



# General Assembly

Tenth Emergency Special session

Official Records

**43<sup>rd</sup>** plenary meeting

Wednesday, 1 November 2023, 4.15 p.m.

New York

*President:* Mr. Francis . . . . . (Trinidad and Tobago)

*The meeting was called to order at 4.15 p.m.*

## Agenda item 5 (continued)

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

**Mr. Albanai** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to salute the General Assembly with the greetings of Islam — the religion of peace and mercy. May peace and God's blessings be upon those present.

I will begin my statement by paying tribute and respect to the 121 countries that honourably stated their position last Friday (see A/ES-10/PV.40 and A/ES-10/PV.41) and decided not to stand silent and idle regarding the genocide and collective punishment inflicted on our unarmed civilian Palestinian brothers. I urge them not to forget that, on the same day that they decided to support what is right and made their positions known against the criminality, atrocities and heinous attacks committed by the Israeli occupation forces, those forces declared the start of their ground invasion of the Gaza Strip. They did not stop there. They stepped up their dirty strikes and bloodthirsty violence against innocent civilians, most of them women and children, who had committed nothing to deserve that fate.

Does the world still believe that what is taking place is in self-defence? Are there still people who stand indifferent in the face of an unfolding genocide that is taking place every day? Do they accept that an occupation entity unilaterally disregards the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law

and international humanitarian law? I wonder how some people can turn a blind eye to atrocities and fail to condemn them. They drag the Organization towards an unprecedented abyss because of their double standards and selectivity in applying the law.

The position of the Government of the State of Kuwait with regard to the crimes that we are witnessing is based on three issues: first, an immediate ceasefire; secondly, opening crossings and facilitating the entry of humanitarian assistance supplies; and, thirdly, rejecting any attempt to forcibly displace the Palestinian people to areas outside their occupied territories.

Regarding the implementation of law, I recall the actions of the cowardly occupation forces, which continuously perpetrate violations against civilians. I say cowardly because such actions by a whole army target innocent civilians, whose only fault is that God created them Palestinians.

We see daily violations of the principles of international law and international humanitarian law, as well as countless resolutions and decisions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and international organizations. I would therefore like to recall the violations against civilians. Some of the most difficult scenes that we witness daily due to the criminal bombing are the killings of innocent children, who aspire only to learn, go to school and play with each other. They have committed no crime whatsoever.

I would like to draw members' attention to the statement issued by Save the Children three days ago

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to the effect that the number of children killed in Gaza in the past three weeks alone has exceeded the annual number of children killed in conflict areas throughout the world since 2019, with more than 3,300 children killed since 7 October.

Let us recall together some of the Security Council resolutions that have been violated on a daily basis by the occupying authorities for more than 25 days.

First, Security Council resolution 1261 (1999) is the first resolution of its kind to be put forward before the Security Council condemning the targeting of children in situations of armed conflict, their forced displacement and attacks on objects protected under international law, including in places in which children are present in large numbers, in addition to ensuring the full, safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all children affected by armed conflict. The resolution also underscores the importance of the safety, security and freedom of movement of United Nations and associated personnel, while stressing the responsibility of all States to bring an end to impunity and their obligation to bring those responsible for grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions to justice.

Second, Security Council resolution 1998 (2011) condemns attacks against schools and hospitals, the denial of humanitarian aid by parties to armed conflict and all other violations of international law committed against children in situations of armed conflict.

Third, Security Council resolution 2286 (2016) condemns acts of violence, attacks and threats against the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities.

Fourth, Security Council resolution 2347 (2017) condemns the destruction of cultural heritage, *inter alia*, the destruction of religious sites, in the context of armed conflicts.

Fifth, Security Council resolution 2417 (2018) calls on all parties to armed conflicts to avoid targeting civilian objects, including meeting the basic needs and services that are indispensable to the sustained livelihoods of civilians, and to respect and protect those working to provide humanitarian assistance and other shipments for humanitarian relief operations.

Sixth, Security Council resolution 2475 (2019) urges all parties to armed conflict to take measures, in accordance with international law obligations to protect civilians, including those with disabilities, and to prevent violence and abuses against civilians in situations of armed conflict.

Seventh, Security Council resolution 2573 (2021) condemns attacks in situations of armed conflict directed against civilians and civilian targets, along with indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks, resulting in the deprivation of the civilian population of issues indispensable to their survival, as flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and demands that all parties to armed conflict cease firing at civilians.

*Mr. Hilale (Morocco), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

I ask for forgiveness for having spoken at length. However, I think that we are at a stage where we have to start talking about all Israeli violations in all our meetings. The shameful misinformation campaigns by the occupation forces require that we respond with irrefutable facts. It has become clear that the words of what is right anguish them and that the world standing beside the Palestinians is something that terrorizes them. We therefore stress the dire need for the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on the protection of civilians, where such resolutions include agreed upon and uncontroversial principles. It is therefore illogical for us not to implement them today. It is as if those who drafted the resolutions would know the criminal acts that will persist in the future, and such resolutions seem as if they were tailor-made to respond to the gross violations perpetrated by the occupation forces.

When the Secretary-General said that what happened in Gaza on 7 October did not happen in a vacuum, it anguished them. They rushed to criticize him, demanding his resignation, and declared that he was not welcome to enter their occupying entity. I would like to say to Secretary-General António Guterres that he is the moral compass of the Organization. We are used to hearing from him arguments that highlight what is right, no matter how bitter the facts were. He is welcome in any place on Earth and any place that does not fear the words of right, justice and honesty. All of that only affirms what we already know, namely, that the occupying entity does not know what honesty and right mean and promotes only empty words and fabrications. The time has come, and we will not

reiterate what we have said over the past 56 years. The bombing, killing and violence perpetrated by the occupier in a brutal and bloody manner have no place in our world today. Our only way forward is to achieve a full and comprehensive peace by implementing the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy and establishing the independent and sovereign State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, along the 4 June 1967 borders.

We are committed to a just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option in accordance with the international terms of reference and resolutions, along with the Arab Peace Initiative. We will not return to where we were. That time has already passed. That is not because we refuse to address the situation. The world knows that the State of Palestine did not reject political negotiations. However, ignoring international legitimacy in line with the interests and changes in views of those that are in command on the other side is something that we will not accept and will not disregard. We are States, and we have our own influence, which is not less than that of other States.

I would like to take this opportunity to clearly say the following about the occupying entity. It tried everything. It deceived, fought, bombed and killed. It displaced people. It detained and imprisoned people. Even the earth, the plants and the animals were not spared their brutal acts. One, and only one, clear option is left that would rid us of this cycle of violence. imposed for the past 56 years, namely, to end the occupation and to leave the occupied Palestinian territories.

Our heart is broken. Our blood is boiling. Get out of our land. We do not regret that.

In conclusion, the Palestinian people are free. They are the people of steadfastness and struggle. We take pride in them, in their steadfastness and in their courage, which is unprecedented. We will make every effort to show that they are right, and we will spare no effort to stand by their side. Their bravery is our source of inspiration. They have been the symbol of dignity and chivalry. May God have mercy upon our martyrs and protect our brothers in Palestine.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The events of recent weeks in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict area have perhaps left not a single person on Earth indifferent. We are all heartbroken by the devastating stories and the human suffering, for

which the parties blame each other, while Israeli and Palestinian civilians continue to die.

Every day, our Mission receives dozens of requests from both Israeli citizens and Palestinians, as well as representatives of diasporas. They write about their relatives in the conflict zone, asking us to at least do something to stop the violence, first and foremost to ensure a ceasefire, the release of the hostages and the delivery of the necessary humanitarian aid. There are thousands of horrific personal stories, thousands of lives. I would like to take this opportunity to assure everyone who addresses us that we hear those requests and are trying to do everything in our power to ensure that the international community can take action to resolve this critical crisis.

I once again stress again that the violence to which Israel civilians have been subjected since the beginning of October cannot be justified. We categorically reject and condemn any terrorist act. We express our condolences to everyone who lost loved ones in Israel, Palestine and other countries. We demand the release of all detainees.

However, unfortunately, this tragedy did not come out of nowhere. The long-standing Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains at the centre of all the turmoil in the Middle East. For more than seven decades, the unresolved Palestinian question has remained a source of regional and international dispute, exploited by terrorist and extremist groups in various parts of the world for ideological purposes. Moreover, the lack of a solution to the issue has caused untold suffering to the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, Arab States and the numerous Palestinian diasporas there, including refugees who have been forced to huddle in designated camps for decades.

Over the past few years, that state of affairs has been exacerbated by Washington's single-handed attempts, in isolation from joint work and agreed efforts, to impose economic peace on Israel's Arab neighbours without resolving the Palestinian question. It has come to the point where unilateral initiatives, which not only ignore, but also undermine the United Nations-endorsed international legal basis for the Palestinian-Israeli settlement enshrined in Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, have been launched.

In particular, the United States tried to turn a blind eye to the ongoing construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and recognized Israeli

sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights. We now suddenly hear the Americans calling for an end to the settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank. As a result of the Palestinian desperation, we now have a conflict of an unprecedented scale, which risks spilling over to the entire Middle East region.

For all these years, we have openly warned of the futility and danger of such a policy, explicitly saying that it could lead to tragic consequences. The recent outbreak of violence proves what we have long said: the normalization of Israel's ties with Arab States, while a positive development in itself, cannot, and should not, come at the expense of the Palestinians and cannot lead to a comprehensive stabilization of the situation without a resolution of the core issue in the Middle East — a Palestinian-Israeli settlement. As we saw with the adoption of the Jordanian resolution ES-10/21 in this Hall on 27 October, the leaders of all Arab, Muslim and many other States share that approach.

It is paradoxical that, on the one hand, the entire international community recognizes the illegality of the Israeli actions in the occupied Palestinian territories, which contravene the relevant Security Council resolutions and the provisions of international law. However, on the other hand, our Western colleagues prefer not to recall in their statements that the current unprecedented escalation on the ground is, among other things, a consequence of the settlement policy of West Jerusalem, as well as its systematic restrictions on the rights of the Palestinian population to freely visit their holy sites. It is encouraging that António Guterres was not afraid to say that during the Security Council's open debate on the Middle East on 24 October, noting that the current upsurge in violence did not happen in a vacuum (see S/PV.9451), for which he was immediately subjected to fierce and undeserved criticism from Israel, which prefers to start history from scratch, that is, from 7 October.

We all have yet to return to the root causes of the conflict and restore the Palestinian-Israeli settlement to the agreed path. However, today there must be an immediate ceasefire and an end to the bloodshed. It seems that that should be clear to everyone. It is a pity that our Western colleagues on the Security Council continue to thwart any de-escalation efforts on the ground and block the Council from taking urgent action aimed at normalizing the situation as soon as possible, first and foremost a ceasefire. That is not only common

sense, but it is also what humanitarian organizations working in Gaza demand.

It is clear that the full-scale Israeli ground operation in Gaza now under way may become not only a major tragedy for its 2 million people, but also a likely trigger for a region-wide conflict. It would seem that everyone realizes the danger of such a scenario. The only one that does not want to hear about it is Washington, which is hypocritically trying to promote its own regional agenda, including through the politicized Security Council draft resolution S/2023/792, which China and we did not allow to be adopted.

The aim of our American colleagues is not only to divert attention from the failure of their own policy and to shift responsibility from the sick to the healthy, blaming Iran, Hizbullah and the Palestinian streets of Gaza for all the troubles. Their task is also to have the Security Council legitimize Israel's ground operation in Gaza. After all, as we well remember from the situation with the no-fly zone in Libya in 2011, it was not difficult for our Western colleagues to interpret Security Council resolution 1973 (2011) in their favour and unleash aggression against Libya. The Council has no right to give such *carte blanche*.

I wish to emphasize that, while we condemn the killing of Israeli civilians and foreigners there, we cannot turn a blind eye to West Jerusalem's flagrant violations of international humanitarian law in Gaza. Entire neighbourhoods are being razed to the ground. According to reports, the death toll in the enclave has exceeded 8,500 people, almost 70 per cent of them children, women and the elderly. More than 200 Palestinians were killed in less than 24 hours between 30 and 31 October, according to figures issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Indiscriminate air strikes have already claimed the lives of 3,500 young Gazans, with more than 2,000 people under the rubble, half of them also children. The latest strike on the Jabaliya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip injured more than 400 people. The scale of losses on the part of the United Nations agencies is shocking: 67 staff members were killed, 22 were injured and 42 facilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East were destroyed. The number of internally displaced persons in Gaza has reached 1.6 million. As a result of the bombardment of the enclave, nine hospitals have been rendered completely inoperable, and the remaining ones are suffering from an acute shortage



of medicines. In the West Bank, more than 100 people, including more than 30 children, have been killed since 7 October. Approximately 1,000 Palestinians have been forcibly displaced.

Against that backdrop, Israeli officials allow themselves to make offensive remarks about all Palestinians and speak directly of the collective responsibility of an entire people for the actions of Hamas. The orders to evacuate more than 1 million people do not stand up to scrutiny. Israel's complete blockade of the Gaza Strip is unacceptable. The area has simply been cut off from the rest of the world. In addition to provoking panic among the already frightened and desperate civilians, such a blockade directly undermines the work of medical and rescue services, and it will therefore lead to further civilian casualties. Terrorism cannot be defeated by such methods.

We call on the warring parties to stop the bloodshed immediately and to allow the mediators to work towards a diplomatic solution, including the early release of the hostages. Sooner or later, that path will have to be followed. The only question is how many innocent people will die in the meantime.

I also cannot but stress the hypocrisy of the United States and its allies, which, in other completely different contexts, call for compliance with humanitarian law, establish commissions of inquiry and impose sanctions on those that in fact use force only as a last resort to stop years of violence. Today, seeing the horrific destruction in Gaza, which is many times greater than anything that they angrily criticize in other regional contexts, the strikes against civilian facilities, including hospitals, the deaths of thousands of children and the horrific suffering of civilians under a complete blockade, it is as if their lips were sealed. All that they can do is talk about Israel's alleged right to self-defence, even though, as the occupying Power, it has no such right, as confirmed by an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in 2004 (see A/ES-10/273). I hope that such blatant double standards are clear to our colleagues in the global South.

With regard to Israel's security, which we recognize as a right, it can be fully guaranteed only in the event of a just solution to the Palestinian question based on the well-known Security Council resolutions. We do not deny Israel the right to fight terrorism. It can fight terrorists, but not with civilians. Otherwise, it is siding with evil and acting using their own methods.

The Jewish people, who have suffered centuries of persecution, should realize more than anyone that the suffering of ordinary citizens and the death of the innocent for the sake of a blind, deadly revenge will not help to restore justice, bring the deceased back to life or comfort their families. Christianity, Islam and Judaism are united by the value of human life, which belongs to God, and which no one has the right to take away.

In the current turbulent situation, the Russian Federation is making intensive efforts to resolve the crisis as soon as possible. Our goal is to develop just solutions to the fundamental final-status issues of the Palestinian territories. We support a robust negotiation process within a United Nations-endorsed platform, which should result in the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, coexisting in peace and security with Israel.

In that regard, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Group of Arab States, led by Jordan, to prepare resolution ES-10/21, adopted on 27 October, demanding the implementation of urgent measures to stop the violence, halt hostilities, immediately release hostages, avert a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and prevent the conflict from spilling over into the entire region. Russia fully supported that initiative of the Arab world and co-sponsored it. We call for its implementation.

We are firmly convinced that, along with addressing the urgent task of putting an end to the current cycle of violence, it is necessary to begin, without delay, to agree on a strategy for specific collective action towards a political settlement of the conflict. In the past, the Quartet of international mediators, comprising Russia, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations, carried out that task. However, Washington blocked the work of the Quartet in pursuit of its narrow self-interests.

The establishment of a joint mediation mechanism, with an active role for regional States, is on the agenda. That is supported by the positive trends that have recently emerged around the Middle East situation: the Saudi-Iranian normalization and the reintegration of Syria into the League of Arab States. All that proves that, when countries of the region take matters into their own hands and are not subject to external pressure, they can achieve a great deal towards stabilizing the Middle East.

In the current situation, the Russian Federation maintains constructive contacts with all the parties involved and is ready to continue to contribute to a Palestinian-Israeli settlement. First and foremost, it is necessary to stop the bloodshed and prevent the crisis from spreading to the entire region; otherwise, this conflict will never end.

**Mr. Ray (Nepal):** Nepal is grieving with deep anguish over the death of 10 Nepali nationals in southern Israel when Israel came under sudden attack on 7 October.

The Government of Nepal has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on Israel. With equal gravity, we are against the indiscriminate use of force against civilians by both parties involved in the conflict, including the strike on the hospital in Gaza that killed hundreds of people, including children, women, the elderly, medical personnel and patients.

We are deeply disturbed by the rising number of deaths of civilians, the destruction of properties and the resulting humanitarian crisis. Nothing can justify inflicting suffering on, and the killings of, innocent people, whether Palestinians or Israelis.

Nepal calls for an immediate de-escalation and the avoidance of the indiscriminate use of force to prevent civilian casualties, stop the destruction of public and private properties and provide immediate, unrestricted and adequate humanitarian assistance to the desperate civilians in Gaza.

The United Nations has the responsibility to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe and a breach of the peace. We, the Member States, must demonstrate the courage to utilize the platform of the United Nations to bring both sides to the negotiating table in order to find a just, peaceful, amicable and lasting political solution to the problem.

To that end, Nepal supports the efforts made by the Secretary-General to de-escalate the war, open humanitarian corridors and deliver unrestricted humanitarian relief. We are deeply concerned about our missing student, Mr. Bipin Joshi, and are desperately waiting for information on his whereabouts.

Nepal is in favour of a two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security within the recognized international borders, based on international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. That is the only way forward for a

just, lasting and peaceful solution to the question of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Peace is possible only when both sides respect each other's existence and dignity. Hatred never incubates peace. Nepal calls upon both sides to exercise maximum restraint and resort to dialogue to find a solution whereby both Israelis and Palestinians live in peace.

**Mr. Pieris (Sri Lanka):** It was the great Mahatma who told us that an eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind. Is that what we seek to achieve? He did not stop there. He asked us the question: what difference does it make to the dead, the injured, the orphans and the homeless whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy? That is the question that he asked.

Liberty and democracy, the Mahatma says, becomes unholy — unholy — when our hands are dyed red with innocent blood. In the context of today, that is perhaps very easy to understand.

Victory attained by violence is tantamount to a defeat, for it is momentary. The weak, they say, can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. Sri Lanka therefore offers these words of gentle persuasion to our fellow beings who are at war — a war that neither will win but will surely leave a loser, and that is humanity. Is that the legacy, I ask, that we desire to leave our future generations? Is that the agenda that we intend to prosecute for peace? Do we really believe that we can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in such a hostile environment?

It was only in the latter half of last September that our leaders met at the Assembly in this very Hall to lay the foundation for a better world. We deliberated upon what remedial measures should be taken, as the euphemism suggested, to get back into the game, which did not look promising at half-time. We comforted ourselves with the thought that many games are won in the second half. Dreams, are they not? It was only on that optimistic note that we resolved to take on the challenge of working towards those lofty Goals. We discussed the vital role of financing for development. We discussed the climate catastrophe confronting the planet. We adopted three declarations on the main topics on health concerning our countries (resolutions 78/3, 78/4 and 78/5). Our ministers adopted the scope and elements of what would be the Summit of the Future.

However, the supreme irony is that, in contrast, we are compelled to witness death, destruction, violent attacks on civilians, kidnappings, hostage-taking, retaliatory measures on civilian life and property and the threat of a wider conflict. All that will predictably ensure that the game will be lost at full-time if the hostilities and military misadventures that we are witnessing in Palestine and Israel today do not stop now, as the President of the General Assembly was pleased to observe in his opening statement of this emergency special session (see A/ES-10/PV.39). The war drums must stop beating.

Sri Lanka is therefore deeply concerned by the ongoing escalation of violence and military action in Gaza, which is causing deaths and injuries to many innocent civilians and children, resulting in a grave humanitarian situation. The legitimate security concerns of both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples must be recognized. We observe that indiscriminate actions that cause civilian casualties will make the realization of an enduring peace only a distant reality. Sri Lanka supports the diplomatic efforts to find a lasting solution to the conflict and humbly requests both parties to engage in a dialogue to achieve a durable peace.

Since the adoption of resolution ES-10/21, entitled “Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations”, last Friday by the Assembly, the situation in Gaza has worsened manifold. Death and destruction continue unabated. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), more than 1 million people have been displaced. UNICEF has reported that, out of the total dead, 3,450 are children — innocent children. Last Sunday, the United Nations held a memorial for 59 UNRWA staff killed in Gaza. Millions are suffering without basic essentials and face a lifetime of trauma. I ask the question: will such trauma solve the problems of the Middle East?

We therefore reiterate our call to keep a humanitarian corridor open in order to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the civilians in Gaza, and we are committed to supporting the efforts and activities of the Secretary-General in his endeavour to mitigate the suffering of the people and the loss and damage to life and property and to bring about a ceasefire. Sri Lanka calls for the free movement of essential items and humanitarian aid, including food, fuel, medicine and electricity and water supply to Gaza. We call on all

sides to immediately halt the violence and take steps to prevent further civilian casualties.

We also call upon the international community to redouble its efforts and support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. UNRWA is playing a commendable and courageous role, I must say, in helping vulnerable populations under extremely challenging circumstances.

In the light of the ongoing hostilities, it is therefore important, my delegation says, to address the situation with empathy, understanding and a commitment to finding a peaceful resolution. We therefore have a plea to the leaders and the peoples of Israel and Palestine. We of course acknowledge the deep pain, the loss and the suffering that both sides have experienced as a result of the ongoing hostilities. We urge Member States to prioritize the well-being and security of all individuals involved and to work towards a lasting peace that ensures the safety, dignity and rights of both Israelis and Palestinians.

We understand that finding a solution to such a complex and long-standing conflict is not easy. However, we strongly encourage meaningful dialogue and negotiations, with the aim of reaching a comprehensive and just agreement that addresses the core issues that are at hand. That includes addressing concerns related to borders, settlements, security, Jerusalem and the right to self-determination.

We believe that it is crucial to recognize and respect the aspirations and rights of both Israelis and Palestinians. Mutual understanding, empathy and compromise will surely build the essential trust in creating a conducive environment for peaceful coexistence. We therefore urge them to listen to one another's concerns and perspectives and to engage in constructive dialogue that promotes understanding and reconciliation. We also call upon the international community to play an active role in such efforts.

Ending hostilities and achieving a just and lasting peace will require courage, leadership and a genuine commitment to finding common ground. However bleak the prospects may be, we believe that, with dedication, goodwill and a shared vision for a better future, it is possible to achieve a peaceful resolution to this long-standing conflict. Let us therefore foster social cohesion, make available lifelong learning opportunities, promote reconciliation and healing, rebuild infrastructure, promote economic recovery,

strengthen institutions and governance, engage civil society, promote participation and, finally, invest in peacebuilding and conflict prevention at the community and national levels.

It is our prayer and hope that, together, we can build a future where Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in peace, security and prosperity by committing our resources and our cooperation from all our Governments, international organizations and the whole of our global community. Let us therefore seize this opportunity to break the cycle of violence and work towards a future that upholds the values of justice, equality and respect for human rights.

**Mr. Sekeris** (Greece): I align myself with the statement delivered previously by the representative of the European Union (see A/ES-10/PV.40), and I would like to add the following in my national capacity.

Let me start by recognizing the courageous work and sacrifice of United Nations employees in Gaza and in particular those, including the 70 staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, who paid the ultimate price in the line of duty. I would also like to extend our sincere condolences to all Palestinians and Israelis who have suffered or lost loved ones.

The gravity of the situation in the Middle East gives us great concern. The serious crisis presents a huge challenge and a test to all of us. In view of that, Greece welcomes the Security Council's attempts to address the situation in Israel and Gaza and regrets that those efforts have so far not been fruitful. We acknowledge that discussions are still ongoing, and we hope that a conclusion will be reached.

Right from the start, my country condemned Hamas in the strongest possible terms for its brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks across Israel. Terrorism has no justification. Any form of violence, terrorism or inhumane treatment is totally unacceptable. Israel has a right to its self-defence and to react and protect its citizens, always in line with international law and international humanitarian law. We call for the immediate release of all hostages without any precondition.

Human lives cannot be reduced to a bargaining chip. At the same time, we are particularly alarmed by the catastrophic humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza. All civilians must be protected at all times by all parties. To protect civilians and provide life-saving supplies,

all necessary measures should be taken, including humanitarian corridors and pauses for humanitarian needs. Our aim should be to protect as many lives as possible. In that regard, together with our partners, we are stepping up our assistance to help those in need.

Yet we should all ensure that this conflict will not spill over and take on far-reaching dimensions in the Middle East. We call on all States and international organizations to intensify urgent concrete steps to support efforts by the United Nations and regional States to prevent the violence in Gaza from expanding to other areas in the region.

Greece's foreign policy is a principled one. We remain fully committed to a two-State solution, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Only a political solution could create the long-term conditions for peace, stability and prosperity in the wider region.

**Mr. Koonjul** (Mauritius): It is now six days since the General Assembly, acting under the Uniting for Peace initiative, adopted resolution ES-10/21, calling for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. Yet the bombs are still exploding, and civilians are still dying in huge numbers.

Even before the resolution was adopted, Mauritius fully supported the Secretary-General's call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. The bloodshed of innocent civilians and the destruction of basic infrastructure are unacceptable and will continue to fuel further violence. As we speak, the situation on the ground is worsening, with no sign of abatement. We call on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint.

According to the latest reports, more than 10,000 civilians have fallen victim to the hostilities, while over 25,000 are suffering from injuries. A total of 1.65 million people have already been displaced. It is revolting to note that women and children account for more than 62 per cent of the fatalities. Moreover, 67 United Nations staff members working with the Palestinian refugee agency were killed during air strikes, with around 44 installations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East being damaged.

Yet again, a humanitarian crisis is unfolding in front of our very eyes. In the Gaza Strip, people have limited or no access to basic necessities, while food, drinking water, health services, safe shelter and electricity are



no longer existent. The latest reports indicate that the Gaza Strip is hardly able to sustain essential services.

The international community needs to act now. The violence in Palestine must cease. The world cannot take the risk that the violence spreads to other parts of Palestine and the neighbouring countries.

We welcome the safe passage of some aid convoys into the Gaza Strip for the supply of basic goods, essential medical equipment and fuel so that health facilities can continue to operate. We hope that an adequate supply will continue to flow in order to save as many lives as possible.

Mauritius expresses its profound sympathies to the families of the victims as a result of the conflict, both in Israel and the Gaza Strip.

Mauritius strongly condemns the violence in all its forms, including the terrorist attack on Israel on 7 October, resulting in a number of hostages being taken. We welcome the initiatives to find immediate solutions to various aspects of the conflict. The recent release of some hostages demonstrates that dialogue is only possible, and is in fact the only way, to find a solution to the current situation. We appeal for the immediate release, without conditions, of all innocent civilians being held captive. Mauritius takes this opportunity to commend the efforts of all parties engaged in facilitating such a release.

Mauritius reiterates its unwavering support for a two-State solution based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and on international law, which envisages the establishment of an independent, viable and prosperous Palestinian State within secure and recognized borders, living in peace side by side with the State of Israel. We make a strong plea to both parties to urgently come to the negotiating table to revive peace talks in good faith. It is only through such talks that a peaceful and long-lasting solution can be found.

Mauritius supports the holding of a series of international conferences under the auspices of the United Nations, involving all major actors, including Israel and Palestine, so as to agree to an immediate ceasefire and reopen the discussions with a view to finding a lasting solution. In that respect, we continue to encourage the Secretary-General in his mediation efforts. At the same time, the full weight and scope of international humanitarian law must apply. Violence and terror bring only destruction and untold suffering.

It is high time that a comprehensive solution were found to the conflict based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and on international law.

We must all strive together to give peace a chance at a time when the world is already beset by a cascade of interlinked global crises.

**Mr. Nena** (Lesotho): As I take the floor, allow me to join others in conveying our deepest condolences and words of sympathy to all families who lost loved ones, in both Israel and Palestine, as a result of this unprecedented conflict of our times. We also pay tribute to the United Nations humanitarian personnel who died in the line of duty while working selflessly to provide hope and support to the desperate civilians in Gaza. Our thoughts and prayers are with the injured. We continue to offer our solidarity to those who are working tirelessly in their mediation efforts in order to find lasting peace and stability in that region of the world, with the main objective of averting further loss of life of innocent civilians.

It would be remiss of me not to commend the General Assembly for taking a principled and historical step last Friday by prioritizing the humanitarian situation of the people of Palestine through the adoption of resolution ES-10/21, which recognizes the centrality of the preservation of lives of innocent civilians. However, my delegation remains mindful of the fact that the adoption of that resolution does not in any way whatsoever symbolize the end of the conflict in question. It only calls for further engagement by all and sundry to do our utmost to find a lasting diplomatic and political solution to the problem, which has acquired unprecedented proportions of our lifetime.

Regrettably, the repeated failure of the Security Council to adopt a definitive draft resolution on this conflict erodes the confidence of the global citizenry in the functionality of the Organization, thus amplifying the clarion call for its reform. We implore its members to take full responsibility and find an immediate solution to this war.

My delegation is deeply concerned about the violation of human rights of people on both sides, some of whom were abducted, while others are being cut off from their essential basic needs. Unfortunately, most of them are women and children, who are non-combatants. In that regard, we call for the immediate release of those kept in captivity. The world cannot continue to watch the horrifying pictures of children in Gaza being mercilessly

killed on a daily basis by the Israeli bombardment. Under such circumstances, Lesotho appeals to all the parties involved to exercise maximum restraint.

The further escalation of this conflict raises legitimate concerns regarding its potentiality to spiral out of proportion. We are therefore all bound to call on all parties to give way to a diplomatic solution without any further delay. At the same time, we urge all parties to allow humanitarian corridors, with guarantees of safety to humanitarian personnel.

We express concern over any attempt to forcefully relocate the people of Gaza contrary to the past United Nations resolutions, which unequivocally recognize their inalienable right to self-determination. Our wish is that of a two-State solution, wherein both Israelis and Palestinians will live side by side in peace with each other, in line with the previously adopted United Nations resolutions.

History has proved beyond reasonable doubt that the cost of war is insurmountable in all its facets. As a result, during this critical time, the world must stand up steadfastly to recall the very foundations of the United Nations and live up to them.

Finally, as John Donne posits in his poem,

“No man is an island entire of itself; ... Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”

**Mr. Alrowaiei** (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*); At the outset, I would like to thank the President for the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly against the backdrop of the unfortunate and painful developments that the Gaza Strip is witnessing and their dire humanitarian consequences.

Last week’s adoption by the General Assembly of resolution ES-10/21, calling for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities, with a majority of 121 States, reflects the world’s demand for immediate action to end the war. It is now time to respond to such calls and work tirelessly so as to achieve a permanent ceasefire in a manner that guarantees the safety and security of all parties.

The Security Council has not yet been able to adopt a draft resolution that puts an end to the ongoing escalation, which is causing immense suffering to the brotherly Palestinian people. The Kingdom of Bahrain

therefore urges the international community to shoulder its humanitarian responsibilities in responding to the Assembly’s resolution and to act immediately in order to preserve lives and property and safeguard the security and stability of the region. We must also work to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy on the question of Palestine and to support the Palestinian National Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the brotherly Palestinian people.

Under such dire circumstances, the highest priority is to protect civilians on both sides of the conflict. The international community must not hesitate to condemn any act that leads to the loss of innocent lives, particularly the killing of women and children. Such scenes of death and destruction can create entire generations filled with accumulated anger and a thirst for revenge without finding a solution to any of the fundamental issues.

The Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms the importance of consistent diplomatic efforts among all regional and international parties to achieve de-escalation through an immediate ceasefire, an end to the military operations, the protection of innocent civilians on both the Palestinian and the Israeli sides, the release of all prisoners, hostages and detainees and the cessation of any practices that could widen the cycle of violence.

The Kingdom of Bahrain also stresses the need to lift the siege on the Gaza Strip, open humanitarian corridors and facilitate the flow of medical aid, food, water, fuel and electricity to the Gaza Strip without obstacles. We must also put an end to the targeting of residential neighbourhoods, health-care, educational and social facilities, places of worship and infrastructure and reject any attempts to forcibly displace Palestinians from their land and homes, in line with international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

The Kingdom of Bahrain appreciates the political and diplomatic efforts being made at all levels to stop this destructive war. We highly appreciate the appeal by His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and all his sincere efforts to advance the role of the United Nations and to uphold its responsibilities and serve humankind.

Under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain,

and the guidance of the Government, headed by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the Kingdom of Bahrain stresses that the two-State solution is the only genuine guarantee for peaceful coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, living side by side in security and peace, because there will be no stability in the Middle East without ensuring the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people and achieving a just, comprehensive and sustainable peace in the region.

The Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms its steadfast position in support of the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, foremost of which is their right to establish an independent and sovereign State along the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the two-State solution, based on international law, the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

In conclusion, the ongoing escalation in the Gaza Strip will lead the region to a dangerous abyss and a new cycle of violence. The victims will be civilians and innocent people. There will be more suffering and violations. We therefore need concerted efforts to contain this crisis and its catastrophic humanitarian consequences. We must work to lay the foundations for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace by paving the way for dialogue and peaceful negotiations, in accordance with the rules of international law. That would result in achieving security, stability, prosperity and dignity for all peoples of the region.

**Mrs. González López** (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to express my country's deepest condolences to all the victims of the escalation of this long-standing conflict.

El Salvador joins the voices that have expressed deep concern at the escalation of violence and the serious deterioration of the situation in Israel, the Gaza Strip, the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory and the region. We unreservedly condemn all acts of terrorism, whatever their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever they are committed. We call for a halt to indiscriminate attacks and all acts of aggression perpetrated against the civilian population.

We also express our deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and its consequences for the civilian population. We recall with deep regret that children constitute half the

population of Gaza, who have lived their entire lives in an area of constant conflict and siege. We express our support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and all his calls for immediate and unrestricted access for humanitarian assistance so as to meet the needs of the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip. However, we call for concrete steps to be taken in order to effectively contribute to the cessation of violence in the region and to stop the suffering of the civilian population, who are the most affected by the situation. We acknowledge the leadership, the efforts and the pivotal role played by the Group of Arab States in achieving the cessation of hostilities, ensuring the protection of civilians and providing humanitarian assistance.

We once again welcome the adoption of resolution ES-10/21, entitled "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations", last Friday, 27 October, which we believe to be a concrete and tangible outcome of this emergency special session of the General Assembly. However, despite the adoption of the resolution, and as we meet to resume the session, thousands of innocent people, including children, are losing their lives in the Gaza Strip, and many more are also losing hope that the violence will stop, that the conflict will end and that the Organization will take impactful action to end their suffering.

The emergency special session was convened six days after hundreds of people were horrifically killed in an attack on the Al Ahli Arab Hospital, many of whom had gone there seeking refuge from the relentless bombardment in Gaza. As of today, there are more than 9,700 people dead, more than 21,000 injured and more than 1.4 million displaced persons. Those tragic numbers and events have only increased with each passing hour, compounded by the developments of these past days.

Around the world, people have followed the unfolding conflict with disbelief, frustration and anguish. Many are wondering where the United Nations is. Where are the bodies set up to protect the rights of thousands of people, particularly groups in vulnerable situations? The peoples of the world look to the Organization, which was established to save generations from the scourge of war, and we must no longer fail them.

Instead of adopting legally binding resolutions with concrete mandates to bring about a ceasefire, the Security Council has been caught up in a vicious

circle of the presentation of draft resolutions, meetings and vetoes, which have only undermined what little credibility it had before the escalation of the conflict. Nothing — and I reiterate, nothing — justifies the inaction of the United Nations in the face of the human suffering that we have witnessed in recent weeks.

My country makes a strong appeal to the members of the Security Council, in particular those that abuse their veto power, to comply with the responsibility that all the members of the General Assembly have entrusted to them under the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. We urge an end to thinking in the name of special interests and to act in a manner consistent with the common good of humankind.

The Assembly has played its role, and its message has been clear: the majority of States represented in the Organization condemn all acts of violence directed against Palestinian and Israeli civilians and call for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities. The Security Council must therefore heed that call and act immediately.

My country calls for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. No atrocity can justify another atrocity. We deplore and condemn all attacks and aggression against civilians and the widespread destruction. We strongly condemn the violence inflicted on the civilian population, wherever and by whomsoever it is committed.

We call for the immediate release of all civilians and demand their safety, well-being and humane treatment in accordance with international law. We hear, acknowledge and endorse the cry of the families calling for their loved ones to return home.

We demand that all parties comply immediately and fully with all their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Civilians, humanitarian personnel and civilian and humanitarian objects must be protected unconditionally and at all times.

We stress the impact and severe consequences of armed conflicts, especially for women, girls, boys and all vulnerable civilians, such as persons with disabilities and the elderly. As UNICEF's Executive Director said a few days ago, the true cost of this latest escalation will be measured in the lives of children — those lost to violence and those forever changed by it.

We also call for respect for, and the protection of, all civilian and humanitarian facilities, in compliance with international humanitarian law, including hospitals and medical facilities, their means of transport and equipment, schools, places of worship and United Nations facilities. We condemn all acts of aggression and all attacks against United Nations personnel, humanitarian and medical personnel, journalists and media workers. We strongly demand their respect and protection.

At this point, let me express our deepest condolences to the families of the staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, as well as of all humanitarian organizations that have suffered losses in this conflict. We pay tribute and honour the memory of all the women and men who lost their lives protecting the rights and dignity of the civilian population in the region.

Let me also express our deep admiration for the Agency, which, despite being chronically underfunded, has spared no effort to protect the lives of civilians in Gaza. We call for the Agency's financial gaps to be urgently addressed in order to provide humanitarian assistance, maintain basic services and pay its staff.

Immediate, full, sustained, safe, secure and unrestricted humanitarian access must be provided to ensure that essential supplies and services reach all civilians in the Gaza Strip. That must not be limited to the provision of water, food, medical supplies, fuel and electricity. We stress the imperative, under international humanitarian law, to ensure that civilians are not deprived of objects indispensable to their survival. To that end, we call for the immediate and effective provision of fully protected humanitarian corridors and other initiatives to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians.

My country firmly rejects any attempt to forcibly transfer the Palestinian civilian population. In that regard, we call for the order for Palestinian civilians, United Nations personnel, humanitarian workers and doctors to evacuate areas in the northern Gaza Strip to be rescinded. We reiterate that appropriate measures must be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of civilians and their protection, in particular that of girls and boys, and to allow for their safe movement.

El Salvador joins the call for all parties to exercise maximum restraint. Today more than ever, it is important to prevent further destabilization and



the escalation of violence in the region. We all have a responsibility to fulfil. We call on the parties, and particularly all those with influence over them, to work urgently to achieve that.

We stress the need to ensure accountability for the countless victims of this conflict. Independent and transparent investigations must be conducted in accordance with international norms. Efforts must be made to end impunity, ensure justice and deter further violations.

We recall that a lasting solution to the conflict can be achieved only by peaceful means and with the will of the parties, based on each and every resolution of the Security Council and the General Assembly. We recall that the United Nations, by virtue of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, has an ongoing responsibility for the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects. We recall that reaching a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question is indispensable to achieving peace and stability in the Middle East.

We urge the international community to redouble and coordinate efforts to restore the political horizon and to promote and expedite a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the conflict. Collective efforts are urgently needed to start negotiations on the Middle East peace process. El Salvador hopes that this emergency special session will be the beginning of a process that will lead to the longed-for peace in the region. It is in our hands to give people back the hopes that they have placed in the Organization.

**Ms. Concepción Jaramillo** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama reiterates its strong condemnation of the terrorist attacks and violence perpetrated by Hamas against Israeli civilians on 7 October.

As a signatory to the international humanitarian law conventions and the international law treaties, and being deeply committed to the protection of, and respect for, human life, Panama emphatically regrets the escalation of violence that has resulted in the loss of life of thousands of people in a series of violent incidents in the region, such as the attack on the Al Ahli Baptist Hospital in northern Gaza. That also caused the destruction of both civilian and humanitarian infrastructure, which must be protected by all parties under international law and international humanitarian law.

In view of the serious situation in the Middle East, Panama calls for peace and respect for human rights, with particular attention to vulnerable people in the Gaza Strip. The life, health and well-being of the entire population, with an emphasis on women, children, adolescents, the elderly and people with disabilities, must be protected and respected.

We also urge all parties involved to exercise restraint and strictly respect the norms provided for under international humanitarian law, both conventional and customary. Both bodies of law are essential for the protection of civilians and medical facilities in areas of armed conflict. The escalation of violent actions only drives us into deeper human suffering, increasing the loss of life regardless of ethnicity, religion or origin. That is why we also advocate a humanitarian corridor that will allow for the unimpeded, continuous and safe delivery of medical and humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza. That is viable, possible and urgent.

We also call for the urgent and unconditional release of all abducted civilians. In that regard, we acknowledge the efforts of the international actors engaged in that task. The international community cannot accept the use of civilian hostages as an asset for exchange.

Panama reaffirms its unwavering commitment to peace, security and stability in the Middle East and in the world as a whole. We join the international community in calling for the building of a lasting peace. We reiterate our firm commitment to the practice of multilateralism, with the aspiration to achieve an immediate cessation of violence, respect for public international law and the opening of an effective path towards a peaceful solution to the conflict.

**Mr. Feruță** (Romania): We are faced with a very serious crisis in the Middle East, and it is paramount to address the dire unfolding humanitarian situation to save lives and to facilitate solutions to avoid a regional escalation.

At the General Assembly tenth emergency special session, we meet to defend the principles and norms of the Charter of the United Nations and to reaffirm that there is no justification for terrorism anywhere and at any time or for the loss of lives of any kind.

Romania condemns in the strongest possible terms the indiscriminate and atrocious terrorist attacks committed by Hamas across Israel, starting on 7 October. Each country has the right to defend itself

and its citizens against terrorism, Israel included, in line with international law.

We are profoundly shocked by the large number of lost lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike, and our thoughts are with all the innocent victims of the conflict. Romania is one of the countries that mourns the loss of five dual nationals.

All hostages held by Hamas must be immediately released. We acknowledge the work undertaken by international partners in releasing them. As one of the countries that has dual nationals held hostage, we hope that the work to release them will continue.

Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people. On the contrary, it acts against their aspirations by harming the Palestinian cause and the prospects of the two-State solution. My delegation reiterates the call to make a clear distinction between the justified and legitimate Palestinian expectations and démarches, which should be addressed only as part of a political process, and the terrorist attacks of Hamas, which in the end are harming Palestinian lives and the Palestinian future.

At this stage of the current conflict, it is important to reaffirm the importance of respect for international law and the universal principles of international humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Conventions. The protection of civilians, especially children, must be ensured at all times by everyone.

While we welcome the humanitarian trucks that crossed at Rafah last weekend and in the following days, we should be firm and united in upholding unhindered humanitarian assistance to Gaza. Such measures are necessary, including humanitarian pauses, so as to allow full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, consistent with international humanitarian law, for United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners to act swiftly.

All civilians should be protected at all times. As Member States know, the European Union (EU) and its member States will continue their efforts to assist EU citizens in the region. From a national point of view, that also includes their evacuation upon request.

The conflict in Gaza not only destroys the future of Israelis and Palestinians, but it also has an immense potential to spark hate speech around the world. The rise of antisemitism and of anti-Palestinian or Islamophobic

speech in the world is of great concern. This is the moment to act again and speak out against hatred.

We are convinced that the most durable solutions to such a complex situation are only those emerging and endorsed by all the legitimate parties involved. Romania therefore abstained in the voting on resolution ES-10/21.

For too long, there has been a lack of meaningful progress on the Middle East peace process. Many windows of opportunity have been lost and, in the end, civilians paid the price. However, we cannot give up on peace. The two-State solution remains indispensable and the only option available for a lasting resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The two-State solution also remains indispensable to bringing about just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. The two-State solution will prevent the spillover of the conflict and stop other actors from fuelling it. My delegation stands ready to engage regarding mediation efforts as part of the joint international responsibility to maintain peace and security.

**Mr. Jackman** (Barbados): Barbados associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) during this session (see A/ES-10/PV.40), as well as with the CARICOM statement of 9 October.

Barbados condemns the heinous terrorist attacks perpetrated on Israel on 7 October, which caused more than 1,000 people to lose their lives and hundreds to be taken hostage, including women and children. Those responsible for those devastating violent acts must be brought to account.

We express our alarm at the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and our deep concern for the safety and security of the people of Israel and Palestine. The conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza threatens to spill over to the entire Middle East, with catastrophic results for the people of that region, for global peace and for the already fragile multilateral order. If the conflict continues unabated, it will also have devastating impacts on vulnerable populations everywhere. The international community of States and their peoples must therefore unite and prevent the situation from any further deterioration. The Security Council must act urgently and in unison.

In that regard, Barbados welcomes the adoption on Friday, 27 October, by our Assembly of resolution

ES-10/21, which calls for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities. That was an important signal by the global community. Barbados voted in favour of that resolution because of its clear call for the protection of all civilians, the release of hostages, respect for international law and the need to find a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of a two-State solution. Barbados also supported Canada's proposed amendment A/ES-10/L.26 because it clearly identified those responsible for the 7 October terrorist attacks on Israel. Those points are all in accordance with Barbados's views on the situation, as set out in our statement of 24 October.

An immediate humanitarian ceasefire, as called for by many, including the Secretary-General, is now essential in order to ensure the protection of the lives and well-being of the innocent civilians of Israel and Gaza. Any aerial bombardment in Gaza — an area smaller than my own country, but with seven times our population — is bound to have devastating effects on civilians. The death of thousands of Palestinians in these past weeks bears grim testimony to that.

Barbados further calls for the immediate, unconditional release of all hostages and the provision of humanitarian assistance in all its dimensions to the people of Gaza.

I also wish to express Barbados's support and appreciation for the remarkable work and terrible sacrifices of the United Nations staff on the ground. We commend the Secretary-General and his teams for their efforts to provide relief and to find a path to peace.

Since joining the United Nations upon our independence in 1966, Barbados has always supported a two-State solution, recognizing the rights of the people of both Israel and Palestine to their own State. The international community must now urgently agree and take action to ensure that the Palestinian people can exercise their right to self-determination in an independent, internationally recognized State, in accordance with international law. A sustainable peace must be the world's singular focus, and it is only with dialogue that that can be achieved.

**Mr. Lippwe** (Federated States of Micronesia): This emergency special session of the General Assembly meets at a time of extremely difficult circumstances for civilians in both Israel and Gaza. This organ — every

one of us — must do its utmost to address and prevent this crisis, an already volatile situation, from spreading.

Now more than ever, it is important for the General Assembly to stand against the terror of Hamas and condemn unequivocally the abhorrent and despicable acts of 7 October against civilians and the State of Israel. Many of the victims were women, children and the elderly. The heinous and brutal acts by Hamas and any other terrorist group deserve the Assembly's condemnation and should never be tolerated. Terrorist attacks anywhere on anyone should not be condoned and are not justifiable. Neither is it justifiable for terrorists to use schools, hospitals or innocent Palestinians as human shields.

Micronesia stands with any State to defend itself from terrorist acts, and we support Israel's right to defend its territory and its people. It is not only a right under the Charter of the United Nations; it is the obligation of any sovereign country.

On behalf of my country, I express our heartfelt condolences to the families who lost loved ones. We call for the immediate, unconditional release of the hostages held by Hamas and on both sides to respect international humanitarian law. We are grateful to those countries that are working tirelessly to save and protect civilian lives, Israelis and Palestinians alike. Any civilian's life lost is a tragedy.

The peace and security of the entire Middle East are under threat, and the risk of the crisis expanding within and beyond the region is very real. The international community and the United Nations must redouble efforts to bring back the peace process. A durable solution, with two peoples, Israelis and Palestinians, and two democratic States living side by side in peace, security and dignity within mutually recognized borders, is necessary for a lasting peace.

**Mr. Sarufa** (Papua New Guinea): I thank the President for his stewardship of this emergency special session.

Papua New Guinea is seriously concerned about the unfolding situation in Israel and Palestine following the heinous terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel on 7 October. We offer our sincere condolences and sympathies to all victims of the conflict, in both Israel and Palestine, and to those United Nations staff who tragically lost their lives in the line of selfless duty.

My delegation condemns in the strongest possible terms the barbaric, depraved and murderous Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist attack on Israel, particularly against innocent civilians of Israel and other countries. Such a heinous act must never be condoned by anyone. That is why we also supported the Canadian draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26, which, in our view, is important.

The kidnapping and taking of hostages of Israeli and other countries' citizens, predominantly civilians, including children, the elderly and women, by Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists are also condemned in the strongest possible terms by my delegation. That is against international humanitarian law, and we call for the perpetrators to be held accountable.

Papua New Guinea also joins other countries in calling for the urgent release of all hostages held by Hamas without any preconditions. We welcome the release of those who have been released thus far, and we urge for the rest held against their will to be freed from abduction and captivity. All lives matter, and all measures are needed to protect civilians and their assets by the conflicting parties. We call on Hamas not to use civilians as human shields.

Acts of such a heinous nature, perpetrated by Hamas and other such groups, including Hizbullah, must be designated by the Security Council as terrorist groups that deserve to be dealt with in a similar manner to Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham.

Papua New Guinea stands in solidarity with the State of Israel and unequivocally recognizes Israel's right to self-defence under international law. In the exercise of the right to self-defence, we also recognize the importance of proportionality and distinction, as provided for under international humanitarian law. Papua New Guinea also strongly supports Israel's rightful existence as a nation and strongly condemns parties, including terrorists and terrorist organizations, that are opposed to Israel's statehood.

The evolving situation in Israel and Palestine has potential serious implications for peace and security and imperils lives and livelihoods not only for the parties to the conflict, but also for the wider Middle East region and beyond. The international community must work with all the parties concerned in good faith and mutual respect to urgently de-escalate the situation and restore peace and security in the affected

areas. We therefore join others in urging for an urgent humanitarian truce. That must also include the avoidance of the use of inflammatory rhetoric, which is unhelpful to de-escalating the tense situation. In that spirit, we appreciate the various international and regional efforts under way to de-escalate the situation between Israel and Palestine. Such efforts deserve the international community's support.

We also appreciate the humanitarian efforts to provide for the needs of those who are affected by this conflict, and we extend our gratitude to the front-line humanitarian workers for their selfless service. We also call for the protection of all humanitarian workers and for the parties to the conflict to ensure their safety and security.

This current conflict once again brings to the fore the critical importance and urgency of restarting efforts for the two-State solution. We encourage direct negotiations through peaceful means among all stakeholders in Israel and Palestine towards finding a mutually amicable and lasting political solution for Israel and Palestine to live side by side in peaceful coexistence.

Finally, we are also concerned about the paralysis in the Security Council to appropriately consider all relevant issues in good faith and to urgently address the worsening circumstances, as seen in the recent series of failed Security Council draft resolutions on this serious, increasing concern for peace and security and the well-being of all parties to the conflict. The Council must do better in carrying out its mandate — a mandate that is representative of all humankind, and not just merely representing that of a Council member's parochial interests alone.

**Mr. Tōnē** (Tonga); I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Kingdom of Tonga.

Tonga condemns the horrific terrorist attacks by Hamas against the State of Israel on 7 October, which resulted in the slaughter of civilians. Tonga further condemns the kidnapping of civilians during that attack, who continue to be held captive as hostages. Tonga stands in solidarity with those who call for their immediate and unconditional release.

Tonga supports Israel's inherent right of self-defence, as assured by the Charter of the United Nations, in its determined response to protect its citizens and bring stability to the volatile security situation.

We acknowledge that that should not lessen the rights of Israelis and Palestinians to live in safety,



dignity and peace. Civilians, be they Israelis or Palestinians, are not a target and must be protected.

Tonga further supports the desperate need for humanitarian aid to be delivered without restrictions or undue delay. In that regard, any respite in the military campaign in Gaza will be most helpful in order to facilitate the delivery of such humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians.

As we continue our prayers for those who mourn the loss of loved ones, those who have survived and those who are now living in uncertain fear and pain, the Kingdom of Tonga remains steadfast in its call for peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians.

**Mr. Beleffi** (San Marino): San Marino joins the statement previously made by the representative of the European Union (see A/ES-10/PV.40). I would now like to make some remarks in my national capacity.

The current crisis in the Middle East has brought about profound suffering, pain and destruction on both the Israeli and the Palestinian sides. The crisis demands a prompt and strong response by the international community.

Our thoughts today are with all the innocent victims — Israelis, Palestinians and citizens from many other countries, as well as staff members of the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations.

San Marino condemns the horrendous terror attacks launched by Hamas on 7 October, the killing of innocent civilians, the holding of hostages and the continued indiscriminate missile attacks on Israel. The perpetrators of those atrocity crimes must be brought to justice.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages without preconditions. In that regard, we welcome all mediation actions being carried out by various actors on the international scene, with the aim of enabling the immediate release of people kidnapped in Israel.

San Marino recognizes the right of Israel to defend itself in line with international law and, at the same time, recognizes the right of the Palestinian people to a free and independent State, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements.

International humanitarian law must be respected at all times. The Palestinian population cannot be blamed for Hamas's terrorist acts. The scale of the military

operations and the forcible transfer of civilians within the territory, as well as the demolitions in the West Bank, are a violation of international humanitarian law.

It is essential to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure at all times, in particular medical facilities, schools and United Nations premises, as well as to provide urgent humanitarian aid to promptly reach the Palestinian population, who are stranded in the Gaza Strip in desperate conditions.

It is crucial to avoid a regional escalation, and we call on regional actors to refrain from any action that could further aggravate the situation. San Marino supports any initiative that may foster dialogue, promote an immediate ceasefire and, ultimately, put an end to the ongoing conflict.

We fully respect the rights of the State of Israel and the legitimate aspirations and rights of the Palestinian people, and we remain committed to a lasting and sustainable peace, based on the two-State solution.

Finally, with reference to resolution ES-10/21, previously adopted, we regret that draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26, proposed by Canada, was not adopted. From our point of view, it would have helped the resolution, making it more representative for many countries and, ultimately, more inclusive with respect to the positions expressed in the General Assembly.

**Mr. Da Cruz** (Angola): The resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, on illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, comes at a very challenging time and under painful humanitarian circumstances. This debate is of great importance due to its implications for peace and security in the Middle East, a region of great political and diplomatic sensitivity, and which at this moment represents yet another test for multilateralism as a mechanism for resolving the intricate international challenges that we face today.

Angola is deeply concerned about the exponential increase in violence in the Middle East since the 7 October attack, which every day exacerbates the human suffering and takes the lives of innocent civilians, including women and children. We condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of their motivations and actors. Likewise, we are also alarmed by the likelihood of the Gaza crisis spilling

over and turning into a regional conflict with dangerous implications for international peace and stability.

The international community must mitigate such risks by using all parts to exercise restraint, de-escalate and respect the norms of international law. The only viable way to achieve durable peace is through dialogue and the peaceful settlement of disputes. In that context, we support resolution ES-10/21, which, among other key messages, calls for an immediate, durable and sustainable humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities and the immediate and unconditional release of all civilian hostages, as well as demanding the immediate, continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential goods and services to civilians throughout the Gaza Strip under international humanitarian law. It also reaffirms that a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be achieved only by peaceful means, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and in accordance with international law, and on the basis of the two-State solution.

We commend the humanitarian work being done by United Nations personnel to save lives under very difficult and challenging conditions, which is an expression of their unwavering commitment to the values of human dignity and international solidarity. We mourn those who died as victims of this conflict, and we express our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families in Israel, the Gaza Strip and beyond.

Angola recognizes the pertinent role of the United Nations in seeking universal solutions based on its Charter's major principles of international relations, namely, the sovereign equality of all its Members, the obligation of all Members to settle their disputes by peaceful and amicable means in such a manner as to not endanger or jeopardize international peace, security and justice and to fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the Charter, tolerance and peaceful coexistence among nations.

The current challenges of peace and security in the Middle East demonstrate the urgency of prioritizing the search for a fair and sustainable solution, based on the application of the relevant United Nations resolutions and international law, with the aim of achieving two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within internationally recognized borders.

The United Nations remains the best hope and the last frontier for peacemaking and peacekeeping to prevent conflicts and settle international disputes.

However, today's global challenges reinforce Angola's conviction about the urgent need to reform the United Nations system, especially its Security Council, in order to make it effective, representative, inclusive and able to strengthen multilateralism as the way of dealing with common and interconnected threats and preserving all peace and security.

**Ms. Kalkku** (Finland): Finland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/ES-10/PV.40).

We have condemned Hamas's cowardly terrorist attack against civilians in Israel in the strongest terms. In only three weeks, more than 10,000 people in Israel and the Palestinian territory have now lost their lives in the attack and the escalation that followed. We are deeply saddened by all this human suffering. Civilians, including women, children and the elderly, have once again paid the highest price. We stress that international humanitarian law must always be respected by all parties to a conflict, and all civilians must be protected in all situations. Security belongs to all.

Finland recognizes the right of Israel to protect its civilian population, but we strongly underline that military operations must be proportionate and in line with international humanitarian law. All possible measures to spare civilian lives must be taken in all situations. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of the hostages held in Gaza and commend the role that the United Nations, Egypt, Qatar and other countries in the region have once again played.

We supported the Canadian draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.26) to resolution ES-10/21, presented last Friday. The amendment would have been important and truthful in clearly mentioning the responsibility of Hamas, which is a terrorist organization. Because the amendment was not adopted, we unfortunately had to abstain in the voting on the resolution, despite agreeing with most of its highly relevant and carefully formulated content. We thank the Group of Arab States for all its work in building consensus on this extremely important and urgent issue. We urge the Security Council to assume its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations and adopt a draft resolution as soon as possible. The already catastrophic situation is deteriorating as we speak.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is indeed catastrophic. International humanitarian law protects objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian

population, such as food, water, medical supplies, shelter, electricity and fuel. The civilian population of Gaza, including the children, and the women — of whom 50,000 are estimated to be pregnant — is in desperate need of all of that. We call for continued, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access. All necessary means, including humanitarian corridors and pauses for humanitarian needs, must be employed to facilitate the delivery of more aid with the utmost urgency. Our great appreciation goes to the United Nations and other humanitarian actors and their staff for their crucial work, often at the risk of their own lives. Efforts to discredit the United Nations and other humanitarian personnel are unacceptable.

A joint international effort to de-escalate and to prevent further escalation is needed. The developments in the West Bank are going in the opposite direction. Israel also has the legal obligation to protect civilians from the violence of Israeli citizens residing in the settlements, which are all illegal under international law. We greatly appreciate the diplomatic role that Secretary-General Guterres, the countries in the region and the United States have played on the ground. We commend Egypt for its important initiative to host the

peace summit. All diplomatic efforts are of great value. We highlight the constructive role and commitment to non-violence of the Palestinian Authority. The role that the Palestinian Authority has played — and continues to play — as a partner of the entire international community should be commended and respected.

The situation again highlights that the only sustainable way to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is through a negotiated two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. The solution must meet Israeli and Palestinian security needs and the Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, end the occupation that began in 1967 and resolve all the permanent-status issues. Gaza and the West Bank must be considered as one entity in order to create a viable Palestinian State. As the international community, we must bear our responsibility by making the strongest possible push for negotiations as soon as it becomes possible.

**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 at 3 p.m. in this Hall.

*The meeting rose at 6:15 p.m.*