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New York

President: Mr. Vershinin/Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Sahraoui
China	Mr. Yao Jialiang
Ecuador	Mr. Egas Benavides
France	Mrs. Morghad
Guyana	Mrs. Edwards
Japan	Mr. Sorimachi
Malta	Mr. De Bono Sant Cassia
Mozambique	Mr. Bambissa
Republic of Korea	Mr. Jaeseob Kim
Sierra Leone	Ms. Baimarro
Slovenia	Ms. Učakar
Switzerland	Mr. Carpenter
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Coyle
United States of America	Ms. Postel

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting resumed at 3 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Al-Fatlawi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the delegation of the Russian Federation, which assumed the presidency of the Security Council this month, for convening this high-level meeting. On behalf of the Group of Arab States and in my personal capacity, I would like to thank Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs, for presiding over the meeting earlier, which serves to underscore the importance of the Palestinian question to the agenda of the Security Council.

It is my honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Arab Group.

We meet today after nearly nine months of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. We have seen appalling and horrifying incidents that shock humankind. In one Israeli war against Gaza, we have seen how wars and conflicts can lead to stark violations and crimes against humanity. That Israeli aggression against Gaza has recorded the highest level of violations in any conflict in the world and the highest level of killing children, journalists and humanitarian workers, including United Nations staff.

We have seen how Israel has targeted innocent Palestinian civilians, including women and children. It has targeted homes, destroying them even though people were living in them. It has eradicated entire families and targeted hospitals, schools, universities, mosques, churches and United Nations facilities. Israel has also targeted the personnel of humanitarian organizations, medical and paramedical staff, civil defence workers and Palestinian journalists. It has prevented international journalists from entering Gaza to cover the horrors of its war and aggression.

Israel has also obstructed the delivery of water, food and medicine, leading to starvation that has killed dozens of Palestinian children. It has forcibly displaced 1.5 million Palestinians under gunfire and bombardment. It has also targeted them on their way and in their displacement camps and in United Nations shelters, after destroying approximately 85 per cent of their homes.

Israel has also prevented the entry of fuel and the provision of electricity. It has destroyed roads and

closed and controlled vital crossings, making the Gaza Strip uninhabitable and filled with more than 39 million tons of rubble. Tents filled with internally displaced persons are accumulating, as are mass graves, filthy wastewater and the spread of all kinds of diseases, as well as hunger and deprivation. Doctors have told of witnessing unprecedented incidents in every conflict area, of injured and burned people, of amputated limbs that could not be treated, of wounds turned septic due lack of medicines and medical equipment and of deaths that could have been avoided absent the illegal Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip.

Israel has eradicated all means of livelihood, restoration and relief aid from the Gaza Strip, while it continues its aggression against the civilians and the infrastructure. That is evident after nine months of war and the exacerbation of human suffering every day despite the humanitarian efforts made. All of that is caused by the ongoing killing, destruction displacement and siege.

We have seen new evacuation orders by the Israeli occupation forces addressed to the Palestinian civilians remaining in the besieged Gaza Strip. They were ordered to move south under the pretext that it is a safe area. But the truth is that there is no safe area anywhere in Gaza. Israel is driving out Palestinian civilians everywhere they displace to.

The Council has adopted a number of resolutions in that regard, but they were never implemented. We call upon the Council to firmly and immediately implement its resolutions to save humanity and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, along with implementing the decisions taken by the International Court of Justice, which has clearly called for a permanent and immediate ceasefire and the delivery of unhindered humanitarian assistance. Israel must implement Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2720 (2023), and must cooperate fully with all Council mechanisms and stop any forced displacement inside and outside of the Gaza Strip. We call for an investigation of all of those crimes committed by Israel to ensure accountability.

The horrors witnessed in the Gaza Strip must not detract from the atrocities witnessed in the occupied West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. There, Israel continues its raids, detentions, abuses, destruction of houses, settlement building, attacks by extremist settlers against innocent Palestinian civilians and

the continued acts of aggression and provocations in Al-Haram Al-Sharif and other Muslim and Christian holy sites. Israeli attempts to alter the historic status quo in the West Bank continue unabated, as do the defamation campaigns, the intimidation and the false accusations against the Palestinian people and relief organizations such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The international community must condemn all such continued Israeli violations of international law and resolutions of international legitimacy.

Against that backdrop, the Arab Group underscores the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to live in freedom and dignity in their independent State. That right is the key to peace in our region because the Palestinian question is central to the Middle East and the entire world, as we have seen over the past few months.

The Arab Group underlines the importance of implementing resolutions of international legitimacy. The Arab Peace Initiative — the strategic Arab option — represents the best way of protecting the entire region from the cycle of violence. We reiterate that Israel will never enjoy peace and security if the Palestinian people do not have an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In parallel with the genocide that it is committing against the Palestinian people, Israel continues to fuel regional tension through repeated attacks against the countries of the region. In that context, the Arab Group condemns the repeated Israeli aggression against the territories of the Syrian Arab Republic. We call on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and put an end to such aggression and ensure that it will not be repeated. We also underscore that peace in the Middle East requires the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan. All relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981), must be implemented.

The Arab Group is following with deep concern the danger of the war in Gaza spreading to the countries of the region. The Arab Group condemns Israel's attacks on Lebanon, its use of internationally prohibited weapons, particularly white phosphorus, and its attacks on safe villages in southern Lebanon, as well as on Lebanese civilians, the Lebanese Army and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

More than 100 civilians have been martyred, including children, women, aid workers and journalists, and 2,000 more injured. Furthermore, 97,000 civilians have been displaced from their villages. Israel has launched repeated attacks with the aim of starting fires, resulting in the loss of vast areas of forested and agricultural land in southern Lebanon. The Arab Group calls on Israel to cease its daily aggressions against Lebanon and to comply fully with resolution 1701 (2006).

Finally, in that regard, the Group of Arab States once again thanks all countries that have recognized the State of Palestine and those that voted in favour of granting the State of Palestine full membership in the United Nations and of General Assembly resolution ES-10/23, which granted the state of Palestine more rights as an Observer. The Arab Group calls on other countries to take the step of recognizing Palestine's statehood and granting it full membership of the United Nations, as a step towards a just and comprehensive peace, consistent with the international vision of finding a peaceful and comprehensive solution that can bring an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, enabling Palestine to exist as a State on equal footing with all our States and the Palestinian people to be equal to all our peoples.

I would like now to make some brief remarks in my national capacity as the representative of Iraq. I thank the delegation of the Russian Federation, which is presiding over the Security Council this month, for convening today's meeting to discuss the longest-running issue in the history of the United Nations — an issue that the Council and the United Nations as a whole have been unable to resolve at its root after more than 75 years of conflict, bloodshed, violations and plundering of the land. Over those decades, the world has tried to use diplomatic and negotiation tracks, international initiatives, legal mechanisms and Security Council and General Assembly resolutions to end the Israeli occupation and put a stop to its violations and arbitrary practices against the Palestinian people. However, unfortunately, that usurping entity has ignored the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international humanitarian law. It is undeterred, and with no accountability or deterrence, it has flouted the resolutions of international legitimacy and used false pretexts to defend its crimes.

The war that the Israeli occupation forces are waging on the Gaza Strip is far from being one of self-defence, as Israel claims. It has no validity in law and has taken the path of revenge and genocide, as is evident

in the horrifying numbers of Palestinian civilians who are its victims, including children, women, the elderly and — in a dangerous precedent never before witnessed in the history of our Organization — even United Nations staff and their families. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my condolences to all the victims' families. I would also like to stress that we are aware of both the old and new approaches that the occupation forces are pursuing in order to bring about forced displacement, expand the settlements, entrench Israel's occupation of the remaining occupied territory and once again illegally and immorally undermine the right of the oppressed Palestinian people to establish an independent State, as endorsed in the resolutions of international legitimacy adopted according to the will of the international community. Iraq calls on the Security Council to assume its legal and humanitarian responsibility, in line with resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023), 2728 (2024) and 2735 (2024), and to endeavour to achieve the following objectives.

First, in order to save lives, a ceasefire should be established and safe routes opened immediately for the delivery of emergency humanitarian aid to the Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip. Secondly, Israeli occupation forces must withdraw fully from the Gaza Strip in order to allow civilians to return home safely. Thirdly, efforts should begin to rebuild the brutally devastated areas that the occupation forces' savage war machine and its various weapons have destroyed. Fourthly, we should expedite consideration of the fulfilment of the Palestinian people's natural and deserved right to establish their State, recognizing the State of Palestine and granting it full membership in the United Nations.

Like the rest of the world, Iraq has previously warned of the dangers involved in expanding the war and of its repercussions for regional and international peace and security in the form of growing instability and a perpetual state of tension in the region. We call for an end to all of it, and I would now like to take this opportunity to inform the Council of some of the Government of Iraq's recent measures taken during the war waged by the Israeli occupation forces. First, Iraq has received large numbers of wounded Palestinians in its hospitals for treatment, surgical procedures and psychological and rehabilitative care. Secondly, we have provided \$25 million in financial support to UNRWA to enable the Agency to continue its humanitarian work. Thirdly, Iraq has established cooperation between the

Iraqi Red Crescent Society and UNRWA to meet urgent needs. Fourthly, we have opened an air bridge to deliver humanitarian and medical aid. Lastly, we have worked with Egypt and Jordan to send aid through official and informal channels.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the position of the Government and people of the Republic of Iraq in support of a solution to the Palestinian question and of the Palestinian people in their steadfast efforts to achieve self-determination, end the occupation and establish an independent State on the land of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Flashing lights on the collars of the microphones will prompt speakers to bring their statements to a close.

I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate your friendly country, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and to welcome the presence here this morning of His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. I also thank the Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General for his statement.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The circumstances surrounding today's meeting are unprecedented, set as it is against a backdrop of the ongoing Israeli war on the Gaza Strip and in particular because nearly 130,000 civilians have been killed or injured and almost 2 million internally displaced as a result of the indiscriminate shelling of homes, hospitals and schools and a policy of collective punishment and starvation. Qatar has reiterated its condemnation of every form of attack on civilians. We have warned about the widening cycle of violence and expedited diplomatic efforts to reach an immediate and lasting ceasefire, bring about exchanges of hostages and prisoners, protect civilians, deliver aid and pave the way for a serious peace process leading to a just and comprehensive political settlement. Those efforts have

had tangible results in alleviating the suffering of the people of Gaza and of detainees on both sides.

The State of Qatar welcomed the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2735 (2024), which stresses the importance of the ongoing diplomatic efforts of Qatar, Egypt and the United States to reach an agreement on a comprehensive ceasefire. In a joint statement, the three countries called on Hamas and Israel to conclude an agreement that embodies the principles outlined by President Biden in May. Despite the challenges to the negotiation process, which has gone through numerous back-and-forth stages in the process of reaching an agreement, the State of Qatar will not relent in its commitment to joint mediation efforts to arrive at a united vision and bridge the gap between the two parties.

Qatar condemns in the strongest terms the occupation forces' appalling attack on displaced people's tents in the Al-Mawasi area, which martyred and injured hundreds of civilians in a brutal and shocking massacre. That has also coincided with the obstruction of the delivery of life-saving humanitarian aid at a time when according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification the population of the Gaza Strip is on the brink of famine. The escalation constitutes a disregard for international warnings and clear defiance of the International Court of Justice's provisional orders, especially that of 24 May, which called for an immediate halt to the offensive on Rafah, the opening of the Rafah crossing for the passage of aid and the granting of access to commissions of inquiry to investigate allegations of genocide. Facilitating the broad delivery of humanitarian assistance, meeting all basic needs and protecting humanitarian workers are obligations under international humanitarian law and the Council's resolutions. There can be no effective alternative to utilizing all land crossings, as demanded by humanitarian actors.

The State of Qatar supports various humanitarian efforts and participated in the "Call for Action: Urgent Humanitarian Response for Gaza" Conference, held under the presidency of the sisterly Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt and the Secretary-General. The State of Qatar contributed humanitarian assistance, sending thousands of tons of food, medical and relief aid by land and air to Gaza, and evacuating more than 2,000 sick and injured people. Furthermore, we pledged \$50 million as an initial aid package for the displaced. The State of Qatar also increased its contribution to the United Nations Relief

and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East by donating an additional \$25 million.

The State of Qatar rejects the illegal policies and practices of the occupying Power in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as its settlement expansion, land confiscation and violation of the rights of Palestinian civilians. We condemn the crimes perpetrated against them by extremist settlers and occupying forces. We note, in particular, the critical situation of Palestinian prisoners. We also reiterate the need to preserve the historical and legal status of the city of Jerusalem, as well as that of Islamic and Christian holy sites.

At this critical juncture, temporary solutions are not enough. We need a sustainable solution in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative. Irreversible steps must be taken to ensure an implementation of the two-State solution that guarantees the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We stress that the Gaza Strip is an integral part of Palestinian land and reject any attempt to change it — demographically or geographically — pursuant to resolution 2735 (2024).

In that context, we welcome the recognition by a growing number of countries of the State of Palestine. It is high time that it became a full member of the United Nations since it meets the conditions for membership, as confirmed by the recent resolution adopted during the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly (General Assembly resolution ES-10/23). That step will contribute to ensuring the achievement of the two-State solution.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on presiding over today's meeting. I convey the regards of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who would have liked to be with us today, but had a previous commitment to participate in the mid-year coordination meeting of the African Union in Accra.

We meet here again in the context of a war in Gaza that has been raging for 10 months, turning the Gaza Strip into a living display of misery, destruction and loss of hope. We meet again to discuss how to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza and save innocent people, and

how to enforce the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Security Council, the General Assembly, the International Court of Justice and the Human Rights Council in that regard, as Israel continues to flout and disregard them.

The result is that, despite our efforts, the situation in Palestine is worsening, without a glimmer of hope. The illegal war waged by Israel on Gaza has reached unprecedented levels in terms of number of people killed, injured or displaced, not to mention the massive destruction of infrastructure and the risk of famine that has become a reality and threatens hundreds of thousands in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The killing of Palestinians is increasing to levels not seen in two decades, yet Israel continues to adopt unprecedented extremist policies to legitimize settlements, seize Palestinian territories and change the status quo of religious and holy sites in East Jerusalem, especially Al-Aqsa Mosque.

However, the deterioration does not stop there. The region faces a serious risk of sliding into a new regional war as a result of the continuing war and humanitarian tragedy in Gaza, Israeli air attacks on both Syria and Lebanon, continuous Israeli threats of launching a military operation against Lebanon, as well as the irresponsible statements made by some Israeli officials and their ongoing incitement against all countries of the region.

In the context of our analysis of that catastrophic humanitarian situation, I would like to focus on three revealing scenarios.

First, according to the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, at least 10 children lose one or two legs a day in Gaza, about 400 children are currently reported missing, there are 17,000 unaccompanied minors and more than 15,000 children have been killed. Does that not weigh on the human conscience? What bleak future awaits those child victims? What are their chances for a better future, free from extremism, given the collapse of the education system in Gaza and the lack of opportunities for children to continue their education, at least for the foreseeable future?

Secondly, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report indicated that 96 per cent of the population of Gaza faces high levels of food insecurity

that will continue until September 2026, assuming that the situation begins to improve now. The entire Gaza Strip is now in phase 4 of a state of emergency, with phase 5 literally being famine. Is it conceivable that the world could remain silent in the face of those alarming figures? Is it right for the Council to remain silent about that heinous crime?

Thirdly, the Israeli Government is moving to annex thousands of dunums of land in the West Bank — Jordan Valley — and to consider it part of the territories of the State of Israel, for the purpose we all know, namely, to put an end to any hope for an independent and geographically contiguous Palestinian State while the Government pursues its narrow and local political gains.

Those scenes prompt Egypt to wonder what Israel really wants. Does Israel want war or peace? Is it interested in a policy of coexistence and integration with the countries of the region or does it want to continue the policy of war and aggression, the illusion of security through military deterrence, including through killing and starving civilians and children while continuing to plunder land and steal the inalienable rights of others?

Does Israel expect the Arab peoples to continue to silently witness that ongoing massacre and those attacks without doing anything, despite the repercussions on generations of peoples of the region? Is it conceivable to see those appalling figures and then disregard them or for some members of international community to continue to turn a blind eye to such practices and refuse to condemn them or even describe them as what they are — blatant violations of international law and international humanitarian law? How many times have we warned that double standards on this issue would give Israel carte blanche to continue its aggressive policies and practices in the region?

Egypt warns against committing such systematic violations of international law and international humanitarian law and disregarding the United Nations Charter. Egypt also stresses the imperative of applying the principle of accountability for the perpetrators of those violations in that war. We also warn against the ramifications of any further Israeli escalation in the region, which could only serve to plunge the region into an all-out regional war. In that regard, we recall the Secretary-General's statements that the region and the world cannot afford another war in the Middle East.

Egypt reiterates its rejection of the occupying Power's control over the Gaza Strip, including the

Palestinian side of the Rafah crossing, and stresses that Israel's occupation of the Palestinian side of the crossing has blocked the flow of aid.

Egypt calls upon the Security Council to assume its responsibilities and obligate all Members of the United Nations, including Israel, to implement United Nations resolutions and the decisions of the International Court of Justice, to reach an immediate ceasefire, to allow unhindered access of humanitarian assistance and to put an end to forced displacement, whether inside or outside the Gaza Strip, with the aim of liquidating the Palestinian question — if we are to prevent the situation in the Middle East from reaching the point of no return.

Egypt calls upon the Security Council to not allow Israel to normalize its violations, which would result in a more dangerous situation and a wider regional war that would prompt some of the members of the Council to regret the opportunities they had to stop the war. The situation is deteriorating further as a result of Israel's intransigence, and Egypt fears that the worst is yet to come.

Egypt has always opted for peace and continues to do so because it is the best, safest and most sustainable way for all in order to ensure coexistence in the region. We remain committed to the international conventions that we have joined, and we expect the same firm commitment from all other parties to those conventions. For Egypt, honouring that commitment is part of our belief in the culture of peace and in the importance of achieving stability and security in the region. That belief prompts us to address the root causes of the conflicts in the region. Those root causes are, of course, namely, the lack of justice and the failure to restore the rights of the Palestinian people.

Egypt will continue with its efforts to stop the war through its engagement in mediation efforts with Qatar and the United States. We will continue to ensure the flow of humanitarian assistance to our Palestinian brothers in Gaza and to provide support to the Palestinian Authority and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including full membership in the United Nations.

Egypt will contribute positively to any track that could lead to the resumption of the peace process aimed at reaching a solution for the Palestinian question and achieving the independent Palestinian State along the 4 June 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Once again, Egypt reiterates that there is no alternative

but to immediately end this unjust war and to allow unconditional and unhindered humanitarian access. The Security Council should compel all Members of the United Nations without exception, including Israel, to implement its resolutions by any means. Otherwise, the Council will lose its role and credibility before the peoples of the world. We warn that the continued aggression undermines multilateralism, the international system, the principles of international law and international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. I wish you every success in the conduct of the work of the Council during this month.

I would also like to thank Mr. Courtenay Rattray, Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General, for his important briefing, which shed light on the catastrophic circumstances that are the result of the blatant aggression against the Gaza Strip and its population.

Jordan associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Jordan reaffirms its condemnation of the genocide and massacres that the Israeli occupation has continued to perpetrate against the Palestinian people in Gaza since October 2023. To date, approximately 40,000 Palestinians have been killed, mostly women and children, as a result of the aggression, and tens of thousands have been orphaned, displaced or missed under the rubble. An entire generation of the people of Gaza is lost owing to the Israeli war, as the eyes of the entire world have been watching. When to stop that unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in the region?

We stress that the ongoing blatant war and Israel's systemic targeting of safe areas and civilian and United Nations facilities, along with vital infrastructure, while preventing the entry of humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip, not only reflect disregard for the principles and values of the Organization but constitute a blatant challenge to the international community and the Council's resolutions that call for an immediate end to the war and the suffering of millions of Palestinians.

Last week, the occupation forces targeted and bombed camps and tents housing internally displaced people in places designated by Israel as safe in Khan Younis of the southern Gaza Strip. That is additional evidence of the brutality of the Israeli war and of deliberately targeting innocent civilians, killing them mercilessly. That constitutes war crimes and crimes against humanity. Israel must be held responsible for those crimes, which are not subject to a statute of limitations. Israel and its officials must be held legally responsible no matter how long it takes.

In that context, we would like to emphasize that the international community must take appropriate legal individual and collective measures in response to Israel's blatant violations of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians. It has violated all *jus cogens* norms that prevent such war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Israel must be compelled to implement the decisions of the International Court of Justice pertaining to the case presented by South Africa against Israel in accordance with the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, especially in relation to the protection of civilians and ensuring humanitarian access.

We call upon the Council to shoulder its responsibility by immediately ensuring a ceasefire and the implementation of all its relevant resolutions. There must be an end to the gross violations by Israel of international humanitarian law in the absence of accountability and with the existence of impunity, double standards and trampled international law. The Security Council must provide the necessary protection to the Palestinian people and to United Nations facilities, including hospitals, relief workers and others who are making a heroic effort to provide vital services to millions of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, despite the scarcity of material supplies and human resources owing to the measures imposed by Israel and aimed at the starvation and collective punishment of the people of Gaza.

We emphasize the need to bring pressure to bear on Israel to open all crossings to ensure adequate access to humanitarian aid and to meet the humanitarian needs of the people of Gaza in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Israel must not obstruct the entry of that assistance or its distribution, and it must not be conditional on the release of the hostages in submission

to Israeli blackmail, because the people of Gaza have been pushed to the brink of famine.

We note that the results of the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report, which was supported by the United Nations, reflected the blatant impact of the Israeli war against civilians in Gaza. The IPC report noted that 96 per cent of the people of Gaza face acute malnutrition, reaching category 3+. Moreover, almost half a million Palestinians across Gaza are facing catastrophic levels of hunger, category 5. Jordan will continue its efforts aimed at providing assistance through all available means, whether through the Jordanian land crossing or through airdrops.

In cooperation with Egypt and the United Nations, in June Jordan hosted the Gaza Emergency Humanitarian Response Conference, with the participation of 75 countries. The Conference called for the coordination of humanitarian assistance and the provision of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. In that regard, we reiterate the need to coordinate with all international partners to increase the volume of such assistance through all crossings.

We reiterate our call to all countries and donor entities to provide the necessary assistance to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which represents a lifeline for millions of Palestinians who are facing the repercussions of the catastrophic war in Gaza. We commend the new financial contributions provided by Member States during the UNRWA pledging conference that was held recently, and we would like to thank all countries that have endorsed the shared commitment on UNRWA — 122 countries so far. That initiative was launched formally by Jordan, Slovenia and Kuwait last week. It is designed to mobilize the necessary political support for UNRWA so that it can continue to carry out its mandate in all of its working places and to confront Israeli attempts to liquidate the Agency, the issue of refugees and their right to return. In that vein, we condemn the fact that the Israeli occupying army has killed more than 200 UNRWA staff since the launch of the war in Gaza.

Jordan also warns that the situation in the West Bank and occupied Jerusalem is deteriorating owing to the illegitimate Israeli practices, which have led to undermining any chance for Palestinian statehood and peace in the region, including the confiscation of land, the expansion of settlements and allowing terrorist

settlers to kill Palestinians and destroy their properties. We call for abolishing all punitive measures imposed on the Palestinian economy and for providing the necessary support to the Palestinian Government. We stress the need to respect the legal status of Al-Haram Al-Sharif/Al-Aqsa Mosque in its entirety and the custodianship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan over the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

In conclusion, we stress the importance of reaching a comprehensive ceasefire in Gaza. We must ensure that assistance will reach those in need without impediments. We also stress the need to end the Israeli occupation and ensure just, lasting and comprehensive peace to meet the aspirations of the brotherly Palestinian people and recognize their inherent right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State along the lines of 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital and on the basis of a two-State solution.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank His Excellency Sergey Lavrov for presiding over this important discussion. I would also like to thank Mr. Courtenay Rattray for his briefing on behalf of the Secretary-General.

I would like to align myself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Republic of Iraq on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

What Gaza has witnessed over the past 10 months in terms of killing and destruction has exceeded all legal boundaries and is a very dangerous humanitarian crisis. With the continued Israeli bombings, hundreds of thousands of Gazans have been repeatedly forced to flee to areas that were purported to be safe. However, those areas were also bombed, as we have seen recently when Israel targeted the tents of displaced persons in Al-Mawasi in Khan Younis and Al-Abyad Mosque in Al-Shati camp, blatant violations which my country strongly condemns.

Israel's attacks and restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian assistance have led to an almost complete paralysis in the medical system, given the severe shortages in fuel and medical supplies. Most of Gaza's population are experiencing acute hunger, and there are increasing warnings of a looming famine.

The psychological harm caused by the war is no less severe than its material damages. The horrific scenes of the war will remain in the minds of the peoples of the region and the world for decades to come.

At the same time, the situation in the West Bank is escalating owing to the violence being committed against the Palestinians, both by the Israeli forces and the settlers. We are also seeing an acceleration in the legalization of settlement outposts and the confiscation of vast areas of the West Bank, including in the Jordan Valley, in flagrant violation of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions. My country condemns in the strongest terms those practices which undermine the prospects of achieving a two-State solution.

We therefore stress that the international community, and in particular the Security Council, must assume its responsibilities in advancing the implementation of the following four points.

First, it must increase the pressure it brings to bear towards reaching an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire in Gaza, ensuring urgent and safe access to humanitarian aid at scale and reopening the Rafah crossing and all other crossings. In that regard, we commend the mediation efforts led by Egypt, Qatar and the United States aimed at reaching a comprehensive agreement to avoid further escalation in the region. We call upon the parties to prioritize the interests of civilians and reach an urgent ceasefire agreement and to release the hostages and detainees. They must also implement relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2720 (2023) and 2735 (2024).

Secondly, settlement activities throughout the Palestinian territory must cease. All decisions related to settlement outposts and land confiscation must be revoked.

Thirdly, with regard to developments along the Blue Line, diplomatic channels must be activated and positive messages must be issued to spare the peoples of Lebanon and the region the consequences of a broader war.

Fourthly, there must be a relaunching of a peace process based on a two-State solution and relevant United Nations resolutions within a clear time frame, leading to the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State, on the basis of 1967

borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel in peace, security and prosperity.

In conclusion, we affirm our commitment to continue providing all forms of support to the brotherly Palestinian people, including the establishment of the field hospital in Gaza and the floating hospital in Al-Arish, and in addition to the installation of water desalination plants and providing financial support through United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

We stress the need to put an end to the war and the bloodshed and to take serious steps towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, for holding this meeting which was presided over by His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

We are meeting in this Chamber again under very difficult and critical circumstances in the Middle East. What we have seen over the past nine months in the Gaza Strip, together with the catastrophic, inhuman suffering of the Palestinian population and the targeting civilians, has pushed the conflict to a more serious and risky level, which is jeopardizing regional stability. Moreover, the Israeli military actions in the Gaza Strip have revealed stark violations that contradict international law and international humanitarian law, with the number of the victims reaching unprecedented levels. At the same time, health, education, religious and other civilian facilities have been targeted, which is another violation of international law and shared human values.

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates that there must be an immediate and lasting ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. That is the only way to put an end to that tragedy and protect civilians under international law and international humanitarian law and to allow unhindered and adequate humanitarian assistance to be delivered to the population in Gaza. Furthermore, all detainees and prisoners must be released and a political solution for the Palestinian question must be reached, with a view to achieving a just and comprehensive peace while

ensuring security and a decent life for all the peoples in the region.

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its rejection and condemnation of all violations under Israel's policies of collective punishment and forced displacement and its attempts to impose a new status quo on the ground. We underscore that the Gaza Strip is an integral part of the Palestinian territories and the unified Palestinian State. The Kingdom of Morocco calls upon the international community, in particular the Security Council, to ensure safe, lasting and unhindered access to adequate humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian brothers in the Gaza Strip, in accordance with resolutions 2712 (2023) and 2720 (2023). The Kingdom of Morocco, under the instruction of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chair of the Al-Quds Committee, has made a significant contribution to that end.

More recently, Morocco launched a humanitarian operation ordered by King Mohammed by sending medical supplies to the Palestinian population in Gaza. The supplies consisted of 40 tons of medical materials, including various types of equipment for treating burns, as well as orthopaedic surgical instruments and other necessary medicaments. The assistance was supplied through the land route used during the holy month of Ramadan and further attests to King Mohammed's concern about the Palestinian question.

Morocco reiterates its rejection of any measures designed to change the historical and legal status of the city of Jerusalem and its holy sites, including Al-Aqsa Mosque. We reject any restrictions on people who wish to worship there, and all forms of provocation and escalation. Jerusalem should remain a city that fosters the peaceful coexistence of the followers of the three monotheistic religions and a place for mutual respect and dialogue, as noted in the Al-Quds appeal signed by King Mohammed and His Holiness Pope Francis in Rabat on 30 March 2019.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its steadfast, historical and established position on the just Palestinian question and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, based on international legitimacy and the concept of a two-State solution approved by the international community that would lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State along the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to Mr. Abdelaziz.

Mr. Abdelaziz (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, who could not attend today's important meeting owing to prior commitments.

"I thank His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, for convening today's high-level meeting on the situation in the Middle East and thank him for personally presiding over the Security Council meeting this morning.

"The situation in the Arab region and in relation to the Palestinian question has reached an alarming stage as a result of Israel's escalation over the past nine months of its brutal military aggression against the occupied Palestinian territory in Gaza and the West Bank and its flagrant violations of all the rules of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The League of Arab States expresses its appreciation for the Secretary-General's briefing delivered by Mr. Rattray today and would like to stress the following points.

"The League of Arab States has taken effective steps to support the implementation of clear Arab positions and resolutions adopted in Arab meetings at various levels. They include in particular the positions adopted at the Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit held in Riyadh on 11 November 2023 and at the most recent Arab summit, held in Manama on 16 May, together with the steps taken by the eight-member joint Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee, the six-member Ministerial Committee led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Arab Ministerial Committee to Support the State of Palestine led by the Kingdom of Bahrain. They are all working diligently with my full support and that of the League as a whole to control the situation and prevent it from deteriorating into an all-out confrontation in the Middle East.

"The General Assembly and the Security Council have adopted a number of resolutions calling for an immediate ceasefire by Israel, including the Council's recently adopted resolution 2735 (2024), based on the pioneering initiative

of United States President Biden on 30 May. The resolution explicitly requires Israel's acceptance of that initiative, with an immediate ceasefire as one of its main requirements. The current situation has reinforced doubts in the minds of Arab peoples about the effectiveness of the Security Council's resolutions on international peace and security, and calls are growing for the Council to immediately adopt a resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Such a resolution would compel Israel to implement the relevant Council resolutions and the provisional orders of the International Court of Justice in order to bring about an immediate ceasefire and stop the genocide and forced displacement of the Palestinian people. It would also prevent Israel from imposing a new demographic and political reality on the ground in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Jerusalem and from taking any measures that could impede the implementation of a two-State solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

"The League of Arab States supports the intensive mediation efforts that are being made by Qatar, Egypt and the United States at every level. However, they have still been unable to exert the political pressure needed to compel Israel to stop using force to overcome the Palestinians' legitimate resistance to the occupation and to abandon its notion of changing the situation on the ground through its aggressive settlement policies. Their efforts have also been unable to compel Israel to stop tying the successful mediation of a settlement to individual Israeli electoral and legal domestic interests that have nothing to do with regional peace and security.

"There is no truth to Israel's claims that the United Nations and its States Members and organs have become a forum for antisemitism based on the legitimate positions that they have taken on this issue. The League of Arab States believes that there is nothing antisemitic in calling for an end to the occupation, the implementation of a two-State solution and the Arab Peace Initiative and the establishment of a Palestinian State. It is not antisemitic to call for a ceasefire and the protection of the Palestinian people from violence by settlers and occupation forces. It is not antisemitic to call for an end to the genocide and forced displacement of the Palestinian people. It is not antisemitic for a

majority of Member States to recognize the State of Palestine, just as they have recognized the State of Israel. It is not antisemitic for a majority of Member States to vote in favour of Palestine's full and immediate membership of the United Nations.

"It is not antisemitic for a majority of countries to continue providing vital political and financial support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and its pivotal role in meeting the needs of the Palestinian people. It is not antisemitic to call for opening border crossings, ensuring the unobstructed delivery of humanitarian assistance and refraining from using starvation as a weapon of war in Gaza. It is not antisemitic to list Israel among the countries that have perpetrated the highest number ever of violations against Palestinian children. It is not antisemitic for the International Court of Justice to adopt provisional orders calling for an end to the genocide of the Palestinian people.

"All of those and other positions taken by the United Nations, its Member States and its principal organs are based on the growing international opposition to the threats and violations by the extremist and racist Israeli Government aimed at the decisions of international legitimacy. They are based on opposition to the occupation and to racism and on a deeply held belief in human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly the right to self-determination.

"The Israeli Government must therefore choose one of two paths. It can abide by the decisions of international legitimacy and join the community of civilized nations and States that comply with the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international law — including international humanitarian law and international human rights law — and engage in constructive and productive negotiations on a basis of equality, rather than a false sense of superiority and strength, in order to achieve the peace and security that we all desire. Alternatively, it can continue to behave as a rogue State in the face of increasingly strong international pressure and bear the growing international consequences of all its violations and the isolation that will be imposed on its people and Government. It will undoubtedly feel that isolation and its increasingly negative consequences.

"The League of Arab States strongly supports the repeated demands that President Mahmoud Abbas of the State of Palestine made to the Security Council and the General Assembly to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East, with the aim of establishing the political horizon needed to reach the desired settlement through direct negotiations between the two parties. At the same time, the League underscores that recent developments on the ground have compounded the danger that the current situation poses to regional and international peace and security, especially with Israel's increasing aggressions and threats against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and Syria and its continued illegal occupation of their lands, in violation of international resolutions that demand Israel's immediate withdrawal from the occupied territories. Israel persistently attempts to manufacture crises with other parties in the region in order to broaden the conflict and hold those parties responsible — all in an effort to divert attention from its flagrant violations against the Palestinians living under occupation.

"In conclusion, there can be no doubt that if we are to establish a political horizon for the settlement, what is needed first of all is to immediately establish a ceasefire, open all crossings, enable the full flow of humanitarian aid, stop the settlers' vicious attacks and secure a massive international commitment to rebuilding Gaza, whose hospitals, schools, homes, electricity, water and sewage plants — along with every aspect of civilized life — have been destroyed by Israel. All of that requires that the Security Council play an effective and united role, free of all the existing geopolitical tensions. The League of Arab States looks forward to continuing to cooperate with the Council in order to establish that political horizon, convene an international conference, implement a two-State solution and establish an independent Palestinian State along the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital."

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Türkiye.

Mr. Yıldız (Türkiye): The situation in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem continues to provoke great concern and calls for greater attention and engagement on the part of the international community.

In Gaza, an unprecedented humanitarian tragedy is unfolding. Over the past 10 months Gaza has become uninhabitable, with nearly 40,000 Palestinians killed and approximately 90,000 injured. More than 1.7 million Palestinians have been displaced, and the civilian infrastructure has been severely damaged. The Rafah border crossing has remained closed in the wake of Israel's invasion since the beginning of May, severing a crucial lifeline for humanitarian aid. The people's access to such basic necessities as food, water, electricity and medical equipment is minimal to none. Famine has set in. Refugee camps and schools are under ferocious attack, and humanitarian workers and aid convoys are being targeted. Dozens of civilians were recently massacred in Al-Mawasi, which Israel had designated as a safe zone in Khan Younis, highlighting the ongoing atrocities. The discovery of mass graves attests to that. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the backbone of humanitarian operations in Gaza, is dealing significant physical and political challenges. The situation in the West Bank is more fragile than ever as a result of illegal settlements, demolitions and settler violence.

The regional spillover of the conflict has been a major concern for the international community since day one. We are deeply alarmed by its spread beyond its current borders, particularly along the Blue Line. We have to prevent any drift towards total chaos at all costs. We call on all the parties to show maximum restraint in order to prevent a catastrophic outcome for the region and the wider world.

We cannot stand idly by while the rules-based international order reaches a breaking point. In the face of these brutal atrocities and brazen violations of international law, we call on the Security Council, the main organ of the United Nations responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, to fulfil its obligation to end this conflict. The International Court of Justice has reiterated its call on Israel to uphold its legal obligations under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Court's provisional measures demand an immediate end to civilian casualties and unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza. Resolution 2735 (2024) demands an immediate ceasefire and unimpeded humanitarian assistance, which we view as an important step towards halting the massacres in Gaza. It is imperative that Israel announce its

commitment to implementing a permanent ceasefire and withdrawing all of its military forces from Gaza. We expect the Security Council to take decisive action to ensure Israel's compliance with international law and the relevant Council resolutions.

This conflict has proved time and again that there can be no lasting peace in the region without a just, fair solution. We must work for a political solution based on a vision of two States. The longer that vision is deferred, the further the region will be pushed into vicious cycles of violence and destruction. Recognizing Palestine as a sovereign State is an essential initial step. In that context, we welcome the recent decisions by various nations to recognize the State of Palestine and note the overwhelming support in the General Assembly for granting Palestine extended rights to participate in the work of the United Nations. We particularly urge all the members of the Security Council to recognize the State of Palestine in order to demonstrate their commitment to a two-State solution.

Türkiye reiterates its call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. Without a ceasefire, a catastrophe of unprecedented magnitude is inevitable. We should continue to support all efforts to achieve a political solution based on the vision of two States coexisting within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent, sovereign and geographically contiguous State of Palestine.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Nasir (Indonesia): As we meet today, violence, death and destruction continue to face the Palestinians in their own homeland. Whether we are talking about Gaza, the West Bank or East Jerusalem, nowhere is safe for the Palestinians. For nearly 10 months, the people of Gaza have faced unimaginable horrors. Schools, shelters and designated humanitarian zones have been decimated. In the West Bank and East Jerusalem, settlers' brutal actions are escalating, with almost 1,000 attacks since 7 October that have resulted in more than 500 Palestinian deaths. How much more of that barbarism will it take for us to say enough is enough? How much more will it take for humanity to prevail? The Palestinians need action now — action here, by the Security Council, and action on the ground. In that context, I would like to make three points.

First, the Council must compel the parties to respect international law. To date, we have four

Security Council resolutions (resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023), 2728 (2024) and 2735 (2024)), two resolutions, ES-10/21 and ES-10/22, adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session, and provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice. While they are binding, they have all fallen on deaf ears. The ceasefire that the international community has called for is nowhere in sight. We urge the Council to scale up its action to ensure that all the parties implement those mandates and take further action to stop the continuing violations of international law and international humanitarian law in Gaza and the West Bank.

Secondly, border access and the scaling up of humanitarian aid is urgently needed. We are deeply alarmed by the escalating threat of famine and the extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza. With 88 per cent of educational facilities in Gaza destroyed, 620,000 school-age Palestinians are out of school — an entire generation of traumatized children deprived of education, falling prey to the vicious cycle of violence. We call for immediate and unrestricted humanitarian aid to flow through Rafah and for aid distribution to be scaled up throughout Gaza. In that context, we must also reaffirm our steadfast support for the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to carry out its mandate. Allowing efforts to undermine UNRWA is the same as pulling the trigger ourselves and delivering a death sentence to the Palestinians.

Thirdly, we need to urgently pursue a political solution. A just, lasting and comprehensive political horizon in Palestine based on a two-State solution is the only way forward. We must seize the growing support for a two-State solution by taking concrete action.

Indonesia supports an international peace conference in order to seek a political solution. We also call on those that support the two-State solution to walk the talk by recognizing the State of Palestine and supporting its membership within the United Nations. Palestine must no longer be denied its right to have an equal standing. A fair and just peace outcome can be better achieved on the basis of an equal footing.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Lagdameo (Philippines): The Philippines reaffirms its unwavering support for the full and immediate implementation of resolution 2735 (2024)

and all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, on establishing a comprehensive ceasefire in Gaza. We urge all concerned parties to implement those resolutions without delay or conditions.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire. The Philippines joins the international community in calling for an immediate ceasefire, a cessation of hostilities and the unconditional release of all hostages. We are gravely concerned about the escalating violence and its devastating impact on civilians, particularly women, children and the elderly.

We reaffirm our strong support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and commend the extraordinary efforts of UNRWA and other United Nations agencies in delivering urgent humanitarian assistance and essential supplies to the Gaza Strip under extremely challenging conditions. It is imperative that all parties respect international humanitarian law, protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and ensure that the essential needs of trapped civilians and refugees are met.

The Philippines reiterates its strong support for a two-State solution, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Both Israelis and Palestinians deserve to live in a peace in which their rights, aspirations and security are recognized and upheld.

Diplomacy remains the cornerstone of achieving lasting peace in the Middle East. We recognize that the conflict can be resolved only through diplomatic engagement, dialogue and comprehensive negotiations rooted in international law. We urge all parties to work towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict, with a view to realizing the two-State solution.

The Philippines supports the initiatives of Saudi Arabia, the European Union and the League of Arab States, in cooperation with Egypt and Jordan, to revive the Middle East peace process and resolve the dispute between Israel and its neighbours in accordance with international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Philippines stands ready to contribute to efforts that foster peace, security and stability in the Middle East. We call on the international community to continue its support for diplomatic and humanitarian

efforts and to work together towards a just and lasting peace for all.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Van Schalkwyk (South Africa): We thank the Russian Federation for convening this open debate on the situation in the Middle East and for providing all United Nations Member States an opportunity to address the Council on developments in the region.

South Africa firmly believes that the question of peace in the Middle East will not be resolved unless the question of Palestine is resolved. The failure of the Security Council to find a sustainable resolution to the plight of the people of Palestine and secure their peace and freedom is a profound stain on its mandate to maintain international peace and security.

On 10 June 2024, the Security Council adopted resolution 2735 (2024), which welcomed the ceasefire proposal that emerged following diplomatic efforts by Egypt, Qatar and the United States. The resolution proposed a comprehensive three-phase ceasefire deal to end the war in Gaza and it urged both Israel and Hamas to implement it fully and without delay or conditions.

A month later, we are witnessing the blatant disregard for international human rights law and international humanitarian law by parties to the conflict in Gaza. We are appalled by the continuing violence against Palestinians and the shocking targeted attacks on schools and medical facilities sheltering Palestinians. This has resulted in an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, exacerbated by further denials of safe access and delivery of desperately needed aid.

We witness the continued attacks on humanitarian aid workers and health facilities. Palestinians have endured decades of discrimination, which has escalated in the current war against them and is resulting in genocide. We therefore pose the question — what makes this acceptable? Will Member States continue to be spectators of such violations and the denial of Palestinians' inalienable right to freedom and self-determination?

Israel continues to defy the orders of the International Court of Justice. In its third such pronouncement, on 24 May, the Court ordered Israel to immediately halt its military offensive and any other action in the Rafah governorate, which could inflict on the Palestinian group in Gaza, conditions of life that

could bring about its physical destruction, in whole or in part.

South Africa has provided the Council with a public dossier of evidence relating to the State of Israel's intent and incitement to commit genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza (see S/2024/419). We continue to appeal to the international community to exert its influence over parties to the conflict in order to compel them to accept and abide by the decisions made by the Security Council and the International Court of Justice.

South Africa is also deeply concerned about the further escalation of tensions in the Middle East between Lebanon and Israel, which hold devastating implications if a region-wide conflict ensues. All parties must exercise the utmost restraint and avoid any acts that would escalate tensions in a particularly fragile region.

South Africa has continuously stressed that — irrespective of whether States believe that their use of force is lawful — it is never wise to resort to war as, inevitably, it is ordinary people who bear the brunt of conflict. The efforts of the international community and the Security Council, in particular, must therefore pursue sustainable and just peace for all people in the region.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): The situation in the Middle East continues to deteriorate, with little prospect for positive change. Liechtenstein is distressed by the catastrophic situation in the Gaza Strip, as well as by signs of increasing escalation and instability in the wider region. We are deeply concerned about the massive displacement of the civilian population, the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, the large-scale loss of civilian life — in particular, the shocking number of children killed — and the intolerable suffering that continues to be visited on the people of Gaza.

We again emphasize the indispensable imperative to protect civilian life at all times. Any military operations must be strictly carried out in line with the principles of necessity, precaution and proportionality. The use of weapons to achieve military ends must not be indiscriminate, and the recent targeting of facilities protected under international law, notably those of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine

Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), is inexcusable. UNRWA, whose work we continue to support politically and financially, provides a vital lifeline for protecting Palestinian civilians. We would like to remind everyone of resolution 2735 (2024), adopted by the Security Council last month, which is legally binding and yet is still awaiting implementation. We urge the parties to accept and fulfil their responsibilities to protect civilians and end the war in Gaza. Similarly, the Council must be prepared to take the action required to ensure the implementation of its own decisions.

We remain a strong supporter of international law in all situations, including as it relates to the situation in Gaza, where the protection of civilians remains our highest priority. All actors must observe international humanitarian law and there must be accountability for violations of it. We have taken note of the decision of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to file applications for arrest warrants against Hamas leaders as well as the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Israel. On this day, World Day for International Justice, we want to express our strong support for the Court. We fully respect its independence and procedures and consider judicial and prosecutorial independence cornerstones of its effectiveness. We will continue to speak up against political attacks on the Court, as we did recently in a joint statement with 92 other States. We also strongly support the International Court of Justice, including its role in the settlement of disputes under the Genocide Convention. We emphasize the importance of compliance with the provisional measures ordered by the Court, which are legally binding, and we look forward to the advisory opinion to be released by the Court in the coming days.

Settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and the West Bank — notably the tentative legalization announced last month of five settlements — are in violation of international humanitarian law and the relevant Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016). Such activities run the risk of further undermining the basis for any peaceful resolution of the conflict. Statements to the effect that settlements would be legalized in response to other States' recognition of Palestinian statehood constitute clear evidence of an intent to violate Council resolutions and undermine the possibility of a two-State solution, agreed to by this Organization many decades ago.

Going forward, Liechtenstein is deeply concerned about the risk of further escalation in the region. We call on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint and support serious, committed, legitimate mediation efforts, underpinned by the strong support of the international community.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Mythen (Ireland): Nine months after 7 October 2023, the spiral of violence appears ever more precipitous. The tensions on the border of Israel and Lebanon risk creating disastrous consequences for millions of innocent civilians across the region. In Gaza, despite ceasefire proposals on the table that have been endorsed by the Security Council, we are instead seeing a surge in Israeli military operations. Air strikes continue to rain down on schools, health-care facilities and locations where civilians shelter in Gaza. More than half of the Gaza facilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East have now been damaged or destroyed in the bombardment. Attacking humanitarian facilities and locations where civilians are sheltering is abhorrent, and the continued cynical use of civilian infrastructure for military purposes by Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza is utterly unacceptable.

Over the past nine months, we have seen the Security Council call for a ceasefire, the release of hostages and the provision of humanitarian aid, while the International Court of Justice has issued a number of legally binding orders aimed at protecting innocent civilians from further horror. However, there has been no meaningful cessation of the conflict, no further deal to release hostages and no substantive improvement in the dire humanitarian situation inside Gaza. Instead, we are seeing total destruction, with more than 38,000 killed and an entire population — more than 2.2 million people — enduring daily hunger and malnutrition. Perhaps those who have rejected peace have become desensitized to the images of death, deprivation and destruction on our television screens and mobile phones, or perhaps they decided not to look in the first place.

In the West Bank, away from the media headlines, ever more intense settler violence and the displacement of Palestinian communities are deepening the cycle

of humiliation and conflict. The Israeli Government, in defiance of efforts towards a lasting peace and in clear contravention of international law, has sought to strengthen the illegal settlement activity. Military raids, arbitrary detentions, restrictions on movement, the degrading of the Palestinian Authority and the withholding of its revenues are all deliberate attempts to undermine the basis for peaceful co-existence. The recent Israeli moves to reshape administrative and legal control of parts of the West Bank go even further, hastening the illegal annexation of Palestinian territory. Such blatant breaches of international law, coupled with consistent disregard of Security Council resolutions and the orders of the International Court of Justice, should be of deep concern to us all, not only for obvious reasons of principle but also for the corrosive effect they are having on multilateralism more broadly. If we are to preserve a multilateral system that can provide for peace and shared prosperity, we must pursue accountability for the breaches of international law on both sides that have characterized the conflict in Palestine.

It is Ireland's profound respect for international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations that underpin our firm belief in a two-State solution as the only just, sustainable and comprehensive peace settlement for Israel and Palestine. Despite belligerent rhetoric and actions that cast doubt on the sincerity of attempts to engage in any meaningful peace efforts, we remain resolutely focused on supporting progress towards that end. It is incumbent on those of us who seek to defend multilateralism and international law to be unequivocal now in affirming the equal right to self-determination, peace, security and dignity of Israelis and Palestinians. There can be no lasting peace in the Middle East without a political solution grounded in those principles, and there can be no political solution without political leadership. Without that, generations of Palestinians, Israelis and millions more in the wider region face only an unending cycle of death and misery.

In the short term, faced with humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and the potential for an even more devastating war across the border between Lebanon and Israel, it is imperative that the international community muster all the levers at its disposal to avert further disaster. Therefore, we must see a ceasefire, we must see the release of hostages, we must see access for humanitarian aid at scale and we must see de-escalation.

None of us can be in any doubt about what needs to be done.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. França Danese (Brazil): I thank the ministers, other high-level officials and the briefers for their important contributions to this debate.

The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza is unspeakable and must end. For the past nine months, we have come here and tried to put into words our deep concerns about the situation there of civilians, mostly children and women, and we have condemned the acts that have resulted in such immeasurable suffering. Brazil reiterates its calls for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of hostages and the unimpeded provision of humanitarian aid at scale. But we have to do more. It is not just military action that is destroying lives in the Gaza Strip at an incredible pace. It is also our inaction and our failure — the failure to enforce accountability for non-compliance, to stop the flow of weapons used to commit internationally wrongful and illegal acts, to attach consequences to breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights law and, finally, to realize the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood.

The situation in Gaza cannot be dissociated from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. Over the years, our leniency regarding practices that are tantamount to annexation by the occupying Power has contributed to the latest human carnage. The violence now risks expanding along the Blue Line and beyond, without regard for Security Council resolutions.

The provisional measures of the International Court of Justice have denoted that in Gaza the military action under way could plausibly bring about the total or partial destruction of Palestinians lives. With knowledge of that unspeakable reality, we should feel compelled to exercise our duty not only to express our condemnation, but also to take effective action, including by abstaining from providing military support in a situation where there is reasonable ground to believe that war crimes and crimes against humanity are also being committed.

We shall not condone or be indifferent to the holding of hostages, nor to attacks against humanitarian actors and civilians, especially if they are simply waiting in

line for aid. All such crimes must be investigated and punished. And we shall enable humanitarian assistance to sustainably reach Palestinians to address the adverse conditions of life they are facing. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East has a critical and irreplaceable role in that regard. We must support it in all its multidimensional actions, especially in providing education to Palestinian children, who are the main victims of a conflict that has been destroying their past, present and future.

The wider Israeli-Palestinian conflict will cease only with an end to the occupation. We cannot envisage any comprehensive and sustainable peace in the whole Middle East while the occupation persists. The admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations will bring us closer to that goal, by making it clear that Israel cannot determine the fate of Palestine's sovereignty and statehood and that United Nations resolutions on the peaceful settlement of the conflict do matter and must be implemented. That this message has not been clearly conveyed so far constitutes the backdrop against which five illegal settlements in the West Bank were recently approved under Israeli law, in alleged retaliation against the decision by five countries to recognize Palestine. That is a complete reversal of principles. We commend those five countries for exercising their right to recognize Palestine and encourage others to do the same. Brazil has recognized the State of Palestine, similar to more than 140 countries, since 2010. A move in that direction by the few countries that have yet to do so would be especially important now, when a number of actions by the Israeli Government threaten the viability of the two-State solution.

As Members of the United Nations, it is incumbent on us all to uphold the Organization's promise to end all cases of colonial domination and alien subjugation. In the Middle East, that can and should be done through actions in support of the rightful existence of an independent and viable State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel, in peace and security, within the 1967 borders, which include the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Vidal Mercado (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Russian Federation for convening this quarterly open debate and for the stewardship of the

presidency during this month. We take note of the statement delivered by the Chef de Cabinet on behalf of the Secretary-General this morning.

Owing to the time limit, we will deliver only a portion of our full statement.

Chile promotes the two-State solution and the right of Israel and Palestine to live in harmony, within secure and internationally recognized borders and with full respect for the human rights of all their inhabitants.

Chile reaffirms its support for the State of Palestine to become a full Member of the United Nations. We urgently call for full and prompt compliance with the relevant resolutions that support the right of the Palestinian people to establish a sovereign State, such as General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947 and Security Council resolution 242 (1967), and related resolutions, such as resolution 2334 (2016), which reaffirms, that the establishment of settlements by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and is a violation of international law.

We therefore condemn Israel's policy of expansion, which led to the approval earlier this month of the largest land confiscation in the occupied West Bank since the 1993 Oslo Accords. Indeed, in February and March, two other land appropriations had already taken place. That does not strengthen the position of the parties, but rather fuels tensions and is a step in the wrong direction in finding a negotiated two-State solution.

Chile has unequivocally condemned the actions of Hamas, as well as all terrorist acts, acts of violence and hostilities against the civilian population. We therefore call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages still held by Hamas and for their welfare to be ensured and their treatment to be in accordance with international law.

Undoubtedly, the terrorist acts perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and the indiscriminate response of the State of Israel against the civilian population living in the Gaza Strip, which has also affected the West Bank, violate the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law.

Chile insists on an immediate and permanent ceasefire, a greater flow of humanitarian assistance to Gaza, guarantees for full, immediate, safe, unimpeded and sustained access to humanitarian assistance, that

is, the removal of all obstacles to that assistance and the facilitating of the use of all available land routes to enter the Gaza Strip.

It is distressing to know that the spiral of violence continues to cost the lives of thousands of Palestinian civilians; food insecurity affects 80 per cent of the population in the Gaza Strip; and the civilian infrastructure there, including schools, hospitals and shelters, continues to be targeted for destruction. We would like to recall that in recent open debates in the Council, such as on the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2024/384), held on 26 June (see S/PV.9669); on the protection of civilians in armed conflict for the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1265 (1999), held on 21 May (see S/PV.9632); and on “Women and peace and security: Preventing conflict-related sexual violence through demilitarization and gender-responsive arms control”, held on 23 April (see S/PV.9614), there was a focus on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the devastating consequences the war is having on current and future generations.

We are especially concerned about the innocent women and children who have suffered from the catastrophe. We stress that violence cannot be resolved with more violence. We express our deepest sympathy to the injured.

We call for the full implementation of the four resolutions adopted by the Council — resolutions 2712 (2023) and 2720 (2023) adopted last year and resolutions 2728 (2024) and 2735 (2024) adopted this year. We recall that all Security Council resolutions are binding and must be complied with and upheld.

We also would like to highlight the press statement that the Council issued on 10 May on the mass graves in Gaza (SC/15692).

We reiterate our full support for the dedicated and courageous work being carried out by the United Nations and its agencies, in particular the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), on the ground. We referred to that last Friday during the UNRWA pledging conference.

There is no doubt that the protection of human life must be our top priority, and so far, the Security Council has not been able to manage that.

We are alarmed by the repercussions and ramifications of the conflict in the rest of the region.

We encourage all parties involved, as well as the international community, to continue working to end the war. In that regard, we thank Egypt, Jordan and Secretary-General Guterres for organizing the “Call for Action” conference in Amman in June.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Vasconcelos y Cruz (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since last October, we have participated in these regular discussions in the hope that the voice of the international community, which has been overwhelmingly in favour of a truce in Gaza, will be heeded.

As the months go by, the number of civilian casualties has continued to rise. As several delegations have recalled, more than 38,000 Palestinians have been killed, and more than 87,000 have been injured.

The massive destruction of civilian infrastructure is a daily reality which the inhabitants of Gaza are facing helplessly.

Every day Israel’s military operation further limits essential services and goods and access to food, medicine and drinking water, among other needs. Generations of Palestinian children and young people are being deeply affected by the trauma of living through an armed conflict of this magnitude. The fact is that the violations of international humanitarian law have not ceased despite repeated calls from the vast majority of countries, including Mexico, and despite the orders of the International Court of Justice. The resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly have been powerless to stop the barbarism of the war. Mexico regrets the Israeli authorities’ decision to enact a law legalizing Israeli settlements built without official authorization in the West Bank. We reiterate that all Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory are illegal under international humanitarian law, and the expansion of such settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is a major obstacle to a relaunch of the peace process. It also increases tensions and puts the viability of a two-State solution at risk. To make matters worse, the measures exacerbate humanitarian needs by affecting the Palestinian population’s livelihoods, food security and access to essential services. We call on Israel to reverse those decisions, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly resolution 2334 (2016).

We also deplore the letter sent by the Israel Land Authority on 28 May requesting that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) vacate the building housing the Agency's Jerusalem office, claiming that it lacks the appropriate legal permit. We once again recall Israel's obligation to ensure the inviolability of UNRWA facilities and personnel. Further hindering the operation of its office compromises the livelihoods of Palestine refugees who depend on the services provided by the Agency.

As we have said numerous times, Mexico strongly condemns indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population in any circumstances, as well as against medical and humanitarian personnel. Such acts contravene the principles of the Organization and may constitute war crimes under international humanitarian law. Moreover, and in view of the alleged commission of crimes that fall under the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, Mexico decided to make a statement to the Court regarding the *South Africa v. Israel* case of the application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip. We will continue to call for a definitive cessation of hostilities throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, along with the unconditional release of all Israeli hostages held by Hamas. We commend the diplomatic efforts being made by Egypt, the United States and Qatar, as well as the recent adoption of resolution 2735 (2024) in support of the Gaza ceasefire plan proposed by President Biden. We are confident that the ongoing negotiations can lead to lasting commitments.

I would like to reiterate that Mexico firmly believes that a comprehensive and definitive solution to the conflict can only be reached on the basis of a two-State solution that addresses Israel's legitimate security concerns and enables the consolidation of a politically and economically viable Palestinian State, living side by side within secure and internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Aldahhak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I deliver this statement on behalf of Mr. Faisal Mekdad, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic. I would also like to convey

to you, Mr. President, Mr. Mekdad's congratulations on the Russian Federation's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and our confidence in its prominent and important role in upholding the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

"The Israeli war of extermination against Gaza has gone on for 10 months, amid the massive destruction and incalculable massacres perpetrated by the occupying authorities. More than 40,000 Palestinian civilians have been martyred and more than 100,000 injured, most of them women and children. The region has been brought to what the Secretary-General has referred to as the edge of the abyss, owing to the Israeli entity's deliberate, massive escalation of its brutal crimes and recurring hysterical attacks on my country, Syria, and on our brother nation of Lebanon. We have to ask ourselves what could warrant action on the part of the Security Council more than the genocide and atrocities that we are seeing Israel commit against the Palestinian people. Why has the collective security system established by the Charter failed to compel the occupying authorities to immediately cease their aggressive policies and daily massacres? Why have certain Western countries been silent about the daily war crimes and crimes against humanity that Israel has been committing before the eyes of the entire world, while in other contexts those same countries have adopted many resolutions, held numerous meetings and established various unjustified mechanisms on unfounded claims and pretexts?

"The crimes of the Israeli entity did not begin on 7 October 2023, because they are at the core of its aggressive nature, racist tendencies and expansionist settlement aspirations. They are merely the latest in a long series of massacres and acts of aggression and terrorism that are well documented in the annals of the United Nations and the memory of our peoples. The Israeli occupiers have been committing such crimes for decades in order to entrench Israel's presence in the occupied Arab lands, kill and displace their inhabitants and build more settlements on them, thereby undermining any chance of establishing a Palestinian State. The occupation authorities approving the construction of 5,300 new settlement units in the West Bank a few days ago reiterated that, and to that end, they

also approved the confiscation of the largest area of Palestinian land in more than 30 years.

“Syria stresses its condemnation of Israeli crimes and calls for those crimes to cease and their perpetrators to be held accountable. We also reiterate our full support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to end the occupation and exercise their established and inalienable rights, including their right to establish an independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital, and to achieve full membership in the United Nations.

“Syria rejects all attempts to undermine the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and its important role in providing support to the Palestinians in their homeland and in host countries, including my country Syria.

“The Israeli occupation entity would not have dared to commit all those flagrant violations of international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law without the direct involvement of the United States in that aggression and the unlimited political, military, financial and media support provided to Israel by the United States Administration and a number of its allies. The United States prevented the Security Council from shouldering its responsibility to maintain regional peace and security, opened its weapons depots and used its veto rights five times within a few months in order to empower the Israeli entity to continue committing its crimes.

“Moreover, the United States Administration granted itself, without any right to do so, the authority to decide which resolutions of the Security Council are binding, according to its whims and interests. That was evident when it swiftly denied — a few hours after its adoption — the binding nature of resolution 2728 (2024), which called for a ceasefire. As for resolution 2735 (2024), submitted by the United States, it was nothing but illusions and never sought to protect the Palestinian people or enforce the principle of the responsibility to protect, which has been used to invade countries, destabilize them and plunder their wealth. Instead, the resolution was used to ensure domestic electoral gains and to gain more time so as to enable Israel to kill more Palestinians and liquidate the Palestinian question.

“The Israeli aggression against Gaza has laid bare all the slogans and pretexts used by certain Western countries to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. It has exposed their lies and hypocrisy, their lack of human values and their blatant bias towards occupation at the expense of international law and the United Nations Charter.

“The war criminals of the Israeli entity were not satisfied with the blood of tens of thousands of Palestinian people from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Instead, they continued their repeated attacks on Syrian territory, the latest of which was the vicious air aggression that targeted a residential building in the city of Damascus and its surroundings in the early morning of Sunday, 14 July. That attack was preceded by another attack on the surroundings of the city of Baniyas. Those Israeli acts of aggression threaten to widen the scope of war in various parts of the region and the world if Israel is not curbed and held accountable for its crimes and aggression.

“Syria has warned of the repercussions of such continued attacks. Time and again we have called on the United Nations and the Security Council to shoulder their responsibilities to put an end to such aggression and to hold Israel accountable, but the United States Administration has prevented the Council from playing a concrete role in that regard and has provided immunity to Israel and its criminals. That runs counter to its commitments as a permanent member of the Council. Syria reaffirms its legitimate right to defend its sovereignty, security and stability and to free our occupied land by all means available under international law.

“Syria calls for an end to the Israeli attacks on fraternal Lebanon and the safe villages in southern Lebanon. Those attacks have led to the martyrdom of a number of civilians, the destruction of towns, the displacement of their inhabitants and the destruction of agricultural land due to the use of white phosphorus by the occupation authorities, which is internationally banned.

“Last month, the Syrian people, including in the occupied Syrian Golan, commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of raising the flag of the Syrian Arab Republic over the city of Qunaytirah after its liberation from Israeli occupation. On that occasion, the Syrian Arab Republic reiterated our

unrelenting determination to raise our flag over our entire national territories after we liberate them from the scourges of occupation and terrorism.

“Syria underscores that the occupied Golan remains an integral part of our Arab and Syrian territories. The United Nations and the Security Council must break the current state of silence and paralysis and compel Israel to stop its attempts to alter the cultural identity, demographic nature, urban character, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan, which is an occupied Syrian land and an essential part of the territories of the Syrian Arab Republic. We also call for the implementation of the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy and the Security Council, foremost of which are resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and 497 (1981), in order to put an end to the Israeli occupation of the occupied Arab territories.

“In conclusion, Syria stresses the important role of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization missions. There must be no prejudice against them, and they must not be diverted from their primary mandates, which will end only when Israel no longer occupies the Arab territories.”

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): We commend the Russian presidency for convening this timely debate on the Middle East.

The cycle of tensions in the Middle East, especially the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, demands urgent attention. It has the potential of destabilizing the entire region and beyond.

Indiscriminate warfare and disregard for United Nations resolutions undermine the United Nations and other institutions responsible for upholding international law. This alarming trend, where might makes right, threatens to crush humankind's hope for a stable future.

Kazakhstan, for its part, continues to demand an immediate stop to the brutal violence in Gaza. We are firmly convinced that constructive dialogue is the only acceptable approach to resolving deep-rooted differences. To that end, we applaud the multilateral mediation efforts, which include a ceasefire, the release

of hostages, the provision of humanitarian assistance and the subsequent reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, with international support.

According to international humanitarian aid groups, there is still an unfolding catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. People are facing shortages of food, access to water and medical assistance. Every passing day marks a new violation of international law and humanitarian principles, with more and more innocent children, women and elderly persons facing famine and death. As we heard today in the Chamber, this unprecedented situation calls for a unified and immediate response from the entire global community in order to stop the suffering of the people and restore peace and stability in the region.

As a gesture of support, we have donated \$1 million to aid the Palestinian people through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). We have also delivered humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. In that regard, Kazakhstan backs growing demands to guarantee sufficient funding for UNRWA as the sole lifeline for civilians in Gaza.

Kazakhstan firmly stands alongside the international community in calling for an urgent diplomatic solution to the conflict. We believe that the resolution of the Middle East crisis lies in the implementation of the two-State solution, as outlined in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

For that reason, the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, hailed the adoption of the May 2024 General Assembly resolution ES-10/23, on recognizing the right of Palestine to full United Nations membership. We firmly believe that this resolution, along with the recognition of the State of Palestine, will mark a significant stride towards a just settlement of the Palestinian issue. Kazakhstan reaffirms its unwavering support for the establishment of the State of Palestine, with its capital in East Jerusalem, on the basis of the two-State solution. Kazakhstan stands for peace, security, progress and prosperity — long-cherished goals for both peoples.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. Fepuleai (New Zealand): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's debate, and Chef de Cabinet Rattray for his briefing.

New Zealand welcomed the Council's adoption last month of resolution 2735 (2024). It is disappointing, though, that we have yet to see a ceasefire deal formally agreed on and implemented. We urge both parties to make genuine efforts to reach a ceasefire, which would facilitate a surge of desperately needed humanitarian assistance and the release of all hostages by Hamas. We condemn any moves to prolong the conflict and the human suffering it has unleashed. New Zealand also supports the full implementation of resolution 2720 (2023). We urge the parties to cooperate with the Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza to ensure the full implementation of her mandate. It is important work that will be needed well into the future.

As we call for an end to the catastrophic suffering in Gaza, we are also greatly concerned about the deteriorating situation in the West Bank. We call on Israel to uphold its commitments under the Oslo Accords. The continued expansion of illegal settlement projects poses significant risks to the stability of the West Bank and ultimately to the security of Israel. Israeli settlements in the occupied territory are a violation of international law and a serious obstacle to achieving a just and lasting peace. In the long term, only a political solution, where two States are able to live side by side in peace and security, with dignity and without fear, will end the cycle of violence. We must not lose sight of that objective. We urge the Security Council to work to protect the two-State solution envisioned and endorsed in many of its resolutions.

We are gravely concerned about the escalating rhetoric and hostilities between Israel and Hizbullah, which threaten to spark yet another war in the region. We urge the relevant parties, particularly Israel and Hizbullah, to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis along the Blue Line consistent with resolution 1701 (2006). The parties must recommit to and implement that resolution. We recognize the stabilizing role played by United Nations peacekeeping missions, including the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, in mitigating the risk of escalation in the region. Their good offices must be part of diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions. It will be critical to ensure that all parties refrain from taking further action to escalate the crisis. The region cannot afford another destructive war.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. García Toma (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Peru reiterates its deep concern about the marked deterioration of the fragile humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, which has resulted in the deaths of 38,295 Palestinians so far, most of them women and children, and 88,241 wounded, according to figures published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The inhuman suffering of an estimated 1.9 million displaced people in the midst of impending famine and the obstruction of humanitarian aid are deeply regrettable. The desolation and pain of the innocent pierces the souls of those who are suffering and those who live in hope. Their suffering must come to an end.

More than nine months have passed since the Hamas terrorist attacks of 7 October 2023, which caused the death of approximately 1,200 Israelis and which Peru strongly condemns. In recent weeks, we have seen an increase in attacks on refugee centres in Gaza, including the deplorable bombing of a United Nations school in the Nuseirat refugee camp, an area designated by the Israeli army as a safe zone for civilians, an attack that Peru has also condemned.

We have reiterated our demand for an immediate and definitive ceasefire, the immediate release of all hostages and the unimpeded entry of humanitarian aid, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice, in order to end the suffering of a vulnerable, displaced civilian population that lacks the basic conditions for survival. In that regard, Peru has from the outset joined the call for the parties to implement fully, without delay or conditions of any kind, the ceasefire proposal contained in resolution 2735 (2024), adopted on 10 June, which is binding in nature. As a matter of urgency, all necessary measures must be taken to reverse the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and ensure full respect for international humanitarian law. In that context, it is essential that the humanitarian aid work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East continue, especially in the current circumstances, as was recently expressed by more than 118 States.

Committed to the quest for peace and consistent with its principled position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Government of Peru reiterates its support for initiatives aimed at finding a long-term political solution based on the existence of two States, Palestine

and Israel, living peacefully side by side within recognized and secure borders, in accordance with international law and United Nations resolutions. We reaffirm that international humanitarian law must be complied with in all circumstances, and that reducing the risk of a regional escalation that threatens international peace and security is also a priority.

Finally, Peru reiterates its support for the work of Secretary-General António Guterres and the United Nations agencies, especially in their humanitarian efforts. We also support the efforts of all international actors seeking a lasting, peaceful solution to the conflict, which is taking more lives and destroying the livelihoods of millions with each passing day, as well as their prospects for a better future. The lack of a definitive decision on the solution to this serious humanitarian problem calls into question whether the principles, values and objectives of our Organization are being fully applied.

Finally, we would like to note that it must be remembered that humiliating the weak does not bring strength or power. It only makes the lives of those suffering more miserable. We cannot remain aloof as hope and faith in genuinely human coexistence seemingly crumble.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): We thank the Russian presidency for convening today's important debate.

We are meeting in the shadow of the gravest violations since the Second World War of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and virtually every tenet of international law and international humanitarian law. Israel's ongoing, nine-month genocidal military aggression has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians, injured more than 88,000, a disproportionate number of them women and children, and displaced the entire 2.3 million population of Gaza. Israel has also killed more than 200 humanitarian workers, including United Nations staff. Israel has employed starvation as a tool of warfare, impeded the delivery of humanitarian supplies and life-saving assistance and targeted and destroyed civilian infrastructure and humanitarian shelters. It has rendered deconfliction mechanisms ineffective and denied humanitarian workers essential communications equipment. The International Court of Justice has termed the brutal and indiscriminate

suffering imposed by Israel on an entire population as plausible genocide.

A month has passed since the adoption of resolution 2735 (2024), yet there is no ceasefire, no protection mechanism for civilians and no respite for the innocent people of Palestine. It is imperative for the Security Council and the entire membership of the United Nations to consider imposing measures to reverse that wanton rejection of peace by Israel.

Pakistan proposes the following steps to effectively address the situation.

First, the Council must implement its resolutions and impose an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire without further delay.

Secondly, the provision of sustainable humanitarian assistance to the beleaguered Palestinians in Gaza must be ensured. There is an urgent need to increase our support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Thirdly, the deployment of an impartial international force for the protection of Palestinian civilians in Gaza and the West Bank must be considered.

Fourthly, the immediate withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from Gaza must be ensured, in accordance with resolution 2735 (2024).

Fifthly, the Security Council must hold Israel accountable for its breaches of international law and its resolutions. We also call for an embargo on all military supplies and sales to Israel.

Pakistan supports the international consensus on the two-State solution and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, as that is the only viable path to durable peace in the Middle East. We strongly oppose any demographic or territorial change in Gaza. Pakistan supports the call for an international peace conference to work out a road map for implementing the two-State solution. Apart from the permanent members of the Security Council, that process should include the participation of key Arab and Organization of Islamic Cooperation countries.

Lastly, it is also time to approve the immediate admission of the State of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): At the outset, I thank your delegation, Mr. President, for convening this important high-level meeting. I also thank the Chef de Cabinet for presenting the statement of the Secretary-General earlier today.

It has been nine months since the start of the Israel-Hamas conflict and the continuing humanitarian crisis is deeply concerning. India was among the countries that strongly and unequivocally condemned the terror attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023. We have also condemned the loss of civilian lives in the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict. We have called for restraint and de-escalation and emphasized the peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy. We have also urged the parties to adhere to international law and international humanitarian law under all circumstances.

We reiterate the call for an immediate, full and complete ceasefire; safe, timely and sustained humanitarian assistance; and unrestricted access to relief and essential humanitarian services in the Gaza Strip. In addition, we also call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. To that end, we appreciate the role played by countries in the region, particularly Qatar and Egypt.

Our leadership has continued to engage with the leadership of both Israel and Palestine. We have consistently reiterated our position in all the relevant multilateral forums.

India stands for peace and stability in the region. It has been our long-standing position that we support a two-State solution that entails the establishment of a sovereign, viable and independent State of Palestine within recognized and mutually agreed borders, living side by side with Israel in peace, with due regard for the security needs of Israel.

India was represented at the senior level at the international high-level conference on the urgent humanitarian response for Gaza, held in Jordan last month.

India has always supported the strong role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in human development and humanitarian services. Our development assistance to Palestine in various forms over the years amounts to close to \$120 million,

including \$35 million as a contribution to UNRWA. India has been providing an annual contribution of \$5 million since 2018 to UNRWA. We have already announced the disbursement of \$2.5 million, the first tranche of our annual contribution to UNRWA, which was transferred earlier this week, on 15 July.

In conclusion, India stands ready to continue its engagement with the region, with an abiding faith in realizing the vision of sustained peace and stability in West Asia.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Kridelka (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would like to underscore the following points in my national capacity.

Since the start of this conflict, Belgium has called on all parties to respect international law. More than a month ago, we welcomed the adoption of resolution 2735 (2024), supporting the efforts undertaken by Egypt, Qatar and the United States to reach a comprehensive ceasefire agreement — an agreement that finally defined the parameters for an immediate, full and complete ceasefire, the release of hostages and the safe and effective distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale throughout the Gaza Strip — all prerequisites for a permanent cessation of hostilities. That agreement, despite the efforts undertaken, has still not been implemented, while the conflict is threatening to spread to southern Lebanon, where as Council members know, tensions are high.

Belgium is also concerned about the situation in the West Bank, where the settlement policy continues to be actively pursued by the Israeli Government.

I would like to reiterate today our profound conviction, enshrined in resolution 2735 (2024), that the only way out of this conflict is a two-State solution, with two democratic States, living side by side in peace, within secure and recognized borders. That is the best way to reconcile Israel's security with the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

That solution is increasingly threatened by the actions of extremists and terrorist groups, such as Hamas, which pose a threat to the security of Israel and the region. We strongly condemn the continued holding

of hostages by those terrorist groups, and we call for their release.

Belgium strongly denounces the settler violence and settlement expansion in the West Bank. Those practices run counter to the two-State solution and international law. I recall that, in resolution 2334 (2016), the Security Council reaffirmed that:

“the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace” (*para. 1*).

The Council must act decisively before it is too late. We must all ensure that resolution 2334 (2016) is implemented.

In the same vein, the unilateral actions that weaken the Palestinian Authority must also cease. The withheld clearance revenues must be released. The correspondent services between Israeli and Palestinian banks must remain in place.

In all wars, children are always the primary victims. The attacks of 7 October 2023 and the deadly fighting in Gaza will leave a traumatic mark on a whole generation of Israelis and Palestinians. That is why, together with Jordan and the European Union, Belgium has launched a Call to Action for Palestinian Children in the West Bank and Gaza. That appeal, which is in the spirit of resolution 2712 (2023), has already been endorsed by more than 50 States.

I urge my colleagues to join that appeal and support the five demands it contains: an immediate ceasefire; respect for international law; an end to the grave violations committed against children, including the release of detained children and those held hostage; safe and unhindered humanitarian access; and support for a strengthened and coordinated United Nations humanitarian response to meet the needs of Palestinian children. Palestinian children are the adults of tomorrow who one day will have to rebuild peace. We cannot abandon them. We must not turn our backs on them. Let us help them. Let us protect them.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Abd Karim (Malaysia): We thank you, Madam President, for convening this debate, and the Chef de Cabinet for delivering the briefing of the Secretary-General.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Israel's brutal aggression against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, including the massacre at the Al-Mawasi refugee camp — an area designated as a safe zone by Israel itself — is yet another flagrant violation of the principles of humanity and international law. Malaysia condemns those acts of terror against innocent civilians.

The situation in the West Bank is equally of grave concern. Violence by Israeli illegal settlers has rapidly increased. Thousands of Palestinians are being arbitrarily detained, with no avenue for legal recourse. We find it regrettable that Israel has denied the International Committee of the Red Cross access to Palestinian detainees. Clear violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including war crimes and other crimes under international law, are being committed by Israel. There seems to be no end to the collective punishment being inflicted upon Palestinians.

Israel's war in Gaza severely violates the legal obligations of distinction, proportionality and adequate precaution. Palestinians have been deliberately denied humanitarian aid and supplies, including the basic necessities for survival. Hospitals and civilian infrastructure have been destroyed. Humanitarian envoys and those who have been tirelessly aiding victims are also not spared Israel's brutality. The humanitarian situation is indeed distressing.

We again call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, which would facilitate a surge of desperately needed humanitarian assistance. In that context, the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is indispensable and irreplaceable. Malaysia reaffirms its unwavering support for UNRWA and calls upon others to continue and scale up their contributions. For our part, we have made additional financial contributions to help sustain the Agency's operations, amounting to \$5.2 million. Malaysia's commitment is further reflected in the statement of Shared commitments on UNRWA led by Jordan, Kuwait and Slovenia.

The war in Gaza was preceded by decades of violence, retribution, dispossession, unlawful occupation and the denial of the Palestinians' right to self-determination. Entrenched impunity has emboldened Israel's inhumane and illegal actions in the occupied Palestinian territory, and the occupying Power continues to defy international law and order.

The Security Council's role remains particularly important, now more than ever. Inaction has severely eroded trust and confidence in the Council's mandate. Malaysia therefore reiterates its call for the Council to exercise its responsibility mandated by the Charter of the United Nations to end the killings of Palestinians. We call upon the Council to compel Israel to abide by the relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 2735 (2024), and the rulings of the International Court of Justice.

We urge all States to act in accordance with their international obligations under the Geneva Conventions, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and international human rights treaties and to take all measures to pressure Israel to stop its genocide in the Gaza Strip. Those measures include adhering to the arms embargo requiring the cessation of the sale, transfer and diversion of arms, munitions and other military equipment to Israel.

Israel must be held accountable for the immense violations inflicted upon the Palestinians, including through a reparative approach to the rebuilding of Gaza.

Malaysia stands in unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people. The grave injustices forced upon them have persisted for far too long. The United Nations has, on a number of occasions, proven itself capable of ending atrocities against humankind, through collective and concerted efforts. We must do the same for Palestine. We must work swiftly towards realizing an independent and sovereign Palestinian State.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Maldives.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): I thank Russia, President of the Council for the month of July, for convening this quarterly open debate.

For the past 10 months, the entire Middle East has been on the edge. Yet the Security Council's actions have been largely limited to debates and ineffective resolutions. More than 1.9 million Palestinian civilians are currently displaced because of Israel's

brutal invasion. Palestinian children, women and men have been exposed to horrors on a scale that is unprecedented. They are forced to endure a widespread cycle of brutality and inhumane treatment. Ending the genocide in Gaza would significantly defuse tensions across the entire Middle East.

The world has been asking why the Security Council has been unable to take more decisive action and stop the war. Since 15 November 2023, the Council has adopted four resolutions on Gaza. The resolutions demand that humanitarian assistance and access be allowed. During the debate in April (see S/PV.9608), Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized the urgent need for humanitarian aid to avert famine and prevent further deaths in Gaza. The Maldives welcomes the establishment of a framework to expedite and accelerate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Gaza. We would also welcome a mechanism for the monitoring and verification of humanitarian assistance as required by resolution 2720 (2023). We urge the Council to exercise its mandate to ensure the effective implementation of those measures. We urge all member States to uphold their humanitarian obligations and demonstrate the political will to resolve the crisis.

As history has witnessed, time and time again, appeasement emboldens the aggressor, and delayed action encourages further atrocities. The Maldives condemns the repeated expansion of illegal Israeli colonial settlements and the settler violence carried out in the occupied West Bank. Israel cannot be allowed to continue with impunity. Israel's illegal activities and apartheid policies must be stopped immediately. Israel must be held accountable for its crimes and must pay reparations for the purposes of Palestinian relief, aid and reconstruction.

The Maldives asserts that a just and long-lasting peace in the Middle East can be achieved only with the establishment of an independent, sovereign State of Palestine, based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to Mr. Koopmans.

Mr. Koopmans: The Council's resolutions 2735 (2024), 2720 (2023) and 2712 (2023) must be implemented without delay or conditions, as must the binding orders of the International Court of Justice. The number of innocents killed is unconscionable.

The fear, the abandonment and the hopelessness are unconscionable.

There must be an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, an immediate release of all the hostages and an immediate, substantial increase in the flow of humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza. How can anyone condition the effective delivery of assistance to hungry people, or medical support to the wounded and the pregnant, on the outcome of a political negotiation? How can anyone hold innocent civilians hostage for nine months in a war zone? Both parties have a non-negotiable obligation to protect civilians. Current realities are an affront to humanity and international law.

The United Nations and all humanitarian actors deserve our praise for their courageous work, delivering life-saving help in extremely dire and dangerous conditions. All parties must take every precaution to avoid harm to humanitarian workers and facilities. Aid workers must be enabled to operate effectively. The services that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East provides in Gaza and across the region are essential. The European Union (EU) obviously condemns any attempts to label a United Nations agency a terrorist organization.

We should all condemn Israel's decisions to further expand and strengthen illegal settlements across the occupied West Bank. Those are serious violations of international law and are also harmful to Israel's own security interests. We must all condemn terrorism in Israel and in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, by all perpetrators, regardless of where they come from, who they are, what their ethnicity is, what passport they hold or what their status is. We must condemn the policies that further erode the status quo of the holy sites and the religious equilibrium in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

The EU supports the Palestinian Authority as it undertakes the necessary reforms, which should help it to return to Gaza. There is no alternative to the Palestinian Authority, and Israel must stop weakening it.

We all see the grave danger of further regional escalation, notably between Israel and Hizbullah, and that danger includes the forced displacement of civilians on both sides. A regional war would be a catastrophe for all. Resolution 1701 (2006) must be respected in all of its aspects by all parties. In order to help, the EU will strengthen the Lebanese Armed Forces and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

While ending the current crisis must be our top priority, we must, at the same time, work towards sustainable peace, in accordance with Security Council resolutions. Nobody who rejects the two-State solution has offered any credible alternative, and we must face the fact that there is none.

The EU is working with its partners on the preparation and implementation of the two-State solution. And I would like to recall the Peace Day Effort, which we launched here at Headquarters last year together with Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Arab League. And today, in the depths of war, we must also address the urgent realities of those suffering right now. Therefore, any initiative must address the humanitarian situation, strengthen the Palestinian Authority, prepare for the post-war situation in Gaza and, at the same time, adopt an action plan to support the implementation of the two-State solution.

For if we do not have a plan, everything is urgent. And if we do not have a plan, there is always a reason to wait. Therefore, we need to act on our top priorities right now and to adopt an action plan to address the root of the problem. The EU is ready to work on that plan with all its global partners because there can be no just, secure or genuine peace without a sovereign Palestinian State or without a safe State of Israel, both integrated in the region and the world.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nicaragua.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): We once again thank the Russian Federation for convening this important ministerial debate.

Nicaragua associates itself with the statements to be delivered by the representative of Uganda, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the representative of Senegal, on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

For more than 75 years, the world has borne witness to the persecution and genocide of the Palestinian people. We have watched Israel continue to violate the Charter of the United Nations, international law, international humanitarian law and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

That catastrophe and flagrant repudiation of life are unprecedented. More than 80,000 Palestinians have been injured, and more than 40,000 Palestinians have been murdered in Gaza, a figure that does not include the dead still under the rubble. The number of victims — children, women, the elderly and the ailing — continues to rise with each passing day.

The Security Council has been incapable of fulfilling its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. None of the resolutions on this conflict has been implemented, and the most recent resolution (resolution 2735 (2024)), which included a phased ceasefire, has been a total failure, as Gaza continues to be attacked and assassinations continue to increase, both in Gaza and in the West Bank, with more settlements and appropriation of Palestinian land and with thousands upon thousands of Palestinians being detained and abducted by Israeli forces.

The Government and the people of Nicaragua reiterate their strongest denunciation and energetic condemnation of the atrocities committed against the Palestinian people in Gaza, the West Bank and throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. That inhumane Israeli military offensive is repudiated by all the peoples of the world, who have raised their voices and continue to take to the streets to demand an end to this barbarism, to this unscrupulous genocide and to the imminent attempt to annihilate the Palestinian people. Nevertheless, the United States and European countries continue to provide weapons and economic and political support in order to enable those attacks against the Palestinian people to continue.

The Security Council cannot defer its unfulfilled historical responsibility any longer; it must accept the application of the State of Palestine for full membership in the United Nations. The United States cannot continue to obstruct international law and peace. Palestine must be on equal footing with the other 193 Member States. Recognition of the State of Palestine is a contribution to peace; it is the first step to a permanent political solution, and it must be done in order to end the genocide of the Palestinian people.

Every day, many more States recognize the State of Palestine. In our region of Latin America and the Caribbean, 32 of 33 States have recognized Palestine. There are now 149 States that have recognized Palestine, including some European countries that have recently done so.

It is important to clarify that the narrative of supporting the two-State solution, even with the best of intentions, runs counter to political reality if only one of the States is recognized and the other State is ignored. Such a stance is not impartial and favours only the State that has been recognized. In order to be consistent, those who claim to accept the two-State solution must also recognize both States, if there is to be a genuine political solution and a lasting peace in the Middle East. Recognizing only one State does not contribute to peace and amounts to a continued denial of the existence and establishment of the State of Palestine.

The peoples of the world call for an immediate ceasefire, no more war, no more suffering, an end to the genocide of the Palestinian people and a free, sovereign Palestine in its own State, with East Jerusalem as its capital — two States living in peace and security along the pre-1967 borders. Palestine's heroic struggle for freedom, justice and self-determination will prevail. It is a just cause that is supported by all the peoples of the world who stand for the right to life and peace and for the full realization of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Mr. Hoang Nguyen Nguyen (Viet Nam): I wish to thank you, Madam President, and the Russian presidency for convening this important open debate. I also appreciate the Secretary-General's informative briefing delivered by his Chef de Cabinet.

Viet Nam aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

More than nine months into the Gaza conflict, there remains no sign of de-escalation or of an end to human suffering. Peace seems as elusive as ever. Persistent violence has taken a devastating toll on the civilian population, especially women and children. The unprecedented humanitarian crisis just continues to deteriorate.

As Gaza becomes one of the deadliest and most destructive battlegrounds in recent history, there are fears that an escalation into regional war is imminent. The risks of direct clashes between the region's major military Powers and of spillover of confrontations into neighbouring countries and territories have intensified,

as have threats to maritime security in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Concerns about increased tensions are exacerbated by the recent intensification of settlement activities in the West Bank.

Viet Nam renews its call for an immediate and permanent cessation of hostilities in Gaza and for the unconditional release of all hostages. We urge all parties to exercise the utmost restraint, engage in dialogue and abide by international law, the Charter of the United Nations and all relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2735 (2024).

I reiterate Viet Nam's strongest condemnation of all indiscriminate attacks targeting civilians and critical civilian infrastructure. We firmly reject all acts that violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any State. We also call for more effective measures to ensure the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Gazan population and increased support to enable the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to continue carrying out its central role in that regard.

Viet Nam supports all diplomatic efforts aimed at securing a meaningful and enforceable ceasefire in Gaza, which is essential to ending civilian casualties and suffering. Ultimately, a durable, fair and peaceful resolution to the conflict in Gaza and the broader Middle East peace process must be based on the two-State solution, in line with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

As the Council holds regular debates on the situation in the Middle East and the Palestinian question, we should not regard the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Gaza as a routine issue. Rather than adopting a business-as-usual approach, we must continue to treat it as a matter of the utmost urgency and priority. We call on all Council members to work together in good faith and unity to put an end to the conflict, thus fulfilling its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bolivia.

Mr. Pary Rodríguez (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Russian presidency for convening this open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. I also thank the Secretary-General's Chef

de Cabinet for updating important information on the situation in Gaza.

The genocide in Gaza has surpassed all predictions of its brutal consequences and has demonstrated the complete dehumanization of certain societies, which have already lost the possibility of even having compassion for the lives of others.

The known data reports that, since 7 October 2023, more than 38,000 Palestinians have been unceremoniously killed, with thousands upon thousands injured and more than half a million displaced. Is it possible to be crueller? How many more deaths have to be added to this list for Israel to stop attacking innocent girls, boys, women, men and the elderly?

A few hours ago, in this very Chamber, we heard the briefing delivered on behalf of the Secretary-General, which shows clearly that the situation in Gaza is absolutely unsustainable, with limited access to basic resources such as water, food and medical care. In addition, the constant attacks on facilities belonging to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other United Nations humanitarian agencies, as well as other institutions, are preventing the necessary aid from being delivered to those who need it now.

Bolivia once again reiterates its strong condemnation of Israel's collective punishment of Palestine. They are now using famine and the spread of disease as new weapons. And the people of Gaza are dying — not only from Israel's weapons and bombs, but also from hunger, dehydration and lack of basic human necessities.

In the face of this unprecedented humanitarian situation, we highlight the mobilization of several brotherly countries to offer some relief to Gazans in their daily desperation. To that end, Bolivia also contributed to this collective effort by delivering 90 tons of humanitarian aid in May.

The international community is failing, and it is failing the Palestinians. It is not possible that the brutality and whim of a group of people in one country — in this case Israel — should override the interests of peace in the international system. We cannot continue to watch the continued genocide of the Palestinian people on television and networks. We need more effective and concrete actions from the Security Council in order to once and for all stop the death of

more civilians, whose only dream is to return to their homes, enjoy freedom and live in peace.

Israel and its allies should no longer even be sitting at this table — the table of peace, freedom and democracy. We cannot continue to use doublespeak to justify the unjustifiable.

Finally, Bolivia reiterates its firm commitment to the Palestinian cause. We will always stand for justice, life and the self-determination of peoples. The Palestinian people can rest assured that freedom will come sooner rather than later and the people will decide their own destiny. Palestine is closer than ever to achieving sovereignty and independence as a State, along the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Reyes Hernández (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honour to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

It has been over nine months since the latest and most regrettable spiral of violence, death and destruction that has struck the State of Palestine. According to official figures, it has claimed the life of more than 38,000 innocent civilians, primarily women and children. Moreover, those figures could represent only a fraction of the real number, according to the findings of a recently published study that puts the death toll at more than 186,000.

We therefore would like to begin by reiterating our firm commitment to the just cause of Palestine and renewing our unwavering solidarity with its heroic people, whom we join in their struggle to achieve their inalienable rights, freedom and justice. We also convey our heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of the fatal victims of the most recent massacre committed by the occupying Power against the Palestinian people, which claimed the lives of more than 100 innocent civilians in the strikes against the Al-Mawasi refugee camp, near Khan Younis, and the Nuseirat refugee camp.

We therefore underscore the urgent need of redoubling international efforts in order to effectively advance the much-needed accountability process

for the commission of atrocity crimes by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people. All relevant mechanisms of international justice are expected to play a responsible role in that process so as to put an end to the prevailing cycle of impunity, which has only emboldened Israel, the occupying Power, to perpetuate this protracted tragedy over time, as well as to continue its criminal policies and practices against the Palestinian people, who have endured them for over seven decades. Millions of Palestinian civilians and refugees living under occupation continue to endure such policies and practices, most acutely experienced now by those who are suffering in the Gaza Strip.

Similarly, we reaffirm our support for efforts to ensure justice and accountability, including those aimed at investigating the atrocity crimes committed against the Palestinian people, to identify and prosecute those responsible for war crimes and to provide reparations for damage, loss or injury arising from the crimes committed by the occupying Power.

The Security Council also has a responsibility that it has yet to fulfil. This organ has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations. Thus far, it has been prevented from fully and effectively exercising its functions, owing to the negative vote continuously cast by one of its permanent members — the United States of America — when it comes to assessing constructive and responsible proposals that address the Palestinian question. That State has, over the years, established and consolidated a framework of impunity in favour of the occupying Power.

In that context, we condemn Israel's decision to blatantly disregard and systematically violate its legally binding obligations, including those derived from the norms of international humanitarian law, as well as from the multiple Security Council resolutions on the Palestinian question — which are legally binding by virtue of Article 25 of the Charter — and the orders of provisional measures issued by the International Court of Justice. We urge this organ once again to shoulder its responsibilities, including on the basis of the relevant provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter, and to also ensure that its resolutions are both fully respected and implemented.

For decades the Palestinian people has heroically endured, facing an overwhelming intensity over the past few months, everything from apartheid and

occupation policies to illegal settlements; from sieges and blockades to home demolitions; and from military brutality and terror to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The entire international community has now been witnessing for far too long the ongoing carnage against the Palestinian people. How much longer will it take for the Security Council to adopt a draft resolution demanding an immediate and permanent ceasefire, respected by all parties? How much longer will it take for the Security Council to demand an end to supplies of the means the occupying Power requires to further prolong the human suffering of the Palestinian people?

We cannot overemphasize, in the light of the increasingly dire and dramatic character of the situation on the ground, the importance of reaching such a ceasefire, as well as of ending the supply of the means to perpetuate this already protracted tragedy, confident that it will surely be a step in the right direction to put an end to the years of collective punishment, suffering and widespread destruction endured by the Palestinian civilian population as a result of the conflict, while allowing humanitarian actors on the ground, including United Nations specialized agencies, led by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East — whose role we recognize — to provide rapid and unhindered support and assistance to those in desperate need, including to alleviate the acute food insecurity affecting the entire population and the horrific conditions of famine in northern Gaza.

In that context, we insist on the importance of removing all current impediments to the regular, safe and at-scale delivery of the humanitarian aid needed to alleviate the ongoing catastrophe on the ground, and for which it is also necessary to guarantee an environment in which humanitarian actors can carry out their mission safely and effectively, without obstructions, threats and harassment, as stipulated by international humanitarian law.

There is another related area in which the Security Council has also failed, and that is with regard to the long-overdue admission of the State of Palestine as a full State Member of the United Nations. We urge this organ to reconsider favourably the question of the request of the State of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, in strict accordance with Article 4 of the Charter, so that the State of Palestine can take once and for all its rightful place among the community of nations. That matter, which cannot be perpetuated ad infinitum, would not only be an important expression

of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence, but would also put us on a forward-looking path, to bring an end to one of the most painful conflicts of our times. It is, above all else, a much-needed act of justice and decolonization, over which the occupying Power must have no influence.

Furthermore, we seize this opportunity to also express our serious concern about the continued attempts by the occupying Power to light a match under the Middle East region, as demonstrated, *inter alia*, by its repeated attacks against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, coupled with non-stop threats against Lebanon, including recent exchanges of fire across the Blue Line, which demonstrate a clear intent to expand its illegal aggression in the region, at the expense of the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories. We cannot overemphasize that a further dangerous destabilization of the situation must be prevented in order to prevent a spillover effect into the entire Middle East region, because that would have grave repercussions and ultimately trigger a full-scale regional conflict with dangerous ramifications for international peace and security. Therefore, we call on all relevant actors to strictly abide by the norms of international law and to exercise maximum restraint.

In that context, we stress that establishing peace in the Middle East requires Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, and implementing relevant United Nations resolutions, most notably resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981), which reaffirmed that the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible under the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, and that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan is null, void and has no international legal effect.

To conclude, the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms its commitment to sparing no effort in contributing towards the preservation of a credible political horizon that can lead to the realization of a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on the internationally recognized legal basis, including relevant United Nations resolutions, and the exercise of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and the achievement of its independent and sovereign State of Palestine, within

the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a solution that also ensures the right of return of the Palestine refugees.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Larsen (Australia): Australia shares the international community's grave concern about the catastrophic situation in Gaza.

Australia has been resolute in calling for an immediate ceasefire. The suffering in Gaza is unacceptable; the war must end.

Over one month has passed since the adoption of resolution 2735 (2024) supporting President Biden's ceasefire proposal. That is a viable path towards a comprehensive ceasefire, a permanent end to hostilities and the start of reconstruction in Gaza.

Australia commends Egypt, Qatar and the United States for their intensive efforts to negotiate an end to the conflict. We will continue to work with partners to press for the implementation of that ceasefire proposal. Any delay will result only in more lives lost and more immense suffering.

Australia condemns the unacceptable deaths of innocent civilians as a result of the operations Israel conducted last week, including near schools.

All parties must adhere to international humanitarian law. Civilians and humanitarian workers must be protected, aid must flow at scale and hostages must be released.

The regional and global fallout of the crisis, including the dire humanitarian crisis, demands renewed international efforts towards a lasting and long-term peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to a two-State solution, including the creation of a Palestinian State alongside Israel, with Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in peace, security and dignity.

The escalation of hostilities and incendiary rhetoric between Hizbullah and Israel is deeply concerning. Those escalations threaten to spark another destructive war which would be devastating for the whole region.

Australia continues to work with countries, both in the region and abroad, in support of international efforts to de-escalate the situation. We continue to urge regional countries to use their influence to

promote regional stability. Together, the international community must act collectively to prevent another catastrophe from engulfing the region.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Pieris (Sri Lanka): Let me congratulate the Russian Federation on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July.

The Council was briefed today on the horrific human costs of this conflict in no uncertain terms. As the Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, I had the opportunity to visit, on 22 June, the largest refugee camp in Amman, the Baqa'a camp. The visit was also conducted during a time when an ongoing deadly campaign against the Palestinians had been waged by security forces and settlers in the West Bank, with more than 500 Palestinians having been killed since 7 October 2023, one of out of five of whom were children.

To date, there have been 37,431 people killed in Gaza, with more than 85,653 injured owing to the sustained attack on the people, damage to civilian infrastructure, hospitals, educational facilities, religious sites of worship and serious disruptions of all aspects of cultural and social life. The violent assault on Gaza has been indiscriminate, disproportionate and callous in nature, cutting off the most needed resources, including food, water, electricity, fuel, medical supplies and reproductive health-care products in order to subjugate, dehumanize and collectively punish the Palestinian civilian population.

The stakeholders briefed us as to the numbers of Palestinians currently being held in large numbers in prisons and detention centres with no access to family or the International Committee of the Red Cross and without the protections of the procedures established by international law. Those include thousands of detained Palestinians from Gaza, many of whom are held incommunicado for months and often in stress positions. While it is hard to verify the figures, the Committee was informed that thousands of Palestinians security prisoners were being held in unhygienic, overcrowded conditions with no access to basic human necessities.

Throughout the visit, we learned of the continued and increased systematic targeting of women and

children by the security forces, with children comprising a large proportion of those killed. Multiple stakeholders reported a stark increase in sexual harassment, sexual abuse, the threat of rape and rape itself, including with foreign objects, as well as intimidation through the use of dogs by Israeli security forces. The Committee is shocked by those horrific violations and the levels of impunity for Israeli soldiers who engaged in dehumanizing behaviour, with security personnel publicly and shamelessly sharing photos on social media platforms that aim to mock, shame and brutalize the sexual identities of Palestinian women.

The Palestinians have also experienced a stepped-up campaign of food deprivation — starvation — in an effort to punish a people who were already food insecure. That policy has included a complete siege of the Gaza Strip since 9 October, using food as a weapon of war, targeting individuals looking for humanitarian assistance, destroying food production and circulation systems and not enabling an environment for effective humanitarian aid delivery.

The Security Council must take cognizance of the impact of the war in Gaza on future generations, including their physical and mental health. The conflict will leave a legacy of transgenerational trauma for which no psychosocial support currently exists in Gaza owing to the targeting of health-care workers and facilities. The Special Committee was also made aware of the psychological impact that the actions being carried out on military orders was having on young Israeli soldiers who have to live with the consequences of their actions far beyond the current conflict.

The Security Council must also be deeply concerned about the reports of artificial intelligence (AI) being deployed by Israeli military forces in the war in Gaza. It has been reported that this technology has contributed to the staggering number of civilian deaths, which is deemed collateral damage, as AI programmes have moved to identify anyone who could be a potential target through a system of mass surveillance.

The occupation of Palestine and the apartheid system of injustice that serves it cannot continue if there is ever to be a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. As a first step, we call on Israel and Palestinian armed groups to urgently agree to a lasting ceasefire.

There is frustration among many owing to the sense that action is tolerated and even assisted by developed nations.

The continuing hostilities in Gaza pose us very pertinent questions to all of us. Do those events mean that if a country by omission or commission causes the deaths of thousands of civilians and close to 200 United Nations staff, it can carry on if the Powers that be backed its actions? Does international law then apply to those who do not have the power to defy its dictates?

It is a fact that, outside these walls, the Security Council, as the organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with Articles 12 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, is being subject to increasing public pressure to do something decisive. Sri Lanka calls for the implementation of resolution 2720 (2023), and it calls on all parties to cooperate with the United Nations mechanism established by the resolution to provide humanitarian relief to the Gaza Strip.

I would like to finish with a poem by the poet Elana Bell, a Brooklyn-based poet, inspired by interviews in Israel, Palestine and America. This is how it goes:

“Once in a village that is burning, because a village is always somewhere burning.
And if you do not look because it is not your village, it is still your village.
In that village is a hollow child. You drown when he looks at you with his black, black eyes.
And if you do not cry because he is not your child, he is still your child.
All the animals that could run away have run away.
The trapped ones make an orchestra of their hunger.
The houses are ruin. Nothing grows in the garden.
The grandfather’s grave is there.
A small stone under the shade of a charred oak.
Who will brush off the dead leaves?
Who will call his name for morning prayer?
Where will they go, the ones who slept in this house and ate from this dirt?”

Let us think about the words, images and ideas in this beautiful little poem and how they stand out for us and the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I align myself with the statements delivered by the

representative of Iraq, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and by the representative of Uganda, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Security Council has continued to hold meetings to no avail since the beginning of the aggression against the Gaza Strip more than 10 months ago, as we all continue to witness the Israeli war machine deliberately targeting civilians and imposing the harshest forms of collective punishment by killing civilians, displacing and starving others and imposing a blockade against them. All of those blatant violations are happening before the eyes of the Council, and the international community continues to turn a blind eye. That inaction has prompted the occupation forces, which are hiding behind a solid wall, to take advantage of the international silence and impose their unabated brutal and inhumane practices, completely disregarding international law.

Unfortunately, the Security Council has completely failed in performing its genuine role, namely, to maintain international peace and security, because it has become bound by political calculations and short-sighted, selfish political interests that have impeded its ability to take the necessary firm actions to stop the Israeli aggression. The failure by the Security Council and the international community to protect the unarmed Palestinian people has so far led to the killing of more than 38,000 people and the injuring and maiming of tens of thousands of others, most of whom are women and children. How can such recurrent forced displacement of civilians in the Gaza Strip be

justified? How can we stay silent in the face of their systematic starvation and deliberate blockade? How can the international community stand idly by as a major humanitarian catastrophe is worsening before our eyes on a daily basis?

My country reiterates its call on the Council to carry out the tasks for which it was established and to adopt a draft resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to stop the Israeli aggression, allow for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and compel the occupying Power to immediately and strictly comply with the relevant Council resolutions. It must also fully uphold international law and international humanitarian law and implement the provisions adopted by the International Court of Justice on the genocide perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, my country will continue to support the Palestinian's right to self-determination and the establishment of a Palestinian State along the lines of 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, while ensuring a just and comprehensive peace in line with the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant resolutions of the international legitimacy.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until Friday.

The meeting was suspended at 6.15 p.m.