



General Assembly

Tenth Emergency Special session

48th plenary meeting
 Wednesday, 20 December 2023, 3 p.m.
 New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Lapasov (Uzbekistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 5 (continued)

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

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): A few days ago, on 6 December, in my capacity as President of the Security Council for this month, I received an exceptional letter (S/2023/962). In it, for the first time in more than 30 years, a Secretary-General invoked Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, which allows the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that, in his opinion, may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. He did so in view of the magnitude of the loss of life in Gaza and Israel in the two months since the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October, and in order to avoid a total collapse, a catastrophe with potentially irreversible consequences for peace and security in the region. He did so because the humanitarian situation is rapidly deteriorating. I was personally able to witness that deterioration a few days ago at the Rafah crossing.

Ecuador has been clear in emphatically and unequivocally condemning the unjustifiable and atrocious terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas, as well as in demanding that all hostages be released immediately and unconditionally. We have done so

repeatedly, and we do so again today. We have also been clear in recalling that the Palestinian people have an inalienable right to self-determination and to its legitimate aspirations to live in security, freedom, justice, opportunity and dignity. We have expressed our solidarity with Israel and with Palestine because all lives are precious, because we grieve for all deaths and because there is no justification for causing pain and death to innocent civilians.

We have pointed out that Israel has the right to defend its population and also the inescapable obligation to respect the principles of international law and international humanitarian law in exercising that right. We have also rejected the use of civilians as human shields by Hamas. In short, our position has been clear and has been based on international law and on the defence of human life and dignity. Those are the principles that guide us on this and all issues. These are the principles that will continue to guide us.

We have been called back to the General Assembly, following the letter of the Secretary-General and a veto in the Security Council, to consider a draft resolution and amendments proposed to the text thereof. Consistent with the principles I just mentioned, we believe that a humanitarian ceasefire is absolutely necessary in order to alleviate the terrible situation in Gaza and to reduce the risk of an expansion of violence in the region. We also believe that it is necessary for the Assembly to explicitly condemn Hamas for the terrorist attacks of 7 October, something that, unfortunately, was not done in a timely manner in the resolution adopted

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on 27 October (resolution ES-10/21). We believe that it is essential to clearly point out the responsibilities that are obvious today in order to be able to demand that the responsibilities to be determined in the future be upheld.

For those reasons, we voted in favour of resolution ES-10/22 and the two amendments presented (A/ES-10/L.28 and A/ES-10/L.29).

Finally, I reiterate what my delegation has repeatedly said in the Assembly, in the Security Council and in other forums: the almost eight decades of conflict, the thousands upon thousands of deaths and the immeasurable pain and suffering of entire generations are the clearest evidence that violence is not the solution. The only way to end this conflict is through a peaceful, negotiated, definitive and just solution for the parties, with the existence of two States, Palestine and Israel, on the basis of the 1967 borders and the relevant resolutions. Let us all work together to achieve that goal.

Mr. Al Busaidi (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): We meet today once again under the dome of this majestic Hall, the General Assembly Hall, against the backdrop of the repeated and deliberate disruption of the Security Council, preventing it from taking practical and concrete measures to maintain international peace and security and measures to stop the killing of Palestinian civilians, including the elderly, women and children. There is no doubt that the convening of this emergency special session is a vivid collective expression of the repudiation of collective punishment and ethnic cleansing against an entire people that would allow the execution of racist schemes rarely seen since the Second World War.

We meet today, after nearly two months of deliberate obstruction of the Security Council, despite the explicit calls of the international community as represented in the General Assembly, in the Security Council and in the position of the Secretary-General, whom we applaud for his support for peace, international law and international humanitarian law. We also salute this enormous gathering of Member States that have stood by the truth and international justice calling for an immediate and unconditional cessation of the killing of civilians in the Gaza Strip.

The world and peace-loving peoples will not forget how Israel has been given the green light to continue to perpetrate its crimes against the Palestinian people, whose crime is that they rejected the occupation and

have repeatedly expressed their yearning to obtain freedom and exercise their legitimate right to self-determination like other peoples of the world. We stress that the project of genocide and ethnic cleansing is rejected.

We hold Israel, the occupying Power, and those who support it fully responsible for carrying out that crime. The brutal aggression has cost — and is costing — the Security Council its legitimacy. We have always taken pride of the Council's achievements and role in maintaining international peace and security. The struggle of the Palestinian people and that of peoples who love and yearn for peace have revealed the true face of the projects that have been promoted as seeking democracy, freedoms and other false slogans. What we are seeing today in Palestine is a completely different image of what has been marketed for decades about democracy.

Unfortunately, all those standards have been lost as a result of the continued application of double standards in the Gaza Strip and elsewhere in the world. Unfortunately, all of that undermines the Organization's prestige and the Security Council's legitimacy. It is an established fact that Israel's projects since 1948 have reached a dead end, met with the Palestinian people's determination and resistance. The project of occupation, elimination and forced displacement has been dashed on the rocks of a resilient Gaza.

Today all peoples stand with the Palestinian people in their struggle and just cause demanding a global order that values human beings, wherever they are in the world, based on the foundations and standards of equality among, and the protection of, peoples. That was the message that the countries of the world have agreed upon in this very Hall. It was a message calling for ending injustice, not only in the Gaza Strip and for the Palestinian people, but for all peoples looking forward to freedom and to exercising their legitimate, inalienable right to self-determination.

In conclusion, some have tried to silence the voice of Palestine. The surprise was that the whole world has been supporting the voice of Palestine. The world today is fully aware that terrorism is what Israel has been perpetrating, in full view of the world. But the voice of humankind has been stronger, and the nations of the world will chant "We are all Palestine".

Ms. Kalkku (Finland): The escalation of hostilities — first in Israel and then in the Palestinian

territory — has now lasted for over two months. The magnitude of human suffering and the extensive loss of life is shocking.

Last week, Finland co-sponsored and voted in favour of resolution ES-10/22, which demands an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of hostages and secure humanitarian access.

Finland has also condemned in the strongest terms the brutal terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel. More than 1,200 people lost their lives in the attack, most of them civilians. Hamas and other groups still hold hostages in Gaza, and we demand their immediate and unconditional release. Terrorism is never justified, and Finland fully recognizes Israel's right to protect its civilian population from terrorist attacks. However, we have also strongly and consistently underlined that military operations must be proportionate and in line with international humanitarian law. In every situation, all measures must be taken to spare civilian lives.

Since the start of Israel's military operation, almost 20,000 people have reportedly been killed in Gaza, most of them women and children. Tens of thousands of others have been injured, homes have been destroyed and nearly 2 million people have been displaced. The humanitarian situation is catastrophic, and not nearly enough aid is reaching those in need. Secretary-General Guterres has sounded the loudest possible alarm on the imminent danger of the catastrophic humanitarian situation deteriorating even further and the humanitarian system collapsing. Civilian life must be protected, and aid cannot be delivered while the fighting rages.

Finland therefore joins the Secretary-General's call for a humanitarian ceasefire to ensure the protection of civilians and the delivery of enough life-saving aid throughout Gaza. International humanitarian law must be respected by all parties. The suffering of civilians must end.

The risk of wider escalation also remains high. Tensions in the broader region, especially in the border area between Israel and Lebanon, have intensified, and we call on all actors in the region to de-escalate. In the West Bank, international efforts to de-escalate are hampered by the increasing violence of Israeli settlers. 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.

The situation once again demonstrates that we need a negotiated two-State solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict, based on the pre-1967 borders. Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem together form the Palestinian territory. The future solution must meet both Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, end the occupation, which began in 1967, and resolve all permanent-status issues. We all know that this is the only sustainable way to ensure peace and security for everyone in the region. It is high time to make a renewed international effort to resolve the conflict. The people in the region finally deserve a future without violence.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): France is deeply concerned about the ongoing humanitarian tragedy in Gaza. The Secretary-General sounded the alarm last week, and he was right to do so.

The situation has worsened dramatically since hostilities resumed on 1 December. Humanitarian organizations are all expressing their inability to provide humanitarian aid to the civilian population under the current conditions.

That is why France voted in favour of the Egyptian resolution (resolution ES-10/22). And that is why France is calling for a new, immediate and lasting humanitarian truce that must lead to a permanent ceasefire.

From day one, France has reiterated Israel's right to defend itself and its duty to do so in strict compliance with international humanitarian law, including the obligation to protect civilians.

Hamas and other terrorist groups have committed barbaric and inhuman crimes against Israeli civilians, women and children. We reiterate our strongest condemnation of those acts and, especially, of the sexual violence committed by Hamas and other terrorist groups on 7 October. That is why France voted in favour of the American draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.29).

France also regrets that the Egyptian resolution does not note that the diversion of aid and the use of civilian infrastructure for military purposes are violations of the principles of humanitarian action and international humanitarian law.

France continues to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other terrorist groups. That is why France voted in favour of the Austrian draft amendment. France notes that this appeal is in line with international law and that

it was clearly adopted by resolution 2712 (2023). France wonders why the call for the release of the hostages is not included in United Nations texts.

France will continue to be resolutely committed—in the Security Council, the General Assembly and the region—to resolving the crisis in all its aspects: security, humanitarian and, above all, political.

Mr. Oussein (Comoros) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this vital meeting on such short notice. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Egypt and Mauritania, Chairs of the Group of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, respectively, for their request to resume the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly.

Today we are resuming this tenth emergency special session with immense frustration. The catastrophic and intolerable situation in which the Palestinian civilian population finds itself calls out to us all. The appeals of the Member States have not been heeded, nor have those of the Secretary-General, who, under Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, alerted the Security Council to the disastrous situation in Gaza. Similarly, the voices of the majority of Security Council members were ignored. It is worth noting that more than 100 countries co-sponsored Security Council draft resolution S/2023/970, demonstrating significant international concern. However, the Council's continuing stalemate raises serious questions about its credibility and is having grave humanitarian consequences, particularly in the area of health, including the risk of famine and of the total collapse of the humanitarian support system.

The alarming situation faced by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the growing number of its staff killed, including their family members, also demonstrates that the fundamentals of international law and international humanitarian law are being violated. In the face of those challenges, our responsibility to protect the civilian population is more urgent than ever. What is the moral justification for inflicting this collective and indiscriminate punishment, resulting in the deaths of thousands of people, particularly women and children? It is in that context that Egypt, on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, called for invoking the provisions of the Uniting for Peace resolution in order to enable us to meet

here and demonstrate the strong expectations of the international community. This situation also highlights the urgency of reforming the Security Council, which is necessary to ensure the smooth functioning of our Organization.

The Union of the Comoros does not condone any violence — any violence whatsoever — and we call on the parties to swiftly de-escalate this conflict, which has taken so many lives, and for the hostages to be returned, in order to reopen the path to dialogue and to work together towards a lasting two-State solution, as stipulated in the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

Finally, I stress the importance of our collective responsibility to ensure that a humanitarian ceasefire be reached immediately. In several areas of Gaza, access to essential humanitarian aid is severely restricted, leaving thousands of civilians in a state of need and despair. In those inaccessible areas, where basic resources are sorely lacking, human beings are suffering in silence. This alarming situation demands not only our immediate attention but also coordinated and decisive action. It is our duty as the international community to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches all those in need in Gaza. However, one of the major barriers to achieving that humanitarian objective is the absence of a lasting ceasefire. Without peace, our efforts to provide vital support are constantly being hampered. We must therefore work together to promote an immediate ceasefire that will pave the way for the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid. Moreover, it is crucial for the humanitarian aid to be managed under the aegis of the international community. That will ensure the fair and effective distribution of aid and prevent the politicization of humanitarian assistance.

Our objective must remain clear: to save lives and preserve human dignity. As Members of the United Nations, we have a collective responsibility to protect and help the most vulnerable. That is why my country, the Union of the Comoros, voted in favour of resolution ES-10/22, entitled “Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations”. This is not just a matter for deliberation, but one of vital urgency. Lives are at stake. We cannot delay any longer. The United Nations, whose founding values we have a duty to uphold, must act now to save the Palestinian people from annihilation.

Mr. Yamanaka (Japan): The humanitarian situation in Gaza has deteriorated to an unprecedented level. The fact that the tenth emergency special session has been convened again within just two months underscores that stark reality. In the light of the current humanitarian crisis in Gaza, Japan voted in favour of resolution ES-10/22, which amassed a majority of the voices of the international community, with 153 votes in favour.

The unimaginable death toll, rampant displacement, collapsed health-care system and now, mass starvation — which have all happened within such a short period of time — demonstrate the gravity of the crisis. In that regard, Japan takes seriously the Secretary-General's invocation of Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, urging the members of the Security Council to appeal for a humanitarian ceasefire.

Although it is regrettable that the Council has not been able to take sufficient action, serious diplomatic efforts are under way to make a tangible difference in improving the humanitarian situation on the ground. In fact, the diplomatic efforts led by the countries concerned, including the United States, Qatar and Egypt, achieved the welcome week-long pause we saw at the end of November, which resulted in the release of some hostages and the entry of vital humanitarian aid into Gaza. However, since that pause broke down, there has been a new round of deaths, displacement and destruction. It is evident that immensely more aid needs to be delivered through all available routes to and throughout Gaza. Moreover, reiterating its condemnation of the terror attack on 7 October, Japan again calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all remaining hostages held by Hamas and others.

Commissioner General Lazzarini of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East said in his letter dated 7 December to the President of the General Assembly that the Agency was at its darkest hour in its 75-year history. More than 130 of its staff have been killed in bombardments, most with their families. Japan expresses its heartfelt sympathy to the victims and the injured and offers its condolences to the bereaved families. All parties to the conflict must comply with international law, including international humanitarian law, to protect civilians, United Nations personnel and humanitarian workers.

As a responsible member of the Security Council, Japan will continue to work constructively with other Council members to foster a unified voice that

addresses the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. The Council's adoption of resolution 2712 (2023) was a crucial first step, but it is not enough. Gunfire and bombardments in Gaza continue even now. They must stop immediately for a period that allows for meaningful humanitarian operations for those who are suffering this humanitarian catastrophe.

Ultimately, a two-State solution whereby Israel and an independent Palestinian State live side by side in peaceful coexistence and security remains the only viable solution. But for now, the international community must prioritize an end to the suffering and save the lives of the innocent.

Mr. Amorín (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this emergency special session. The tenth emergency special session was reconvened owing to the grave situation in the Middle East, which continues to be cause for extreme concern throughout the international community.

The situation in the Middle East, specifically in Israel, the occupied territories and the Gaza Strip, is extremely complex and regrettable. On 7 October, a series of brutal terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel and its citizens took place, unleashing since then an unstoppable spiral that has included retaliatory military actions and hostage-taking in Israel, the destruction of homes, schools, hospitals and public buildings in Gaza and a high number of civilian casualties, including Palestinian women and children and United Nations personnel. Uruguay condemned the brutal and inhumane terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas on 7 October. We have no doubt that that act against Israel and its population was the trigger for what is happening today in Gaza. Let us be clear: our Government rejects terrorism in all its forms in the strongest terms; and we demand the immediate release of all hostages without conditions.

We are saddened by the plight of all civilians — those in Israel, those in Gaza and Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. They are not the ones who should be paying the high cost of religious extremism and military confrontation, which should not include them. In that regard, we welcome the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2712 (2023) and regret that the draft resolution on a humanitarian ceasefire presented by the United Arab Emirates (S/2023/970) could not be adopted.

In that connection, we value the pause that was negotiated by Qatar, Egypt and the United States in recent weeks, which simultaneously allowed the release of Israeli hostages and access to humanitarian aid for the inhabitants of Gaza. That pause, for which we are most grateful to the countries that promoted it, is a step in the right direction, just as Secretary-General Guterres called for last week. In that context, Uruguay reiterates and joins the request for a humanitarian pause and corridors to ensure the delivery of necessary aid. It is essential that humanitarian access by recognized agencies such as the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross be comprehensive, rapid, safe and unhindered. Hundreds of thousands of people are still waiting for basic supplies such as food and drinking water.

We believe that the General Assembly must support a broad path forward that includes the release of all hostages and security guarantees for humanitarian access for a prolonged period. That is why we believe that the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session (resolution ES-10/22) should cover all aspects of the situation: on the one hand, the need for a cessation of hostilities to prevent further loss of human life and for respect for humanitarian law in order to allow access to supplies to Gaza; and on the other, clearly condemning the Hamas attack and taking into account Israel's security concerns. Given that not all of those aspects were considered in a balanced manner in the resolution, we saw fit to abstain in the voting.

Uruguay defends and affords priority in its foreign policy to the protection of civilians in conflict and will continue to do so. We recall that Uruguay served as a co-penholder on Security Council resolution 2286 (2016), condemning attacks on hospitals and health infrastructure, as well as attacks on medical, health and humanitarian personnel, which constitute violations of international law.

Uruguay once again expresses its concern for, and its solidarity with, the thousands of innocent civilians killed and injured in the conflict, which no longer has any justification. We will find solutions to the painful crisis in international law and international humanitarian law. Both parties must listen carefully to the demands of the international community within this Organization. It is necessary to advance towards a new scenario of dialogue in which peace and a solution based on international law can prevail over the conflict and lead to comprehensive and permanent agreements. It is

urgent, therefore, to promote a return to the negotiating table based on a two-State solution that guarantees Israel secure borders and the Palestinian people the exercise of their rights.

Mr. Almahmoud (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the United Arab Emirates aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (see A/ES-10/PV.46).

I welcome the important resolution that the General Assembly adopted last week (resolution ES-10/22) by an overwhelming majority, calling for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. That decisive step embodies the international community's commitment and determination to respond to the tragic situation faced by the brotherly Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

In fewer than 10 weeks, the Israeli indiscriminate attacks against the Gaza Strip have led to the killing of nearly 19,000 people, most of whom are women and children, while those injured exceeds 50,000, with many others still under the rubble. Those horrifying numbers are not just statistics. They embody the loss of life, dreams and families that were completely wiped out. Wounded children have been left without families, unaccompanied and with no appropriate medical care. The Gaza Strip today is the most dangerous place in the world for children, after 8,000 children were killed. Their neighbourhoods and schools, which constituted their small world, have been reduced to mere piles of rubble. Every passing hour without an immediate ceasefire means that the number of casualties will continue to rise and that one of the worst humanitarian crises in modern history will continue to deteriorate.

Therefore, we reiterate our call for an urgent and immediate ceasefire, for all parties to adhere to international humanitarian law and for releasing the hostages. We emphasize our support for the continued efforts made by the sisterly State of Qatar and the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt to achieve a truce in the Gaza Strip.

The majority of the population of the Gaza Strip — more than 1.9 million people — are displaced within a narrow geographical area where there is no safe haven and that continues to shrink as the pace of Israeli military operations escalates. Furthermore, they face a severe shortage of the most basic necessities for life, such as water, food and medicine, which has led to the spread of hunger and disease. We are facing a tragic

reality that requires urgent action to protect civilians and provide them with the necessary humanitarian assistance, especially fuel, which is essential for the medical sector.

Many current and incoming members of the Security Council were able to see for themselves, during a visit organized by the United Arab Emirates to the Rafah crossing last week, the extent of the suffering to which the Palestinian people are exposed and the huge needs on the ground. They also listened to warnings by United Nations officials about the near-total collapse of the humanitarian system. They also witnessed the great efforts undertaken by Egypt to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza. In the light of that suffocating crisis, we emphasize once again the decisive role that the international community, and specifically the Security Council, must play to ensure the continuous and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid. The United Arab Emirates has therefore presented a draft resolution to the Council to facilitate and increase delivery of assistance to Gaza (S/2023/1029).

In that context, we emphasize that the United Arab Emirates will continue to support the Palestinian people during this difficult time. We recently announced the construction of three water desalination plants in the Rafah area on the Egyptian side with the aim of providing safe drinking water for nearly 300,000 people every day amid the severe water crisis in the Strip. We opened the first of those three plants last week. My country has also established a field hospital in Gaza, where many Emirati doctors and nurses have volunteered to work in order to provide medical care and treatment to wounded and sick Palestinians, including children severely injured as a result of air strikes.

We must not overlook the continuous and rapid deterioration of the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, where the Israeli occupation authorities have tightened their restrictions on the movement and life of the Palestinian population. Large-scale raids and arrest campaigns are being carried out, targeting Palestinian cities, villages and camps, while settler attacks against Palestinians and their property have continued to escalate since 7 October.

In conclusion, we underscore that security and stability in the occupied Palestinian territory and throughout the region will not be achieved by solely reaching a ceasefire, or by imposing new military realities that only increase the suffering of the people

of Gaza. Rather, the root causes of the conflict must be addressed, namely, an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

We must move towards serious negotiations under the auspices of the international community and based on the agreed international terms of reference, with the aim of achieving a two-State solution and establishing an independent and sovereign Palestinian State along the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mrs. Asaju (Nigeria): Nigeria aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Mauritania, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and Zambia, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/ES-10/PV.46).

I would also like to thank the President for convening this emergency special session on the situation in Palestine, in particular in the Gaza Strip. We would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

Nigeria would like to lend its voice to the global call by States and civil society in condemning the present wanton destruction of lives and property in the Gaza Strip, which has taken on a very critical dimension. Nigeria supports and reiterates the call for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce between Israeli forces and Hamas in Gaza. Many lives, including women and children, have been lost since the commencement of the crisis in Israel and Palestine, with many displaced. The daily increase in displaced persons and shortage of humanitarian supplies, owing to impeded access, has had a great impact on the people, has exacerbated the humanitarian catastrophe in the region and has increased civilian casualties.

As a promoter and protector of human rights, Nigeria urges the parties to the conflict to uphold the fundamental values of international humanitarian law, which places priority on ensuring civilian safety and well-being. That should go beyond mere politics. The destruction of lives and property, including of hospitals and religious and cultural sites, is a violation of international law. Nigeria therefore calls for a ceasefire and reiterates its call once again for a quick de-escalation of hostilities by both sides, which should help us in getting to a two-State solution. The seemingly permanent cycle of violence needs to be broken.

In conclusion, as part of the Ministerial Committee established during the Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary

Summit, under the aegis of the OIC, we will continue to interface with global actors to find a lasting peaceful resolution of this decades-long problem in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the principles of international law.

Mr. Segura Aragón (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador appreciates the convening of this important emergency special session on the serious situation in the Middle East, particularly in the Gaza Strip, where the more than two-month conflict has led to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and countless civilian deaths. We express once again our heartfelt sympathy with regard to all the casualties resulting from the escalation of the conflict.

My delegation reiterates its deep concern about the steep escalation of violence in the region and calls for an end to the suffering of families in the region that have suffered atrocities and irreparable human and material damage. According to the most recent report of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on the situation in Palestine, as of 18 December, in the aftermath of 73 days of hostilities, more than 19,400 Palestinians had been killed in Gaza, 70 per cent of them women and children; 1.4 million internally displaced persons were sheltering in 155 UNRWA facilities across all five governorates of the Gaza Strip; since 7 October, 136 UNRWA personnel had been killed; and the list of human and material continues to grow every day.

My delegation voted in favour and co-sponsored resolution ES-10/22, adopted at the reconvening of the tenth emergency special session, as we believe fundamentally embraces the principles and functions conferred upon the General Assembly in the Charter of the United Nations. Similarly, we believe that its text is balanced, with the clear and purely humanitarian purpose of an immediate ceasefire and the demand that the parties fulfil their obligations under international law. We join the call for an immediate ceasefire and urge the international community to use all its influence to prevent further escalation of violence and end the crisis. We strongly support the Secretary-General's call on 6 December (S/2023/962) urging members of the Security Council to prevent an even greater humanitarian catastrophe throughout the Gaza Strip.

We condemn all acts of violence directed against the civilian population and demand the immediate

release of those abducted and their safety, well-being and humane treatment, in accordance with international law and international human rights law. Given the gravity of the situation, my country reiterates its call that, as stipulated under international humanitarian law, humanitarian corridors be provided with full protection; that all civilian and humanitarian facilities be respected and protected, including, hospitals, medical facilities, transport and equipment, schools, places of worship and the facilities of the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations on the ground. We must ensure that civilians are not deprived of goods essential to their survival. We therefore urge for allowing immediate, full, safe, secure and unrestricted humanitarian access to essential supplies and services, such as water, food, medical supplies, fuel and electricity, to ensure their delivery to all civilians.

We reiterate what we have been repeating throughout the years in various forums: a lasting solution to the conflict can be achieved only through peaceful means, the willingness of both parties and a solution based on two-States and on Security Council and the General Assembly resolutions. It is in times of crisis that the importance of dialogue and the use of multilateral bodies that have been created to maintain international peace and security, strengthen the bonds of cooperation among their member States and ensure the well-being of peoples must be taken into account. We urge the parties to demonstrate that they can reach agreements for the common good, achieve peace and stop human suffering. In that regard, we acknowledge the leadership, the efforts and the pivotal role played by the Arab States in bringing about a cessation of hostilities, ensuring the protection of the civilian population and providing humanitarian assistance. As an international community, we must redouble our efforts to promote and expedite a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the conflict. As such, we urgently need collective efforts to launch negotiations on the Middle East peace process.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. In accordance with resolution ES-10/22, of 12 December 2023, the tenth emergency session of the General Assembly is temporarily adjourned.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.