full solidarity with the victims. Spain has recognized Israel's right to defend itself against those terrorist attacks with full respect for international law and international humanitarian law. Spain supports the Secretary-General's urgent call for a humanitarian pause. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is worsening by the minute. Israel and the rest of the international community have a duty to protect the civilian population of Palestine and to allow humanitarian access and supplies to the people of Gaza, especially drinking water, food, medicine and fuel for desalination plants. We have expressed our grave concern at the

situation of more than 200 hostages, one of whom is a Spanish citizen. All of the hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally. Hostage-taking is a war crime.

The risk of regional spillover of the conflict is high. In the West Bank, we are concerned about the increase in settler violence against Palestinian civilians. We are also concerned about stability in southern Lebanon and other countries in the region. An escalation of conflict and a regional crisis must be avoided at all costs. To that end, we must avoid the political exploitation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Spain is firmly committed to the work of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, which we must support, and which is helping to reduce tensions between regional actors. We must focus on what is important, as well as what is urgent. Starting now, we must establish credible prospects for peace for the day after the cessation of current hostilities. That can be done only by bringing to fruition the two-State solution, Israel and Palestine, coexisting in peace and security, in accordance with the parameters that the Security Council has repeatedly validated. Spain has always been convinced that the two-State solution is the only possible response to the national aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis.

To that end, Spain reiterates the need to hold an international peace conference involving the parties and the international community, within a short period of time after the current hostilities have ended. We must recover the spirit that guided the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991 and the Oslo Accords. The objective of the conference must be to bring to completion a process that began more than three decades ago. That is the only way to end these cycles of violence.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the fact that Spain voted in favour of resolution ES-10/L.25, which was adopted on Friday, on the understanding that the General Assembly should speak clearly and urgently on the necessity to mitigate the unsustainable humanitarian emergency in Gaza.

Mr. Muhith (Bangladesh): We thank the President for convening the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Mauritania on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Group (see A/ES-10/PV.39).

The people of Palestine have been going through unimaginable misery, inhumane treatment and colonial subjugation owing to occupation, continued attacks and killings, the expansion of illegal settlement, the demolition of homes and forcible transfer by Israeli occupying forces, for decades. However, in the past 24 days, what has been happening has gone beyond description and has crossed all boundaries of international norms and principles. The indiscriminate and disproportionate bombardment of Gaza — even of hospitals and refugee camps — by Israel has already killed more than 8,000 people, around half of whom are children, and approximately 20,000 people have been injured. Those numbers are increasing with every passing minute. More than 1.5 million Palestinians have been displaced internally in an area of just 140 square miles and do not have the bare minimum necessary life-saving assistance. They are running out of food, water, electricity, shelter and medical supplies. At this moment, an immediate ceasefire is a must. I urge the Assembly to do the righteous thing to save hundreds of thousands of lives.

It is regrettable that, due to the failure of the Security Council to take action, thousands of civilians have already been killed. The delay in a ceasefire will kill, injure and displace more innocent people. The situation is further deteriorating with the ground invasion by Israel. We have seen in the past how the inaction of the Security Council and its failure to implement its own resolutions have encouraged the occupying Power to continue its aggression and brutality, which are tantamount to war crimes. We urge again for immediate action to stop the war and for the necessary steps to be taken to implement all United Nations resolutions related to Palestine.

Blocking humanitarian assistance is totally unacceptable and cannot be justified in any way. The blockade of fuel and electricity has brought hospitals to a standstill, risking the lives of thousands of wounded and sick people. Immediate humanitarian access to Gaza with adequate life-saving assistance needs to be ensured. We welcome the humanitarian aid through the Rafah crossing, but we all know the meagreness of the supplies going into Gaza, characterized by the Secretary-General as a drop in the ocean. We call once again to ensure the immediate, continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential supplies and services to civilians throughout the Gaza Strip.

We are deeply concerned by the killing of United Nations and other aid workers, health personnel and journalists in Gaza and strongly condemn such heinous acts. It is unfortunate that 67 staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have been killed and numerous UNRWA installations have been damaged so far. We demand the protection of United Nations facilities and all humanitarian installations.

We have seen the bombing of hospitals, schools and shelters in deliberate attacks to kill civilians. Do those incidents not constitute war crimes and genocide? It is not acceptable to collectively punish a civilian population that has been struggling for independence for more than seven decades. No such attack can be justified in the name of the right to self-defence. As an occupying Power, Israel's claim of the right to self-defence and its endorsement by many is nothing but a fallacy of international law on the question of occupation and the rights and duties of the occupying Power. Moreover, the Assembly cannot discriminate among peoples while taking decisions.

I echo the words of the Palestinian Ambassador in his recent statement in the Security Council that Palestinian lives are no less precious than Israeli lives (see S/PV.9439). We also unequivocally reject Israel's call to forcibly displace Palestinians from their own homeland, which is an attempt to further worsen the humanitarian situation in the entire region.

We need to hold Israel accountable for its war crimes and blatant disrespect for international humanitarian law. We have clear legal definitions in international law of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The failure to ensure accountability in the past, mainly due to the blatant double standards undertaken by some Governments and the media, has led us to this awful day. It is a shame for all of us that, after the adoption of so many resolutions — even in the Security Council — with a clear road map for a solution to the crisis, we have failed to implement them.

I would like to refer to the Secretary-General, who said that the attack on 7 October did not happen in a vacuum. A decades-long occupation and Israel's absolute impunity, guaranteed by some Member States, from the consequences of committing atrocities, undermining all diplomatic and multilateral efforts to establish peace in the Middle East through a two-State solution, have led to this point today. We do not want any further loss of lives anywhere. In that regard,

we would like to repeat that the only solution to the crisis and the only way to establish peace in Palestine and in the region as a whole is the establishment of an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, under a two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders.

Before concluding, I would like to recall once again that the Charter of the United Nations starts with our determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. If we fail to do so, we will remain accountable to our future generations. We must not lose sight of the right to self-determination of the people of the occupied Palestinian territories. However, at this time, it is more important than ever to avoid any more killing, to ensure humanitarian assistance and to save civilians and humanitarian personnel. We call upon Israel to abide by the General Assembly resolution adopted on Friday by a two-thirds majority (resolution ES-10/21), of which my delegation was a co-sponsor, and to immediately stop all atrocities by agreeing to a ceasefire.

Mr. Vongnorkeo (Lao People's Democratic Republic): The international community stands at the precipice of a grave security crisis, teetering on the brink of a major catastrophe. Immediate and unified actions are imperative to avert that impending disaster.

Following the Security Council's inability to reach consensus on a resolution for an immediate ceasefire and the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance to save innocent lives in Gaza, the responsibility now rests with the General Assembly to address this critically urgent issue — action on which is long overdue — with the aim of halting the ongoing hostilities between Israel and Palestine.

For over seven decades, political divisions have hindered progress on the Israel-Palestine issue. Regrettably, those divisions have recently stalled any concrete action from the Organization to protect civilians in dire need of exercising their fundamental right to survival. As the humanitarian tragedy unfolds. It is crucial for all States Members of the United Nations to set aside unilateral political interests and unite unconditionally to save the innocent lives caught up in the conflict. We urge all parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint, halt all violent acts and reopen humanitarian corridors.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has been closely monitoring the hostilities between Israel

and Palestine with deep concern, witnessing the devastating toll on lives and property. As a responsible Member State, and in our commitment to contributing to peace in the Middle East, we therefore supported the efforts by other Member States to reconvene the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly. We commend the Secretary-General and all United Nations and non-governmental organization personnel who continue to risk their lives working tirelessly in conflict areas, actively engaging with all parties to de-escalate violence and prevent further humanitarian crises.

The past three weeks of violence serve to underscore the urgent need for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire. Despite positive developments, such as the release of several hostages and initially allowing the delivery of humanitarian supplies through the Rafah checkpoint, much more needs to be done. That includes providing efficient and unconditional humanitarian assistance.

Given the current circumstances, it is imperative that we pursue diplomatic solutions and promote messages of peace.

First, recognizing that violence benefits no one is crucial. Military engagement serves only to exacerbates the crisis, making an immediate humanitarian ceasefire vital and underscoring the need for dialogue and negotiation.

Secondly, we must unequivocally condemn all acts of violence and assaults on civilians. Both the Palestinian and Israeli populations deserve to live free from fear, with their security equally safeguarded.

Thirdly, strict adherence to international humanitarian law is essential. Life-saving humanitarian aid — food, water, medicine and fuel — must be allowed to reach all civilians in Gaza swiftly, safely and at scale. Ensuring the delivery of those life-saving supplies at the scale needed for the people in Gaza, including the personnel of the United Nations, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the International Committee of the Red Cross and individuals of all nationalities, is a top priority. Establishing unhindered humanitarian corridors and the unconditional release of people held captive are critical steps.

Fourthly, countries with influence in the region must collaborate with all relevant parties to prevent escalation and regional spillover.

Fifthly, the solution to the Palestinian issue ultimately lies in the implementation of the two-State solution, enabling Palestine and Israel to coexist peacefully. Working towards a comprehensive, just and enduring settlement, guided by the relevant United Nations resolutions and international peace efforts, is fundamental.

Our immediate obligation is to protect civilians, including during acts of self-defence and in situations involving hostages, hospitals and schools. We must discourage incitement, combat dehumanization and work tirelessly to protect the lives of Palestinians, Israelis and victims from other nations caught up in the conflict.

In conclusion, allow me to invoke the poignant words of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin during the Oslo Accords signing ceremony in 1993,

“We are destined to live together, on the same soil in the same land ... Enough of blood and tears. Enough.”

Those words serve as a timeless reminder of our shared humanity and the urgent need for peace.

Mr. Sowa (Sierra Leone): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting.

The present situation in the Middle East and the response of the Security Council in the past weeks, and even up to yesterday, is an indication that the United Nations needs to be constructive, deliberate and sincere in its approach to its work and actions. The world is counting on the United Nations, especially the Security Council, to not renege in fulfilling its mandate.

Sierra Leone unequivocally condemns in the strongest terms the indefensible heinous attack against Israeli civilians by Hamas on 7 October. Sierra Leone also equally condemns in the strongest terms the taking of hostages by Hamas and calls for their immediate and unconditional release.

Since the 7 October attacks, we have further noted with grave concern the escalation of violence, particularly the response by Israel. In acknowledging the right to self-defence, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which is applicable to all States, we are of the firm view that any response must be in line with international law, in particular international humanitarian law, international human rights law and other relevant legal norms. We therefore unequivocally condemn attacks on civilians and civilian objects. In

this regard, we also condemn in the strongest terms the heinous attack on the Al Ahli Baptist Hospital in the Gaza Strip and other civilian facilities, which is totally unacceptable. We support the calls for an investigation into the matter. As we urge for timely investigations, Sierra Leone calls for accountability mechanisms to be fully engaged to preserve any evidence of violations of international law to ensure accountability. We deeply sympathize with the families of the victims of the regrettable recent escalation of violence and the ongoing occupation. While we can only offer our deep sympathies at this stage, the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, can — and must — act.

As we welcome the diplomatic exchanges that have led to the flow of limited humanitarian aid into Gaza, Sierra Leone is gravely concerned about the ever-deteriorating humanitarian situation, with the simultaneous escalation of violence. The deteriorating humanitarian situation and the inability of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to provide adequate humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza, owing to the indiscriminate bombardment, necessitates a humanitarian ceasefire and the establishment of humanitarian corridors for the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians. The humanitarian ceasefire must indeed ensure full, speedy, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access for United Nations humanitarian agencies and implementing partners. Sierra Leone joins the strong call for the unrestricted provision of adequate amounts of essential goods and services to civilians, including electricity, water, fuel, food and medical supplies in Gaza. That is only in compliance with international humanitarian law to ensure the survival of civilians.

We note with concern the danger of a spillover of the current crisis in the Middle East region. If consolidated action is not taken, a spillover will compound the existing fragile situation in the region. Regrettably, the region is marked by mass displacement, an unimaginable humanitarian crisis, insecurity and the loss of civilian lives. With the recent escalation, we are fully convinced that it is only genuine dialogue and negotiations based on the two-State solution that will guarantee a lasting peace between Israel and Palestine. Sierra Leone therefore calls for concerted efforts to explore diplomatic and political avenues geared towards finding a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the conflict.

At this time of multiple and interlocking crises, as the Security Council is confronted with an ever-increasing number of conflicts around the world, ranging from the ongoing conflict in the Middle to, inter alia, Ukraine and the Sudan, the Council needs to be reformed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, legitimate, inclusive and geographically balanced to perform its overarching duty of maintaining global peace and security. The intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council aims to reach an agreement to make the Council more representative, efficient and effective in the exercise of its mandate, especially in terms of addressing conflicts that have been ongoing for many years. As the Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on Security Council Reform, Sierra Leone attaches great importance to those negotiations, and in the light of the Council's failure to act with the needed urgency, we urge Member States to fully support the ongoing initiative to reform the Security Council, in particular for the Council to reflect present-day geopolitical realities.

Mr. Rae (Canada): As this emergency special session on the situation in Gaza and the Middle East region winds down, it is important that we have to continue our collective diplomatic efforts because, on the ground — which is where things matter — we all know that the situation is still very dire. Last week, Canada introduced an amendment (A/ES-10/L.26) to resolution ES-10/21, in an effort to ensure that the General Assembly acknowledge that this situation arose following an unconscionable terrorist attack by Hamas on Israeli civilians on 7 October 2023, in which 1,400 people were killed.

Canada is pleased that over half of the voting members of the Assembly felt the same way last Friday (see A/ES-10/PV.41) but regrets that its amendment was not adopted, and we therefore abstained in the voting on the resolution. However, I am speaking today because I want to make it clear that that does not change in any way Canada's general diplomatic efforts here and in the region, which are focused on ensuring, first of all, that the hostages currently held by Hamas — be they Israeli, Canadian, Thai, American, Argentine, Chinese or Russian — all be released as soon as possible; that, until hostilities stop between the parties, all possible steps be taken to limit the loss of life; that humanitarian services be increased immediately and substantially; and that Egypt, Israel and the United Nations cooperate fully to ensure that vital humanitarian help is provided.

We have already allocated \$60 million and are trying to get those funds to work as quickly as possible.

In order to ensure those critical steps — and there are still not enough trucks getting through or enough people getting the assistance that they need — we need to have assurances given and measures taken by all parties and all combatants to guarantee the safe delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance. And yes, our efforts are also aimed at ensuring that the more than 400 Canadian nationals and permanent residents currently trapped in Gaza be permitted to leave, along with many other international citizens who are seeking to leave Gaza.

We know that many efforts are under way here, on the ground and in many regional capitals to achieve those objectives, and we are ready to engage in whatever diplomatic and other efforts are needed to resolve them. But we have to come to terms with several things. The first is the terrible toll that the current conflict is taking. All of us weep for the more than 3,200 children killed in Gaza in the past three weeks, just as we weep for the Israeli children lost on or since 7 October. As I told the Assembly the other day, there is no hierarchy in death; it affects all of us.

That is why we are urging further steps to deal with the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, why we need rapid and unimpeded access to assistance and why we endorse the need for humanitarian pauses, which need to be agreed to by all combatants. At the same time, we need to keep our eyes on discussions around a sustainable political solution to this conflict, and that is what needs to change. How to do it is diplomacy's necessary task. We need to understand that talk about the two-State solution — which many of us have talked about today — is empty unless it is accompanied by the end of the violent rhetoric of absolutism, violent acts of terror and the ongoing refusal to accept the legitimate interests of all parties.

There is no point in drafting agreements and constitutions in the air. The security interests of everyone must be respected. Peace will come only with a willingness to compromise, and that will happen only once all parties understand the deep risks and the terrible costs of the current confrontation. We know that adopting or not adopting resolutions and debating them is what the Organization does. However, achieving the reality of a two-State solution — not a theoretical two-State solution but a real one, something that can really be done and accepted by all the parties — with two

States whose borders and boundaries would be both mutually and internationally recognized and whose peoples can live in peace, respect and security means that deep and practical steps must be taken to resolve the issues in dispute.

(spoke in French)

Any country or organization that denies the right of the Palestinian people and the right of the Israeli people to their own State, within secure and recognized borders, is denying those peoples' rights that are essential to peace. Each of us can have more than one thought at a time. It is possible to fully and firmly support Israel's right to exist while at the same time criticizing certain Israeli policies. It is possible to fully and firmly support Palestinian self-determination while at the same time designating Hamas as a terrorist organization and unequivocally condemning its actions. In fact, many delegations told us that adoption of the Canadian amendment would have enabled an even larger majority to support the resolution.

Unless we can name Hamas as an organ of terror, we are not going to reach a true agreement for two States for the simple reason that there is no country here that would live easily or fairly with a terrorist State on its borders. At the same time, it is possible to believe in Israel's right to defend itself, in accordance with international law, and to call for pauses and humanitarian corridors. It is possible to feel genuine empathy for people of all backgrounds without compromising one's principles.

(spoke in English)

Selective interpretations of history and context and follow-on references to original sin, such as I have heard over the past couple of weeks, are a slippery and a dangerous slope. We cannot allow antisemitism, Islamophobia or hatred of any kind to take hold, because they risk feeding a populism that shrinks the spaces we need for dialogue, including in the General Assembly. We can have our debates in the Assembly, but it is important first to understand that our job is also to find solutions. When we go down the wrong path, we are doing things that are harmful, that are a disservice to us all, and that, frankly, are a disservice to diplomacy.

The great Irish writer James Joyce once described history as a nightmare from which we are desperately trying to awaken. We cannot undo what has been done, but we can acknowledge it; we can name it and take the necessary steps to repair it and move forward. As was recalled by other speakers today, the principles

that I have described have been accepted by others in the past. They have been shown to work around the world. And they have been accepted in the Middle East region since the historic journey of President Sadat of Egypt to the Knesset in Jerusalem in 1977 — one of the true moments of great statesmanship in the history of this conflict.

Since that date, efforts have been made by Israeli and Palestinian leaders to reach an understanding between them many times — but not, it must be said, in recent years. There are many reasons for that, but since the break-off of serious negotiations 20 years ago, the prevalence of violent extremism, including escalating settler violence in the West Bank, the failure to build on past understandings, and the now-shattered illusion that an inherently explosive situation could somehow be successfully managed have shown that these approaches have brought us no closer to a two-State solution, or indeed to any peaceful solution.

Canada has been deeply engaged in issues of peace and security in the Middle East since the foundation of the United Nations in 1945. Lester Pearson, a former Canadian Foreign Minister and former President of the General Assembly, proposed the first United Nations peacekeeping force, the United Nations Emergency Force, following the Suez crisis. Twenty-three Canadian soldiers are buried among the 3,000 in the Commonwealth Cemetery in Gaza.

We must find a way to shift the dialogue from the language of impulse to the language of consequence. Canada is ready, as we have always been, to play our part in establishing this dialogue.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers tomorrow afternoon, following the conclusion of the consideration of agenda item 74, entitled “Report of the International Criminal Court”.

The exercise of the right of reply has been requested. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): My delegation takes the floor in exercise of its right of reply to references made by the Permanent Representative of Israel in his statement on Thursday, 26 October at the thirty-ninth meeting of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly (see A/ES-10/PV.39) to an agricultural worker from Thailand, accompanied by the displaying of video footage from a tablet showing that victim, asserted to be a Thai, being inhumanely killed.

Thailand is gravely concerned over the fate of our innocent Thai citizens caught in the conflict. However, we disapprove of the display of such graphic and gruesome footage, which does not afford the proper respect and due consideration for the deceased and his family. Displaying such footage is inappropriate, as it is insensitive, and it is unfortunate that it took place in this very Hall. For the record, we condemn the killing of innocent civilians, regardless of nationality, by any group and for whatever reason.

We appreciate that appropriate action has been taken here with regard to such video footage. Going forward, we sincerely hope that the display of inappropriate video footage here at the United Nations will not happen again and that appropriate steps will be taken by the United Nations to help prevent such incidents in the future.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.