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<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Chanda/Mrs. Baumann-Bresolin	(Switzerland)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Mr. Koudri
	China	Mr. He Mao
	Ecuador	Mr. Piedra Calderón
	France	Ms. Blachez-Eteneau
	Guyana	Mrs. Edwards
	Japan	Mr. Hanami
	Malta	Mr. De Bono Sant Cassia
	Mozambique	Mr. Buanahagi
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Jaeseob Kim
	Russian Federation	Mr. Khloponin
	Sierra Leone	Ms. Baimarro
	Slovenia	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Zahedi
	United States of America	Ms. Ring

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

I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Kerimkulov (Kazakhstan): We commend the Swiss delegation for convening this important debate and congratulate it for its successful presidency of the Security Council in the month of October.

Our meeting is being held amid unprecedented international tensions and political turmoil. Kazakhstan mourns the loss of thousands of civilian lives and pays tribute to the brave United Nations peacekeepers, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) staff and humanitarian workers for their ultimate sacrifice. Kazakhstan is deeply concerned about the escalating situation in the Middle East, with the violence and turbulence posing serious threats to regional and global stability. Dialogue, diplomacy, the immediate cessation of hostilities and de-escalation are therefore the only viable paths to conflict resolution. We see extreme and untold hardship and suffering in the Gaza Strip today. We are also witnessing an escalation in Lebanon. The attacks in the Red Sea are a serious threat to maritime logistics and international trade. Furthermore, the escalating crisis in the Middle East could lead to a broader war and risks extending its impact beyond the region.

Kazakhstan firmly believes that the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, based on a two-State solution, is essential to achieving lasting peace in the region. Now more than ever, the Council must play its vital role in resolving that long-protracted conflict. It must reinvigorate various international frameworks and initiatives, as well as its own resolutions, in order to move towards reconciliation.

We appeal to all international and humanitarian organizations to mitigate the current challenging situation in the Middle East, in which many children, women and elderly persons have become innocent victims of the conflict. According to global

humanitarian aid groups, the severity of Gaza's catastrophe is unprecedented. We appeal to everyone to put a halt to the death toll and mitigate the suffering of thousands of people. Kazakhstan backs the growing demands to guarantee sufficient funding for UNRWA, the sole lifeline for Gaza. Kazakhstan also encourages the use of the mechanisms of the Islamic Organization for Food Security, which is headquartered in Astana, to assist Palestine. We call on everyone to support that effort, which has become even more relevant since the World Food Programme left Gaza.

Kazakhstan stands with the people of the Middle East in their quest for stability and prosperity and joins with others in order to achieve lasting a peace in the region.

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

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we welcome Mr. Ignazio Cassis, Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, and we thank him for presiding over the open debate this morning. We thank Mr. Tor Wennesland, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing.

We align ourselves with the statements to be delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the core group of the shared commitments in support of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The humanitarian suffering of the people in the Gaza Strip has become indescribable, as a result of the Israeli aggression that has continued for more than a year and has expanded to the West Bank and subsequently to Lebanon, despite the repeated warnings of the dangers of regional spillover. The State of Qatar reiterates its strong condemnation of the brutal aggression and collective punishment in the Gaza Strip, which has led to complete destruction and displaced most residents. There is no safe area in Gaza today. In his statement, the Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory indicated that since the beginning of October, the Israeli occupation has increasingly cut off northern Gaza and prevented the delivery of all basic necessities. As a result, the people of Gaza have been made to choose between forced displacement or starvation and bombardment, two options that both entail explicit

violations of international humanitarian law. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights also stated that the forced transfer of people from northern Gaza could amount to a war crime.

The aggressive actions of the occupation forces include atrocities that amount to war crimes under international law, the shelling of densely populated areas and the tent camps of refugees, the interruption of basic humanitarian supplies, forced displacement, including through the issuance of evacuation orders to so-called safe routes and areas that are subsequently shelled after displaced people have relocated to them, besiegement, starvation and the targeting of United Nations premises and convoys. All those acts are clear violations of the Geneva Conventions, which oblige the occupying Power to provide food and medication and are also in violation of Security Council resolutions.

According to the reports of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the number of victims in the Gaza Strip exceeds 42,000. Approximately 500,000 people are suffering advanced levels of hunger. The number of trucks entering Gaza has fallen to its lowest level and all entry ports were closed this month. An almost complete siege has been imposed on the north of Gaza. What is happening now in the Gaza Strip suggests an attempt to destroy all resemblance of normal life, in violation of resolution 2735 (2024), which rejects any attempts to bring about a demographic or territorial change in the Strip. Nine months have passed without any implementation of the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice, which stipulated that Israel must take all possible measures to prevent acts against Palestinians that fall under article II of the Genocide Convention, prevent incitement to genocide, and provide all basic services and humanitarian aid.

We reject any attempts to discredit and target UNRWA — a humanitarian agency for which there is no alternative. There is more need than ever for UNRWA in the light of the current disastrous humanitarian situation. Any attempts to undermine UNRWA would also target the international legitimacy that established the Agency, as part of the collective responsibility for refugees until their issue is settled fairly. That is why UNRWA must be supported. This year, the State of Qatar increased its contribution to UNRWA. Targeting UNRWA is part of a campaign that targets the United Nations as a whole, including the Secretary-General. In that regard, we express our full solidarity with the

Secretary-General and commend his good offices, which are in line with the mandate of the United Nations to settle disputes peacefully and carry out humanitarian activities.

The State of Qatar condemns the Israeli aggression against brotherly Lebanon, which has left thousands killed and injured. We support all diplomatic efforts for de-escalation and we join the American-French initiative for a temporary 21-day ceasefire to ensure achieving a permanent diplomatic solution and the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). My country was among the first to address the worsening humanitarian crisis in Lebanon by providing humanitarian relief. That was in addition to the humanitarian efforts we initiated to alleviate the suffering in Gaza, provide treatment to the injured and support humanitarian efforts by the United Nations.

Recently, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has been directly and repeatedly attacked by Israeli forces. In that regard, the State of Qatar, as a troop-contributing country to UNIFIL, signed the joint statement condemning attacks against a mission with a Security Council mandate. Such attacks are inconsistent with commitments under the Charter of the United Nations and international law and are also a threat to the vital role of UNIFIL in maintaining stability.

The destruction of the livelihood of an entire people cannot bring about peace and security for anyone. There is broad international recognition, as reflected in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, that security requires a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. The only solution to the Palestinian question is the two-State solution, which involves the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, within the 1967 borders, in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. That would safeguard the right to self-determination of the brotherly Palestinian people.

It is time to recognize the State of Palestine and grant it full membership in the United Nations, because it has fulfilled all the necessary criteria. The Security Council must push for a sustainable solution of the Palestinian question. As a first step, it must prevent any further escalation and must demand an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. It must prevent the attacks by occupation forces and settlers in the West Bank and must address any attempts to exploit

the current situation to expand settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory or to alter the status quo of religious sites in Jerusalem. The Council must also send a clear message of support to the United Nations and its agencies, including UNRWA, as well as to its peacekeeping operations.

For one year, the State of Qatar has undertaken extensive efforts, alongside the Arab Republic of Egypt and the United States, to reach a ceasefire agreement, release hostages and prisoners, and deliver sufficient aid to those in need. That would pave the way for serious negotiations leading to a sustainable solution. Those efforts led to a truce agreement in November 2023. Despite the obstacles to mediation, the State of Qatar is continuing its efforts to resume negotiations in order to stop the war in Gaza and reach a comprehensive ceasefire.

In conclusion, the Security Council has the necessary tools under the Charter to put an end to this unacceptable situation and ensure the implementation of its resolutions. We call on all Council members to uphold that great responsibility at this critical juncture for the region and its peoples.

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

Mr. Prabowo (Indonesia): Indonesia aligns itself with the statements to be delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the core group of the shared commitments in support of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

One of the most troubling chapters in human history is unfolding before our eyes. Israel's prolonged atrocities in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territory have spiralled out of control. Its recent attacks against Lebanon and Iran have brought the wider region into crisis. No less distressing are its systematic attacks against the United Nations. In that regard, we condemn the adoption of two bills yesterday to ban UNRWA, as they will have devastating consequences for millions of Palestinians under Israeli occupation. Never before have threats to global peace and security and the very foundations of global order been so imminent.

Let me highlight four points.

First, an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza must be realized, along with unimpeded and

scaled-up humanitarian aid. In the face of firm and bold actions by the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice, the Security Council's inaction puts its own relevance at risk. Beyond the Council, all States must show their sense of responsibility and utilize all tools at their disposal to bring about a ceasefire, including by pushing for an immediate halt to arms transfers to Israel.

Secondly, we must safeguard the two-State solution. Israel's long-standing policy and systematic actions to undermine the two-State solution are unacceptable. In fact, the recent Israeli bills to outlaw UNRWA have once again evidenced the premeditated systematic and deliberate efforts of Israel to diminish the feasibility of the two-State solution. The strike against UNRWA goes far beyond the humanitarian issue, which in itself is already a major concern. It also strikes deep at the core issues of the two-State solution, in particular the continued legal existence of Palestinian refugees and their right of return. That is a clear violation of international law and numerous Security Council resolutions. It also shows Israel's lack of willingness to pursue the path of peace. Instead, it seems to have chosen the path of subjugation, sowing the seeds of unbreakable cycles of violence.

Thirdly, we must not let the wider region fall into crisis. Achieving stability in Lebanon is essential for broader regional peace and security. Indonesia calls for maximum restraint to prevent further violence and reiterates its unwavering commitment to peacekeeping and peacebuilding in Lebanon.

Fourthly and finally, Israel's hostility towards the United Nations must not go unanswered. Systematically harassing — and now banning — UNRWA is simply wrong, especially in the face of the clear findings of the Colonna report. Declaring the Secretary-General persona non grata is simply wrong. And deliberately targeting a United Nations peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, is simply wrong. Israel's attack against the United Nations is not just an assault on the Organization, it is a direct affront to the principles of international peace and global order. Those are the actions of a rogue State.

Our action or inaction will be recorded forever in history. For the umpteenth time, I appeal to the Council — please choose the side of justice and humanity.

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

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thought that by today, one year after the beginning of the war, the Security Council would have been able to fulfil its responsibilities and stop the conflict. Did we place too much trust in the Council? Did we demand too much when we asked for an end to the war, the killing, the starvation, the detentions, the destruction and the collective punishment? Was not the United Nations established and was not international law formulated to prevent such tragedies and massacres? It seems that international organizations were established to exclusively serve some people and not others.

Israel has killed more than 42,000 martyrs, including more than 16,000 children. It has injured 98,000 civilians and destroyed the vast majority of buildings and facilities in Gaza. It has destroyed the educational and health systems in the Gaza Strip. Israel has forcibly displaced most residents of the Gaza Strip more than once. It has committed against the Palestinian people all kinds of documented violations and crimes that must be subject to accountability by international courts. The continued crimes against the Palestinian people in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem would not have continued for a year were it not for the lax attitude of the Security Council, which did not compel Israel to implement its four resolutions. That emboldened the occupying Power, Israel, to persist in its crimes, targeting schools, hospitals, humanitarian convoys and places where women and children gather in camps.

Israel imposed one siege after another in northern Gaza to starve the people and forcibly displace more than 400,000 civilians, while killing those who refuse to displace under false pretexts that the world has become tired of hearing. Israel continued with its aggression and launched a brutal war against Lebanon, dragging the whole region into a military escalation that threatens international peace and security. In full view of the world, Israel is waging a vengeful war that is not its first war against the Palestinian people. It is reminiscent of the criminal methods used by colonizers in past centuries. It is launching a broad campaign of killing, starvation, eviction and settlement and is implementing plans to destroy the occupied Palestinian State and its people.

We recently witnessed the Knesset enacting legislation that undermines the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which has a General Assembly mandate. That is inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations and Israel's international commitments and has one strategic aim that we all must address — to kill the two-State solution, liquidate the Palestinian question and end the presence of the Palestinian people in its territories. The great Palestinian people will without fail establish their independent State along the lines of 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Egypt wishes to stress the following points.

First, the Security Council must adopt a resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations that compels Israel to establish a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. It must withdraw from the Gaza Strip and the Lebanese territory. It must open all crossings and ensure the unimpeded entry of aid. It must stop forced displacement and stop targeting United Nations staff and institutions, especially UNRWA staff. The Council must implement measures to ensure accountability for any perpetrator of crimes against the Palestinian people. All measures must be taken to compel Israel to implement previous Council and General Assembly resolutions, as well as the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice.

Secondly, all countries must meet their commitments under Council and Assembly resolutions, especially resolution ES-10/24, adopted by the General Assembly on 18 September. Any arms exports to Israel must stop and any activities that entrench the Israeli occupation must also stop.

Thirdly, the international community must adopt a united stance to reject any division or change in the demographic and geographical character of the Palestinian territories, above all of the Gaza Strip, or any attempt to forcibly transfer its people permanently or temporarily. The international community must prevent Israeli efforts to create a new reality by military force in southern Lebanon. The time during which occupiers drew borders on a map is over.

Fourthly, from day one of the crisis, Egypt has been making extensive efforts on the humanitarian track to facilitate the provision of aid and receive the injured. We have also joined mediation efforts with Qatar and the United States of America to stop the fighting. The most recent effort was the proposal by the President

of the Republic, Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, to establish a two-day ceasefire to allow a limited exchange of prisoners and hostages, on both sides, and to resume negotiations within 10 days with a view to making the temporary ceasefire permanent. Egypt will continue those efforts in line with its humanitarian commitment and support for the legitimate Palestinian rights.

We once again call on the Council to act and would like to pose the following questions. The Security Council did not respond to our previous demands, but could it not at least call for a humanitarian truce and define the number of trucks that need to enter Gaza, starting with those besieged in the north of the Strip? Is the Council not capable of using United Nations reports to ascertain what quantities of food are needed daily by Palestinians in Gaza in order to prevent hunger and determine the humanitarian aid based on that information? Is the Council not able to fulfil its role under the Charter in order to enforce the verdict of the International Court of Justice and compel Israel to abide by its rulings? Is the Council not able to dispatch a working group composed of prominent members of the international community or Security Council members to visit Gaza and Israel and to urge Israel to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza? Where is the conscience of Council members, given all the horrors we have seen in Gaza?

History will not be merciful to the timid and the passive.

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

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to once again convey my best wishes, Madam President, for your successful conduct of the Security Council's work this month. I also thank Mr. Tor Wennesland for his briefing.

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

While this meeting is being held, the Israeli occupation army continues its brutal war, while systematically targeting civilian Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, in blatant defiance of all the principles and values for which the United Nations was established more than seven decades ago. Since the war started more than one year ago, the Israeli war machine has

killed more than 43,000 Palestinians, most of them innocent women and children. There are also tens of thousands of injured, displaced, orphans and missed people under the rubble in various parts of Gaza.

The continued aggression of the extremist Israeli Government, which has been utterly condemned and rejected, shows total disregard for the international community's will to stop the Israeli war, which has led to a humanitarian disaster whose repercussions will be suffered for decades by Palestinian generations. What Israel is doing today in northern Gaza, in full view of the international community, is ethnic cleansing and genocide. Israel is brutally killing innocent civilians and systematically targeting residential areas. It is trying to impose a new reality in northern Gaza by force. It is also continuing to follow policies of starvation and collective punishment against Palestinian civilians. It is besieging them, preventing the entry of food and medication for them and forcing them to be displaced. Those are all war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We call on the Security Council to shoulder its legal and moral responsibilities in the light of those crimes. The Council must take decisive measures to deter and stop those crimes through a binding resolution that imposes an immediate ceasefire under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. We call upon the Security Council to ensure appropriate protection for the Palestinians. The absence of accountability and the prevalence of impunity have emboldened the Israeli Government and its extremist members to continue to violate the Council's resolutions, as well as international law and international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Disregarding Israeli violations and not making any real effort to stop them will encourage those who violate international law all around the world to persist in those violations and disregard the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

That aggression must stop immediately, and all States must fulfil their legal obligations by ceasing to provide Israel with the weapons that it uses to kill innocent civilians. That is the legal obligation of all States with regard to the Palestinian people. Sanctions must be imposed on the extremist Israeli Government, which must be deterred from committing crimes that constitute a threat to international and regional peace and security. In that context, Jordan calls on the international community to take unilateral and collective measures to compel Israel to implement the

orders of the International Court of Justice in the case brought by South Africa on the application of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip.

Yesterday the Israeli Knesset adopted two laws that would prevent the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) from operating in the occupied Palestinian territory. That clearly proves that a State Member of the United Nations is defying, in an unprecedented manner, the will of the international community and the mandate given by the General Assembly to the Agency. That is a dangerous precedent and would liquidate the Agency, the issue of refugees and their right of return and compensation. Those Israeli attempts must be met with a united international reaction, not only to protect the lives of millions of Palestinian refugees and their future but also to protect what is left of the credibility of multilateral action. We stress that the attempts by Israel to eliminate the Agency and liquidate the Palestinian refugee issue will not succeed. That issue will remain alive until the Palestinian people exercise their right to self-determination and achieve an independent State, and until the Palestinian refugees realize all their rights with respect to Israel. In that regard, we reiterate that UNRWA is irreplaceable and indispensable for providing services to millions of Palestinian refugees, and we reiterate our call to the international community to provide the necessary support to UNRWA so that it can continue providing its services in Gaza and other areas of operation, in accordance with the United Nations mandate.

The occupied West Bank and Jerusalem have also witnessed a grave deterioration as a result of the unilateral practices of the Israeli Government and the terrorism in which settlers have engaged there, including through the confiscation of land, the expansion of settlements, the killing of Palestinians and the destruction of their property. We call for concerted international efforts in order to stop Israeli attempts to create new conditions on the ground, thereby undermining the prospects for establishing an independent Palestinian State and ensuring a comprehensive peace based on a two-State solution, which represents the strategic Arab option. We also warn against Israeli extremist settlers storming the Al-Haram Al-Sharif/Al-Aqsa Mosque and underscore that Jordan will oppose any attempts to change the historical status quo of the holy sites or their legal status, in the framework of the historic role

of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as custodian of the Muslim and Christian holy sites.

We emphasize Jordan's support for the security, sovereignty and safety of the citizens of brotherly Lebanon, as well as the need to end the aggression against it and fully implement resolution 1701 (2006). We reaffirm the need for the international community to shoulder its responsibility to stop the dangerous escalation in the region, intensify international efforts to reach a comprehensive ceasefire in Gaza, secure the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Strip and ensure the unimpeded delivery of aid to those in need. We stress the importance of ending the occupation and achieving a just peace that meets the aspirations of the Palestinian people to self-determination and an independent State on their national soil, on the basis of the two-State solution.

Israel believes it has a golden opportunity to liquidate the Palestinian question by committing crimes and massacres, which its leaders, its military and large sectors of its society vaunt in thousands of videos posted on social media. Council members have no doubt seen those videos and heard the chanting that calls for the burning of Palestinian villages, in what resembles a celebration and a daily occurrence in Israeli society online. Those crimes and massacres, however, will only enhance the commitment of the Palestinian people to achieving their rights and remaining steadfast on their land. Generations of Palestinians have been determined to realize their dream of living in dignity in their independent State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital and on the national Palestinian soil.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mrs. Elardja Flitti.

Mrs. Elardja Flitti (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you Madam President, for convening this meeting at ministerial level and for your able stewardship of the work of the Council, and I thank Mr. Tor Wennesland for his comprehensive briefing.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the League of Arab States. The League of Arab States aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Mauritania on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The Middle East is facing one of the most perilous political and security junctures in modern history, with the threat of a comprehensive regional war as a result of

the reckless policies of an extremist Israeli Government that flouts international treaties and commitments and continues to undermine the fundamental premises of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Israel has been seeking to inflame the situation in the Middle East through its ongoing brutal aggression on the Gaza Strip since October 2023, by expanding the scope of its aggression to encompass Syria, Lebanon and Iraq and attempting to mislead the international community into believing that its war is directed only against Iran and its allies in the region.

The devastating humanitarian consequences of the war that it is being waged against the countries of the Arab world, primarily the State of Palestine, as well as the human and material devastation caused by that war, together with the recorded data and statistics, have proved to everyone the falsity of those claims and made it clear that Israel's sole objective was and is to eliminate the prospects for implementing a two-State solution, impose a one-State solution and prevent the already existing Palestinian State — recognized by more than 148 countries — from taking its rightful place among the civilized nations that fulfil their international and regional obligations.

The Palestinian State achieved full recognition in General Assembly resolution 67/19, of 29 November 2012, and once again in resolution ES-10/24, of 19 September 2024, despite the ongoing war being waged against it. The eligibility of the Palestinian State has been fully recognized and it has been granted many important privileges in a number of different resolutions in order to enable it to continue to play an important role in the work of the United Nations. That has enabled it to garner the support of 12 member States of the Security Council (see S/PV.9609), which recommended granting the State of Palestine the full membership due to it under General Assembly resolution 181 (II), the same resolution on the basis of which Israel was granted membership in the United Nations. Resolution 181 (II) undoubtedly applies to the State of Palestine as well, irrespective of the positions taken by some permanent members that support Israel to varying degrees.

In the same vein, Israel has disregarded the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice, which reflect its view that Israel has committed the crime of genocide in the occupied Arab territory, as well as the warnings of the International

Criminal Court that Israel has clearly committed such crimes in its ongoing and escalating war. Israel has refused to implement the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which confirmed the inevitability of the ending of the illegal occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory — an occupation that Israel sought to entrench recently by committing the additional war crimes of starving, threatening and intimidating the population of northern Gaza in order to force them to move south or flee to neighbouring countries under the intensive shelling of their homes, hospitals and schools.

Israel is even seeking to prevent the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) from playing any role in relation to Palestinian refugees. Yesterday a dangerous decision was unfortunately taken by the Israeli Knesset, whereby UNRWA was declared a terrorist Agency and its activities within the occupied Palestinian territory were banned. The Arab League strongly condemns that and calls on the Council to address that unjust decision and take the necessary steps to block it and prevent it from entering into force. Furthermore, Israel declared the Secretary-General to be *persona non grata* — a grave step that is unprecedented in the history of the United Nations. Countless other provocative measures and unilateral actions prove that Israel is a rogue State and above the law and that its conduct represents the greatest threat to regional and international peace and security.

There is no doubt that Israel violated the airspace of Syria, Iraq and Lebanon last Sunday and targeted facilities in those countries under the pretext of retaliating against Iran. Those actions constitute another violation in a series of increasing violations of Israel's international obligations, and they sound a grave alarm to the Council about the prospect of the situation escalating into an all-out regional war. We underscore the need to implement Council resolutions in order to secure an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, Syria and Lebanon and to guarantee the immediate flow of humanitarian aid so that it reaches Palestinians in need, rather than ensuring only that the aid crosses the border, where it remains unloaded or is deliberately denied to them. Every possible means should be deployed to protect the Palestinian people, who remain steadfast on their land and are defending their freedom and dignity against a rogue State, an occupier that is violating all international laws and moral standards without any

fear or accountability. That has led to the failure of the mediation, despite the efforts led by Egypt, Qatar and the United States of America to facilitate it. All of that has also led the League of Arab States to emphasize the role that the United Nations should play.

First, the implementation of Security Council resolutions must be imposed on a rogue State that is no longer peace-loving and no longer meets the basic conditions to be a Member of this Organization.

Secondly, a clear political horizon must be established for a peaceful settlement of the conflict through negotiations in order to immediately implement the two-State solution, unimpeded by geopolitical confrontations between the East and the West.

The League of Arab States has always supported the activities of the Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee, with the goal of achieving the two-State solution and implementing the Arab Peace Initiative. We call on the international alliance launched on the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session to implement the two-State solution.

The Arab League will always support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in order to allow it to play its pivotal role in the occupied Palestinian territory and its other five areas of operation. The Arab League will oppose all attempts by the occupying Power to undermine UNRWA and calls for Israel and its senior officials to be held accountable for the genocidal crimes they have committed.

We support all efforts that call for an end to the supply to Israel of the offensive weapons that it uses against the defenceless Palestinian people and to support settlers in their colonial settlement activities, which contravene international legitimacy.

In conclusion, while the Arab League stresses the importance of the immediate implementation of all Council resolutions related to settlements in order to end the Israeli occupation of Arab occupied territories, including southern Lebanon and the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, we remain committed to supporting the Council and enhancing full cooperation with it for strengthening the international recognition of the independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and for including the State of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations that is capable of

fulfilling obligations and performing duties. That is the only way for the entire Middle East to enjoy the desired peace and stability.

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

Mr. Mythen (Ireland): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the core group on the shared commitments in support of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), consisting of Algeria, Belgium, Brazil, Guyana, Indonesia, Ireland, Jordan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain and the State of Palestine.

We express our appreciation and admiration for the work of the staff of UNRWA under the leadership of Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini, in all fields of operation, in fulfilment of the Agency's mandate. We commend UNRWA's courageous engagement and dedication. In that regard, we also refer to the letter dated 28 October from the Commissioner-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly. We pay special tribute to the UNRWA staff in Gaza and express our sincere condolences for those who have been killed — at least 237 of them to date.

We deplore the measures being taken by Israel against UNRWA, including the legislation adopted by the Israeli parliament on 28 October 2024 that abrogates the 1967 agreement between Israel and UNRWA and prevents UNRWA from continuing its life-saving operations and essential work in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. That includes risking the collapse of the entire humanitarian response in Gaza, which rests on UNRWA's infrastructure. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the delivery of education, primary healthcare and emergency aid to hundreds of thousands of Palestine refugees is at risk of grinding to a halt.

The bills, if implemented, would clearly be in violation of international law, including Israel's obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. Such unprecedented measures would also constitute violations of international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the obligations of Israel, as the occupying Power, to ensure the welfare of the civilian population under its occupation. We call on Israel to respect the United Nations Charter, international humanitarian law

and the relevant resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly.

UNRWA's mandate has been reaffirmed and has for decades received the overwhelming support of the States Members of the United Nations. UNRWA implements its mandate on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations, as established by General Assembly resolution 302 (IV), of 8 December 1949. The eviction of a United Nations agency by the decision of one single Member State would set an alarming precedent globally and would constitute a grave violation of the United Nations Charter. It would undermine the multilateral system and compromise the rule of law, with unforeseen consequences. We are also very concerned about the broader implications that such an action could have for the work of the United Nations system across the globe.

UNRWA is one of the remaining lifelines for the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank — 1.9 million of whom have been displaced. Without UNRWA's logistics and the scale of its capacities, the entire humanitarian response in Gaza, which is already severely challenged, would be fundamentally undermined at a time of the greatest and ever-growing humanitarian need. In that regard, we reiterate the imperative and the urgency of enabling and accelerating the entry of humanitarian aid to Gaza, in particular in the north, at scale and unimpeded, and of protecting all civilians from further devastation, as well as the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2735 (2024).

The implementation of the bills would have severe implications that go far beyond the immediate humanitarian impact and cannot be overstated. The absence of UNRWA — which is first and foremost a human development agency — would remove the only mechanism capable of reconstituting education, health and other vital services, creating a vacuum that would further destabilize the entire region. Only UNRWA can take on the education of the 600,000 children in Gaza who have already lost two years of school — first owing to the coronavirus disease pandemic and now as a result of the war. UNRWA is also by far the largest primary healthcare provider in Gaza. UNRWA's role is indispensable and irreplaceable. There is no alternative to UNRWA — there is no plan B. If implemented, such legislation would also significantly hinder the prospects for renewed peace efforts and the viability of the two-

State Solution, further exacerbating existing tensions and insecurity, as well as instability in the region.

As long as there is no global, just and sustainable solution to the conflict and the status of the Palestine refugees, the mandate of UNRWA will remain vital and a key pillar in the United Nations' permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is justly resolved in all its aspects. UNRWA is vital for upholding that responsibility, providing sustenance and dignity to the refugees in the absence of a solution and safeguarding the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and their right of return.

We highlight the important findings of the independent review of mechanisms and procedures to ensure adherence by UNRWA to the humanitarian principle of neutrality, led by Ms. Catherine Colonna. Like all United Nations bodies, UNRWA continuously works to improve its functioning and operational integrity. In that regard, we welcome and support the Agency's ongoing efforts and commitment to fully implementing the recommendations of the Colonna report, so as to improve its functioning and continue to ensure its neutrality, impartiality and independence, in close coordination with host countries, staff and stakeholders. We reiterate the importance of the implementation of the findings to ensure balanced support for both UNRWA's core mandate and the ongoing reforms. We urge all Member States to support and ensure a conducive environment for the implementation of the recommendations.

We reaffirm the shared commitments on UNRWA, which have gathered overwhelming support from 123 signatories to date, and we remain committed to ensuring the support necessary to enable the Agency to fulfil its vital mandate. We recently came together to reconfirm our commitment to uphold UNRWA's mandate. We do so again today and will continue to do so.

I will now deliver a statement in my national capacity.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Ireland is appalled at the measures being taken by Israel against UNRWA. We condemn in the strongest terms the approval by the Israeli parliament of legislation to prevent UNRWA from operating in the occupied Palestinian territory. The decision to cut off a United

Nations agency, on which 1.9 million people depend, is shameful. Those actions take us even further from a two-State solution and set a very serious precedent for the work of the United Nations and for all organizations of the multilateral system. Israel must facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, in accordance with its obligations under international humanitarian law. Ireland will continue to work with donor and host countries to ensure the viability of UNRWA's work and its humanitarian role.

Today's debate comes a little more than one year after the 7 October 2023 attacks by Hamas on Israel. I again reiterate Ireland's unequivocal condemnation of those heinous attacks. I also reiterate Ireland's call for an immediate ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages and the provision of hugely scaled-up humanitarian aid.

The heart of the instability remains the conflict in Gaza and the broader occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel. Last week, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya issued a stark warning that the entire population of north Gaza is at risk of dying. Ireland calls on Israel to immediately end its siege in northern Gaza. For more than 12 months, we have seen the unconscionable toll of the conflict on civilians, including thousands of innocent Palestinian children. What we need more than ever is a comprehensive plan that delivers a two-State solution and curbs the dangerous escalatory cycle of violence. All efforts to bring about peace and advance the two-State solution should be supported. I welcome the launch of the global alliance for the implementation of the two-State solution on the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly held in September. Ireland is committed to supporting international partners to step up our efforts to implement the two-State solution.

Like everyone here, we are deeply concerned about the situation in Lebanon and the risk of further escalation across the region. When we last met in this forum (see S/PV.9687), we discussed the risks of increased tensions at the border of Israel and Lebanon. Today that risk is a reality, with more than 1 million people displaced in Lebanon and Israel. As with the situation in Gaza, the death, destruction and displacement that we are witnessing in Lebanon is on a scale that is hard to comprehend and is completely unacceptable. A clear sign of the desperation of the people in Lebanon is that 500,000 people have crossed

into Syria. Syria already had 16.7 million people in need — the largest number since the crisis began. A surge of humanitarian assistance into Lebanon is imperative. Ireland announced an additional €5 million in humanitarian assistance to Lebanon in Paris last week. That brings to €10 million Ireland's support for Lebanon in 2024. We will continue to support those in need across the region.

We need an immediate ceasefire and a de-escalation by all parties. We must also do all we can to support a long-term diplomatic solution. Despite the calls of the Security Council and other international partners, we are seeing no cessation. Instead, we are watching an upsurge in Israeli military operation, with hospitals, municipal buildings and banks being struck. Hizbullah, too, has increased its strikes on Israel. We continue to condemn Hizbullah for those attacks and its malign role in Lebanon and the region. Over many years, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has played an invaluable role in Lebanon. The targeting of UNIFIL peacekeepers is a serious violation of international humanitarian law. We cannot accept that. The safety of our peacekeepers must be paramount. Israel must be held accountable for such violations. The role of the Lebanese Armed Forces must be enhanced and its resources deepened.

There is a very real risk of wider conflict across the region, if we do not break the dangerous cycle of escalation. Ireland urgently calls for restraint and de-escalation following the aerial strikes by Israel on targets in Iran and the large-scale missile attacks on Israel earlier this month. Iran's continued destabilizing actions, including military support to militia groups in the region, must cease in order for peace to be a possibility.

We know that multilateralism and respect for international law are core to securing and building peace wherever conflict has erupted. Those principles must be the building blocks for peace and enduring stability in the Middle East.

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

Mr. Novicio (Philippines): The Philippines is gravely concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and the increasing tensions in the Middle East region, including Lebanon. We urge all parties to refrain from escalating the violence, work

towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict and end the vicious cycle of violence.

The Philippines recognizes the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a key to achieving peace and stability in the Middle East. That conflict can never be resolved by violence but rather through meaningful dialogues and negotiations, in accordance with international law. We reiterate our firm belief and faith in the Charter of the United Nations, which explicitly sets out the peaceful means by which we can settle international disputes, in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. The Philippines reaffirms its full support for the full and immediate implementation of resolution 2735 (2024) and all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions for a comprehensive ceasefire and humanitarian provisions in Gaza. We also welcome the advisory opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice on 19 July.

The Philippines reiterates its unwavering 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 peace, harmony and prosperity and have their rights, aspirations and security recognized and upheld. In May, the Philippines supported General Assembly resolution ES-10/23, which upgraded Palestine's rights at the United Nations as an observer State and urged the Security Council to favourably reconsider Palestine's full United Nations membership. In that regard, the Philippines supports the creation of the State of Palestine and its acceptance as a full Member of the United Nations as soon as possible.

The Philippines believes that diplomacy remains the cornerstone of achieving lasting peace in the Middle East. We recognize that the conflict can be resolved only through diplomatic engagements and comprehensive negotiations and dialogues rooted in international law. We support steps that would expand the space for meaningful dialogues and negotiations by building trust, mutual understanding and cooperation for peace. In that regard, the Philippines supports the global alliance for the implementation of a Palestinian State and a two-State solution — a ground-breaking initiative spearheaded by Saudi Arabia, Norway and the European Union. The Philippines will participate in the meetings and initiatives of the global alliance with a view to realizing the two-State solution as soon as possible.

Finally, we reaffirm our full support for and confidence in the Secretary-General and his work. We are confident about his commitment to international peace and security, and his tireless efforts reflect our shared desire for an end to violence and meaningful dialogue in the pursuit of lasting peace in the Middle East.

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

Mr. Kridelka (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Since the beginning of the conflict, Belgium's focus has been on respect for international law, in particular international humanitarian law, which provides the only guarantees of a balanced and objective position — one that can provide civilian populations with the protection they sorely need. Implementing Security Council resolutions is also crucial. Most of the parameters to emerge from the crisis have in fact already been defined, some well before the horrific terrorist attacks of 7 October 2023. The path towards the solution of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, was outlined in resolution 2334 (2016). Already in 2016, the Council stated that the status quo was not sustainable. It called on the parties to prevent and condemn terrorism and create the necessary conditions for the promotion of peace and negotiations. The political decision-makers concerned and other de facto authorities have chosen to ignore those calls and jeopardize the two-State solution by opting for violence or terrorism, condoning or encouraging the unlawful creation of new settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory or choosing deliberately not to invest in the option of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. All of us here in this Chamber have witnessed the crossing of red lines, one by one, while allowing it to happen.

We are making the same mistakes with regard to the implementation of resolution 2735 (2024). The enforcement of an immediate ceasefire that is respected by all parties, humanitarian access that is unhindered and on the scale required and the unconditional release of all hostages — not one of those goals has been achieved, despite the calls of the entire international community. The same story is now being repeated along the Blue Line. Belgium joins the calls for an immediate ceasefire on both sides of that Line and throughout the Lebanese territory and for the full and symmetrical implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Otherwise, the crisis could spread to the whole of Lebanon and

have a lasting effect on its sociopolitical fabric. In that fragile context, I would like to reaffirm my country's full support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. Ensuring the safety and security of the mission's personnel and property is an obligation under international law.

The collective political will to implement those resolutions is sorely lacking. The political cost of inaction must be increased in support of the non-violent path and diplomacy. The International Court of Justice and the General Assembly have called on us to take action to that end. We must move beyond the parallel versions of the truth presented within the Council, stop the one-sided dialogue that we are seeing and work concertedly to find a solution. Every initiative to that end and every actor willing to help achieve it can count on Belgium's active support. Last week's Paris conference for Lebanon and the Two-State Solution Coalition are good examples of that. Belgium also advocates for taking restrictive measures against those who are hindering the quest for lasting peace.

In conclusion, in the absence of a political solution, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is an indispensable and irreplaceable player, the backbone of desperately needed humanitarian aid, a factor in the stability of the entire region and the embodiment of Palestinians' legitimate right to self-determination and return. Belgium resolutely supports UNRWA, condemns the legislative measures adopted by the Knesset and fully endorses the joint declaration on the subject read out just now by the representative of Ireland. We know all the parameters needed to make lasting peace possible. It is up to the parties to assume their responsibilities and implement them in their own and the general interest.

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

Mr. Muhamad (Malaysia): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this debate. We also thank Special Coordinator Wennesland for his briefing.

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

For more than a year, since the start of the war in Gaza, the Security Council has been convened multiple times and heard many stark warnings. And yet here

we are again, repeating the same things and seemingly nowhere near finding a solution. As highlighted by Mr. Wennesland this morning, the situation in Gaza has worsened to the point that it defies imagination. And yesterday Israel's Parliament voted to ban the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East — the backbone for humanitarian responses and other essential services for Palestinian refugees. Malaysia strongly condemns that decision. If implemented, it would transform the already catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza into a near apocalypse. Meanwhile, tensions continue to escalate, and the war has expanded into a wider regional war.

What more does the Council need to hear before it can find courage, be united and finally take decisive actions to uphold the Charter of the United Nations and international law? What further evidence needs to be presented for the Council to act to end Israel's impunity, stop the genocidal war in Gaza and prevent the further escalation of tensions in the region? How many more innocent lives, including of women and children, have to be the so-called collateral damage in this senseless war — a war that is being orchestrated and perpetrated by a callous and irresponsible leader motivated by his own political survival? The Council must seriously reflect on its position and see that enough is enough.

The consequences of the Council's further inaction could be disastrous for the whole world. The international rules-based system, which the global community has painstakingly built since the end of the last great war, is being undermined. And the failure of the United Nations to bring a timely and just resolution to the question of Palestine is one of the major causes of the unravelling. Israel, the occupying Power, has been openly defying the United Nations and international law for decades. Over time, it has grown bolder in its defiance and belligerence because of the impunity that it enjoys. Israel is confident that it will always receive the cover it needs, including in the Council. Impunity reveals double standards and makes a mockery of international law. It also encourages further violations of international law. It is a bad example to others and will undo our efforts to forge a rules-based order as the guarantee for international peace and security.

The threshold for Council action was crossed a long time ago. More than ever, we need the Council to take united and decisive action for the sake of the global order. The General Assembly has consistently

demonstrated its desire to end Israel's impunity, as reflected in its adoption last month of its resolution ES-10/24 by an overwhelming majority. We implore the Council to act and ensure the implementation of the resolution. Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land must end and the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people must be fully realized.

We are at a dangerous juncture. The Council must put aside its differences and unite in upholding international law. It must lead the world away from the brink of a dangerous abyss. For the sake of humankind worldwide, I pray that the Council will make the right choice and make it fast.

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

Ms. Moutchou (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on Switzerland's convening of this meeting, and to thank Mr. Ignazio Cassis, Head of Switzerland's Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, for presiding over it this morning. I would also like to thank Mr. Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his valuable briefing.

For more than a year the Gaza Strip has been enduring an unprecedented humanitarian tragedy, worsening every day, with huge numbers of civilians killed, most of them women and children, and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure, in blatant violation of international law and humanitarian values. Despite the calls for a ceasefire, this year the conflict has spread to other States in the Middle East. Its continuing expansion will have disastrous security and humanitarian repercussions whose costs we will all bear. His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee established by the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, has stressed that the political deadlock on the Palestinian question is one of the major reasons for the deteriorating conflict in the Middle East.

Morocco once again calls for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip with a view to ending the humanitarian suffering and protecting civilians, in line with international law and international humanitarian law, together with the release of prisoners and detainees. We also urge the international community and the Security Council to accelerate the safe, adequate, sustainable and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance to our Palestinian brethren

in the Gaza Strip, in accordance with resolutions 2712 (2023) and 2720 (2023), for which we have continued our significant support since the beginning of the current crisis under King Mohammed's noble directive. Morocco also supports the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which for more than 75 years has played a vital part in supporting education, health and social services for millions of Palestinian refugees. No other agency or party can play its pivotal and important role in providing services to Palestinian refugees and in neighbouring countries.

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of his accession to the throne, King Mohammed VI outlined his vision for how to emerge from this crisis. First, he said, if putting an end to the war in Gaza is an urgent priority, it must be done simultaneously with the work of opening up political prospects conducive to a just and lasting peace in the region. Secondly, negotiations on reviving the peace process between the Palestinian and Israeli sides require cutting off pathways for extremists of any stripe. Thirdly, ensuring security and stability in the region can be realized only within the framework of a two-State solution, with Gaza as an integral part of the territory of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Kingdom of Morocco rejects any measures that undermine the legal and historic status of Al-Quds city and its holy sites, including the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque, or that impose restrictions on worshippers entering the Mosque. We emphasize the importance of preserving its cultural and Islamic character and avoiding any escalation or provocations. Jerusalem must remain a city where cultures meet and a symbol of peaceful coexistence for the followers of the three monotheistic religions. It should remain a place of mutual encounters, respect and dialogue, as was stated 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 reaffirms its firm historical position regarding the just Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, based on resolutions of international legitimacy and the concept of a two-State solution, whereby the international community agreed to establish an independent Palestinian State along the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. I also want to express Morocco's full solidarity with our brother country of Lebanon and its Government and people

in the face of the aggression against them. We call for respecting Lebanon's national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

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

Mr. Aldahhak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Madam President, for your efforts in conducting the work of the Security Council this month.

Today we are commemorating the anniversary of the brutal massacre by Zionist gangs of the people of the Palestinian town of Safsaf in 1948. That awful event reflects the mentality of the Israeli occupation and its approach, which is based on aggression and killing. That is still going on today, with the new generations of Israeli war criminals who have chosen to continue their barbaric crimes and violate all moral, legal and humanitarian norms. The fact is that the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people started not on 7 October 2023 but decades ago. The daily killings and the systematic destruction in Gaza and the West Bank did not start last year. They are the result of decades of ongoing crimes perpetrated by the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people, who have courageously resisted in order to liberate their land, enjoy their right to self-determination and establish their independent State.

We reject and condemn the Israeli campaigns against the United Nations, its agencies and the Secretary-General. Israel is trying to terrorize and silence representatives of the Organization and deliberately attempting to kill them, in yet another proof of the occupation entity's aggressive approach to the Organization, which began more than 70 years ago in 1948, when Zionist gangs assassinated the first United Nations mediator for Palestine, Count Folke Bernadotte. In that context, Syria reiterates its firm condemnation of the unprecedented and aggressive campaign launched by the Israeli occupation authorities against Secretary-General António Guterres. We stand in solidarity with him in addressing the issue, and we appreciate the efforts he is making in line with his mandate.

Syria also rejects the unilateral measures that the Israeli entity has taken to undermine the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and prevent it from doing its work in the occupied Palestinian territory. According

to Israel, UNRWA is a terrorist organization. That unprecedented and highly dangerous behaviour affects not only UNRWA itself but the United Nations as a whole, as an international organization and a global forum. Syria calls for protecting UNRWA and the mandate conferred on it by the General Assembly. It should be provided with the support it needs to continue to provide assistance and humanitarian services to Palestinians in their homeland and their host countries, including Syria. We also condemn Israel's deliberate attacks on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. We stress the need to protect the safety and security of its personnel, as well as of the personnel of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, so that they can continue to implement their mandate, monitoring and documenting Israeli violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974 and reporting them to the Security Council.

The United Nations has been seized of the Palestinian question since its inception. Through its various organs it has adopted hundreds of resolutions stressing its rejection of the Israeli occupation's practices and crimes and calling for an end to the occupation and for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. However, the resolutions have still not been implemented because certain Western permanent members of the Security Council claim to be protectors of Israel, flying in the face of international law, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the security and stability of our region and the suffering and pains of its peoples. The support of the United States and other Western countries has emboldened the Israeli occupation entity and its war criminals, who have continued to carry out their crimes against the Palestinian people unhindered and have expanded their aggression to include our brother country of Lebanon. They have intensified their attacks on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, carrying them out on a near-daily basis.

In the light of Israel's continued attacks on my country, which totalled 116 as of 21 October, Mr. Bassam Sabbagh, Syria's Foreign Minister, sent a letter a few days ago to the Secretary-General explaining that the attacks are violating Syria's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity. He pointed to the consequences of targeting peaceful civilians' houses, civilian infrastructure and service and economic facilities, as well as diplomatic premises and border crossings. He

called on the Secretary-General to continue making every effort to ensure that the United Nations fulfils its responsibility to stop the usurping occupation's aggression and grave violations while ensuring that it is held accountable and does not enjoy impunity. We look forward to seeing that materialize as soon as possible.

Syria underscores its full solidarity with our brother peoples of Palestine and Lebanon in fighting the Israeli aggression and the barbaric crimes of the occupation authorities. We also condemn the Israeli attack on the Islamic Republic of Iran and stress Iran's right to self-defence and to protect its people and sovereignty. Meanwhile, Syria has continued to take every measure necessary to host our Lebanese brothers and Syrians returning from Lebanon, whose numbers now exceed 500,000. Despite the huge needs and our weak capacity, we are providing essential humanitarian assistance and services, including shelter, healthcare, transportation and communications, among other things. Syria looks forward to receiving support and responses to calls from the United Nations and its agencies for the provision of resources for emergency humanitarian aid.

In conclusion, the Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to take immediate action to stop the Israeli aggression, which threatens international and regional peace and security. We call on it to compel the occupation authorities to stop their genocide and war crimes and ensure that they are held accountable and do not enjoy impunity.

Syria stresses the need to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions in order to end the Israeli occupation of Arab territories in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. We emphasize that the crimes committed by the Israeli occupation entity will not prevent our peoples from continuing their struggle for their legitimate rights and the liberation of their usurped territories. Syria will continue to support the Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle to establish an independent, sovereign State on their national land, with Jerusalem as its capital, and to become a full Member of the United Nations. Syria also stresses its inherent right to recover the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, whose resilient people we salute. We salute their attachment to their Syrian national identity and their rejection of all plans to annex their land and impose Israeli nationality on them. We call once again on Mr. Wennesland to fulfil his mandate and to stop ignoring the Israeli violations against Syria and the aggressive practices of the Israeli occupation against our people in the occupied Syrian Golan.

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

Mr. Vasconcelos y Cruz (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico is participating in this all-too-recurring debate in the hope that the concerted voices of the international community in favour of urgent peace in the Middle East will be truly heard in the Security Council. Regrettably, reality shows us that this is a critical time for peace, and consequently for the urgent need to act collectively in order to create stability in the region.

First of all, my country deplores the fact that as a result of the reprehensible attacks perpetrated by Hamas against the Israeli population in October last year, the disproportionate hostilities against the Palestinian population have increased day after day.

To reiterate Mexico's position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, we believe that a definitive solution can be reached only on the basis of a two-State solution, which must address Israel's legitimate security concerns and at the same time enable the consolidation of a politically and economically viable Palestinian State, within internationally recognized borders, in accordance with repeated resolutions of the United Nations, which have gone unimplemented. It is alarming that despite the Security Council's decisions, the scourge of war is still present, and worse still, the numbers of the dead and displaced are reaching devastating levels, the humanitarian assistance and aid are increasingly inadequate and international humanitarian law is being grossly violated.

The attack on elements of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the declaration of the Secretary-General as *persona non grata* and the possible actions against the legal status of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have no justification and are testing the institutions of the multilateral system, created precisely in order to preserve human dignity. UNRWA's activities are vital to humanitarian assistance in Palestine. Mexico deeply deplores the recent decisions of the Israeli authorities, which are contrary to international humanitarian law and impede the Agency's ability to fulfil its mandate. Mexico reiterates its full support for UNRWA and calls urgently on all the parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law.

My country commends the diplomatic efforts that various countries continue to make to secure a ceasefire in Gaza. At the same time, we urge for détente and an end to actions that could escalate into a broader regional conflict with irreversible consequences. The Security Council should not be an obstacle to further efforts to achieve peaceful solutions and full respect for international law.

The President (*spoke in French*): 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 express our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Ignazio Cassis for presiding over today's important meeting, especially considering the dangerous circumstances in the region. We also thank Mr. Tor Wennesland for his valuable briefing.

The United Arab Emirates aligns itself with the statements to be made on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Amid the catastrophic circumstances in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, the United Arab Emirates reiterates its call for a ceasefire, the urgent, complete and unhindered delivery of aid and the release of the hostages and detainees. Those demands have become increasingly important in view of the dangerous developments in the Gaza Strip. In just the past few weeks, Israeli attacks have killed hundreds of civilians and displaced more than 60,000 people yet again, while more than 90 per cent of the population is now at risk of severe food insecurity due to the sharp decline in humanitarian, food and commercial imports since September. We are deeply concerned about the statement by Ms. Joyce Msuya, Acting Emergency Relief Coordinator, indicating that the population in northern Gaza is at risk of death, and about the reports of civilians there being besieged, killed and starved, with families being separated. My country condemns all those serious violations, including the attacks on hospitals and the ongoing attacks on humanitarian and medical workers. In that regard, we deeply regret the postponement of the final phase of the polio vaccination campaign in northern Gaza, which is putting the lives of many children at risk.

While we continue to call on the Security Council to take action to save innocent civilians, we want to remind the parties of the need to be committed to

implementing the four resolutions that the Council has adopted since the beginning of the war, as well as all the previous relevant resolutions. We also urge all parties to comply with the provisions of international law, including international humanitarian law. We stress the need for Israel to respect its obligations as the occupying Power, including the protection of civilians.

My country strongly condemns the Israeli Knesset's adoption of two laws banning the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and preventing it from carrying out its basic work in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in contravention of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international norms. We stress the importance of the role undertaken by UNRWA in providing humanitarian assistance, which is essential and vital, especially in the light of the ongoing war on Gaza. We also condemn the Israeli policies and practices that are undermining the possibility of a two-State solution and threatening the future of peace in the region. That includes the continued expansion of settlement building in the West Bank, which constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and numerous Security Council resolutions. We stress that mutual peace can be achieved only by establishing an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The serious escalation in Lebanon has given rise to deep concern about the risk that the circle of conflict could expand into a regional war. The United Arab Emirates condemns Israel's continued violation of Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 1701 (2006), its ongoing aggression against Lebanon and its repeated attacks on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, which are undermining peacekeeping efforts. The United Arab Emirates stresses its full support for Lebanon's sovereignty and independence. We will continue to make every diplomatic and humanitarian effort, including the provision of an urgent relief aid package of \$100 million to our brothers in Lebanon, and another of \$30 million to Lebanese refugees in Syria, in parallel with our ongoing efforts to alleviate humanitarian suffering in Gaza.

In conclusion, I call on all parties in the region to exercise restraint, de-escalate tensions, promote dialogue and respect international law and State sovereignty as the foundations for resolving the current crises.

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

Ms. Schwalger (New Zealand): I thank the Swiss presidency of the Council for organizing today's debate.

I am pleased to be delivering this statement on behalf of Australia, Canada, and my own country, New Zealand.

Since the last open debate on this issue (see S/PV.9687), the conflict in the Middle East has expanded and is pushing us away from a path towards peace. We call on all parties to take action to de-escalate the tensions, and we urge all parties to agree to ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon. One year on from 7 October 2023, we remain unequivocal in our condemnation of the terrorist organization Hamas. Then as now, we remain appalled by Hamas's brutality and the taking of hostages. Hamas must release all remaining hostages immediately. The death of Yahya Sinwar, the leader of Hamas, represents an opportunity to secure the immediate release of the hostages and a ceasefire. We condemn Iran's attack on Israel on 1 October unequivocally and call on all the parties to break the cycle of retaliation to prevent a wider regional conflict. We also urge Iran to refrain from stoking violence in the region, including through its support for militant groups. We condemn the attacks on Israel by Hizbullah and the Houthis and urge both groups to lay down their arms.

We urge Israel to exercise restraint and listen to the concerns of the international community. We respect Israel's right to defend itself. But the right of self-defence is not unconstrained. It must comply with international law, including international humanitarian law. The protection of civilians and the humanitarian workers who deliver the food, water and medicine that civilians need to survive is paramount. We condemn Israel's killing of civilians in its recent operations in Gaza and call on it to allow the essential supplies of humanitarian assistance to flow in line with binding orders of the International Court of Justice. Palestinians cannot pay the price for the defeat of Hamas.

We are alarmed at Israel's attacks on United Nations peacekeeping troops and its unreasonable demands for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to vacate its positions in southern Lebanon, in contravention of its Security Council mandate. We are gravely concerned about the fact that the attacks are seriously jeopardizing the safety and

security of UNIFIL forces and setting a dangerous and unwelcome precedent. Resolution 1701 (2006) must be upheld, and we urge all parties to adhere to its provisions. We are also alarmed at Israel's treatment of United Nations agencies and the unjustified attacks on the Secretary-General himself. We have confidence in Secretary-General Guterres. We strongly support his role and welcome his continued engagement on the interconnected crises in the Middle East.

United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continue to be essential to the humanitarian response in Gaza. Recent legislative action taken by Israel threatens UNRWA's ability to provide vital assistance to civilians in need and runs contrary to the mandate given to the Agency by the General Assembly and supported by the Security Council. The United Nations system has an important role to play in the future of the region as we work towards a two-State solution, and it must be allowed to do its job, as mandated by the Council and the Member States. We call on the parties to return to negotiations that can help achieve a two-State solution. That remains the best option for arriving at a just and enduring peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

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

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan commends Switzerland and Ambassador Baeriswyl, as well as you, Madam President, for your country's successful presidency of the Council and for convening this important debate on the grave situation in Palestine and the Middle East. We also thank Mr. Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his important briefing.

The war in Palestine has gone on for more than a year. With each passing month, the circle of conflict and violence has enlarged. Israel's illegal and disproportionate use of force against Gaza and its people, the people of the West Bank, and against Lebanon, Syria and Iran, constitutes a blatant violation of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Neither the United Nations nor its agencies have been spared. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), with hundreds of its members killed, a blatant attack on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, a peacekeeping mission, and attacks

on our Secretary-General himself are features of the aggression that we are confronting.

The world is also witnessing the most egregious violations of international humanitarian law in recent history — what the International Court of Justice has called plausible genocide. The humanitarian crisis is being deliberately exacerbated by the blockade of aid and a strategy of starvation. The targeted shutdown of UNRWA — a lifeline for Palestinians, especially in Gaza — is part of that genocidal campaign. This deliberate and inhuman aggression clearly reflects the extremist agenda of Israeli leaders who are seeking to ensure their political survival by expanding the conflict, perpetuating the occupation and preventing the achievement of a two-State solution. Israel's unchecked aggression against Lebanon, Syria and Iran, which Pakistan has condemned, also threatens a wider war engulfing the entire Middle East.

Despite the Security Council and the General Assembly's adoption of a number of resolutions calling for a ceasefire, and despite the binding orders of the International Court of Justice and the public outcry of world opinion, the international community has failed to halt the Israel aggression. It is facile to blame the Council alone. The reasons for Israel's sense of impunity are self-evident. It is appalling that Israel continues to receive unimpeded weapon supplies to sustain its campaign of aggression and slaughter of innocents.

We are at a critical moment in history. Israel's ongoing aggression is not only destabilizing the region, but it is also a systemic threat to global peace and security and the world order. There is no precedent for its rogue behaviour. The Security Council and the global community now face a decisive choice. We must take concrete action to uphold the Charter and international legality or risk a collapse of the world order that has been built on the foundations of the Charter, with more and more States acting with impunity and aggression against their neighbours.

We must first and foremost mobilize the political consensus to enforce an immediate and unconditional ceasefire under Chapter VII of the Charter. Pleading with Israel has done no good. The Council should propose robust measures to impose a cost on Israel for its defiance, including instituting an arms embargo, holding accountable those responsible for the crimes being committed in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon through appropriate judicial mechanisms, reviewing

Israel's membership in the United Nations and taking other such measures that can be agreed on by the Council, the General Assembly and individual Member States.

Secondly, we must break Israel's humanitarian blockade of Gaza. Israel must be obliged to allow essential supplies, food and medical aid into Gaza. In that regard, it is important to protect and strengthen UNRWA. Israel must not be permitted to delegitimize that vital Agency, and international support for UNRWA's mission must be guaranteed.

Thirdly, we must initiate a political process for durable peace, especially through the implementation of General Assembly resolution ES-10/24, including the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Israeli military forces from the occupied Palestinian territory; an end to Israel's unlawful policies and practices; the dismantling of illegal settlements; ensuring reparations for damages; compliance with the orders of the International Court of Justice; implementing the right of return for displaced Palestinians; and ensuring that the Palestinian people can exercise their right to self-determination and establish a sovereign, independent and contiguous State in their homeland. Palestine must be immediately admitted to the United Nations as a full Member State in order to make a two-State solution irreversible.

Pakistan calls on the Security Council and the international community to act decisively and fulfil their duty to maintain peace and security. The time for half-measures has passed. We must act — and act now — to prevent further bloodshed and work for a lasting solution based on humanity, justice and security for the Palestinians and all the States of the region.

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

Ms. Joyini (South Africa): We thank the Swiss Confederation for convening today's open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. We also thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process for his briefing this morning.

South Africa aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We also align ourselves with the statement made earlier by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the core group of the shared commitments in support of the

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Yesterday South Africa filed its memorial to the International Court of Justice in the *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*. The memorial contains evidence that shows how the Government of Israel has violated the Genocide Convention and continues to ignore and defy several orders on provisional measures of the Court. The evidence will show that undergirding Israel's genocidal acts is a special intent to commit genocide and a failure by Israel to prevent incitement to genocide and genocide itself, as well as its failure to punish those inciting and committing acts of genocide. The evidence is detailed in more than 750 pages of text, supported by more than 4,000 pages of exhibits and annexes. While the memorial is comprehensive, nothing can fully capture the actual devastation of Palestinians living in Gaza as a result of the actions of the State of Israel. South Africa's memorial is once again a reminder to the global community to remember the people of Palestine, stand in solidarity with them and stop the catastrophe, which has been possible only because Israel has failed to comply with its international obligations despite the orders of the International Court of Justice and the actions and interventions of numerous United Nations bodies.

Last week we commemorated the seventy-ninth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations was created to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. To live up to that aspiration, all nations must insist on compliance with the Charter and international law. The action taken by South Africa, joined by other States, is aimed primarily at stopping a genocide in Palestine peacefully, by holding Israel accountable through the institutions set up by the United Nations for that very purpose. Israel has effectively been granted unprecedented impunity for breaching international law and norms, which has imperilled the institutions of global governance that were established to hold all States accountable.

The recent developments in Palestine and the wider Middle East are alarming. Despite our collective warning and appeal for a cessation of hostilities in Gaza and the region, the situation is deteriorating by the day. That is in spite of the Security Council's adoption on 10 June of 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 urged both Israel and Hamas to implement it fully and without delay or conditions. Unfortunately, since then the Israeli occupying State has continued to violate the resolution and international law, including by intensifying its genocide and perpetrating extrajudicial killings. Four months after the adoption of resolution 2735 (2024), we are witnessing blatant disregard for international human rights law and international humanitarian law. We are appalled by the continuing violence against Palestinians and the shocking targeted attacks on schools and medical facilities sheltering Palestinians.

Let us remember that in 2016 the Council adopted resolution 2286 (2016), co-sponsored by more than 18 Member States. The resolution condemned attacks and threats against the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities. It appears that for some, the resolution does not apply to the people of Palestine and Lebanon. The resolution also demanded that all the parties to an armed conflict comply fully with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law, as applicable, and international humanitarian law, in particular their obligations under the Geneva Conventions. And it is clear that for some, the provision applies to all except the State of Israel. We want to repeat again that the resolutions adopted by the Council, and international law as a whole, cannot be selectively applied. Giving rights to some and protecting a select few is something that we as South Africans are well aware of.

The measures being taken by Israel against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), including the adoption of legislation by the Israeli Parliament to prevent UNRWA from continuing its life-saving operations and essential work in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem, must be deplored. Israel's banning of UNRWA is an additional violation of international law and contravenes the provisional measures mandated by the International Court of Justice, which require immediate and effective steps to ensure the provision of essential services and humanitarian aid so as to alleviate the severe living

conditions of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. As the occupying Power, Israel is further obligated under the Fourth Geneva Convention, specifically its article 59, to facilitate humanitarian assistance to the population across the entire occupied Palestinian territory.

South Africa reaffirms its full support for UNRWA's indispensable role in providing life-saving humanitarian assistance and human development services. The Agency is the backbone of humanitarian operations in Gaza and has championed human development for Palestinian refugees in the occupied Palestinian territory, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. It is therefore important for countries to reaffirm their political and financial support to the Agency's vital work. Curtailing its operations means condemning Palestinians to even more death and suffering. From an operational standpoint, the entire humanitarian response in Gaza, which relies on UNRWA's infrastructure, will disintegrate. Again, we want to be clear that UNRWA is a United Nations agency. It is our Agency. It represents the United Nations. If the international community were to accept the banning of a United Nations agency it would set a terrible precedent that could lead to a similar fate for similar agencies elsewhere in the world. That would spell disaster for the multilateral system of goodwill and all the millions whose safety and welfare are dependent on such agencies. We reiterate our call to the international community to maintain its solidarity with UNRWA and provide it with the necessary financial and political support. That solidarity is reflected in the statement of shared commitments on UNRWA, an initiative spearheaded by Kuwait, Jordan and Slovenia and signed by 123 Member States, including South Africa.

The situation in Gaza has now expanded to Lebanon and beyond. The brewing tensions between Israel and Iran are of great concern. All sides must exercise restraint and work towards peace, because the region is now on the verge of an all-out, catastrophic regional conflict. South Africa has continually stressed that irrespective of whether States believe that the use of force is lawful, it is never wise to resort to war, as it is inevitably ordinary people who suffer the most as a consequence of war.

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

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate Switzerland on its successful presidency of the Security Council this month and thank it for convening this important periodic meeting. I am grateful to Mr. Wennesland for his briefing. Today I also want to reiterate Tunisia's support and appreciation for the efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres to bring about a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon and promote de-escalation in the Middle East.

While we underscore the importance of the continuing international and United Nations efforts to end the war of annihilation and the occupation forces' unprecedented acts of aggression against the Palestinian people, which have now gone on for more than a year, the question now is what comes next, considering that the Council and the General Assembly have held many meetings and adopted numerous resolutions, none of which have been implemented.

The killings, destruction, starvation and siege, and the magnitude of the terrible humanitarian tragedy in Gaza, have surpassed all expectations. The occupation forces continue to defy the will of the international community and to flout international law, including international humanitarian law, along with all the resolutions of international legitimacy, including those of the Security Council. They have continued to expand the scope of their aggression and their military operations against Lebanon, Syria and Iran, exposing the region to the worst possible dangers and posing a serious threat to international peace and security.

Meanwhile, as part of their exacerbation of the suffering of millions of refugees and displaced persons, the occupation authorities have approved a decision prohibiting the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East from carrying out its mandate, in a flagrant violation of the rules governing all international and humanitarian instruments — a decision that we condemn in the strongest terms. It is unacceptable for the international community to remain silent about such crimes and acts of aggression and to stand idly by in the face of the continued suffering of Palestinians in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, which includes people's repeated displacement, systematic killings, the denial of humanitarian aid and the targeting of medical and relief teams as well as United Nations staff.

Since the beginning of the aggression, Tunisia has called upon the international community and the

Security Council to shoulder their responsibility and impose a ceasefire, and to implement United Nations resolutions, while holding the occupation authorities accountable for their crimes and practices.

However, nothing has happened, and that emboldened the authorities to continue to act in utter disregard for international law, and continue their operations, which have thus far martyred and injured more than 150,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and displaced more than 2 million Palestinians. Furthermore, those authorities have destroyed all infrastructure and ignited a regional war. Meanwhile, the settlers' crimes and the crimes of the occupation forces continue in the West Bank.

We therefore repeat our question: what else must happen, beyond what has already happened, and what further crimes and violations must the occupying Power commit for the international community to take a firm stance, free of any political considerations and double standards; to put an end to all acts of aggression by the occupation; to end the suffering of the Palestinian people and the current escalation in the region; to enforce the principles of truth, justice, human rights, international law and the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations; and to hold the occupation authorities accountable for their crimes?

Tunisia underscores its full solidarity with the brotherly country of Lebanon in its efforts to confront the brutal attacks by the occupation army on its land and to defend its national security and sovereignty. We also condemn the attacks on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. Tunisia also stands in solidarity with the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic in the face of the repeated attacks by the occupation army on Syrian territories and the violation of its sovereignty. My country warns against the grave consequences of the occupation forces' attacks on Iranian territories and their attempt to ignite a destructive regional war.

In conclusion, we reaffirm Tunisia's principled and firm position in support of the brotherly Palestinian people in their resilience against the occupation and genocide war, and in their struggle to recover their legitimate rights that are not subject to statute of limitations, foremost of which is the right to self-determination and to the establishment of a sovereign independent State on all Palestinian territories, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as the capital.

We call for further collective efforts to ensure an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, to protect civilians, to accelerate the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance and to stop supplies of ammunition and arms to the occupation forces.

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

Mr. Lambrinidis: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union is deeply alarmed by the dramatic military escalation in the Middle East and the risk that it represents for the entire region. We call again on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint, put an end to all hostilities immediately and fully abide by international law, including international humanitarian law. We are fully committed to working towards de-escalation and support all efforts in that direction, and we are committed to scaling up our significant humanitarian assistance. We urge the international community to increase its humanitarian aid as well, given the massive needs.

The EU reiterates its call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the unconditional release of all hostages, the urgent improvement of access and sustained distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale throughout Gaza, and an enduring end to hostilities, in line with resolution 2735 (2024). To that end, we support the mediation efforts of Egypt, Qatar and the United States. We also recognize the central role of Jordan in de-escalating the crisis, and we emphasize the importance of the stability and security of Jordan and Egypt and their borders.

We deplore the unacceptable number of civilian casualties, especially women and children, in Gaza and the West Bank, and the catastrophic levels of hunger and imminent risk of famine caused by the insufficient entry of aid into Gaza. We condemn the further escalation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, following increased settler violence, the expansion of illegal settlements and Israel's military operation. We call for safe access to the holy sites and for the status quo to be upheld.

The EU will work towards further restrictive measures against extremist settlers and against entities

and organizations that support them. The EU recalls the need to fully implement the International Court of Justice orders, and we reiterate our strong support for the Court as one of the main pillars of the international judicial system. The EU reiterates its unwavering commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, based on the two-State solution, and its support to the Palestinian Authority to help address its most pressing needs and support its reform agenda. The EU will actively support and engage with international partners on concrete irreversible steps towards the two-State solution, reviving a political process to that end, including through the holding of an international peace conference as soon as possible. We reaffirm our commitment to implement resolution 2334 (2016) and stress that a credible pathway to Palestinian statehood is a crucial component of that political process.

In the light of the recent Knesset decisions, the EU condemns any attempt to abrogate the 1967 agreement between Israel and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) or to otherwise attempt to obstruct its capacity to operate its mandate. We stress the essential role of the United Nations and its agencies, notably UNRWA — which provides crucial support to the civilian population, both in Gaza and the wider region. Continued implementation of the UNRWA action plan is key.

The EU condemns once again, in the strongest possible terms, Hamas' brutal terrorist attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023, and stands with the families of the victims and the hostages taken by Hamas. We condemn in the strongest terms the Iranian attacks on Israel on 1 October, and Iran's seriously destabilizing actions throughout the Middle East, through terrorist and armed groups — including the Houthis, Hizbullah and Hamas — which constitute a serious threat to regional stability. The EU reiterates Israel's right to defend itself, in line with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, in all circumstances and the European Union's commitment to Israel's security and to regional stability. We also stress again that international humanitarian law must be respected by all parties and that the dangerous cycle of attacks and retaliations must end.

We are gravely concerned by the military escalation in Lebanon and deplore the unacceptable number of civilian casualties, the forced displacement caused by

escalating violence and the persistent use of military force. We recall the need to ensure that civilians are protected at all times, that civilian infrastructure is not targeted and that international law is respected. Rocket attacks by Hizbullah must stop. Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected. We reiterate our strong support for the State institutions of Lebanon, including the Lebanese armed forces. The EU calls on all partners of Lebanon to contribute to strengthening the Lebanese armed forces and reaffirms the Union's readiness to facilitate international coordination of such efforts, as appropriate.

We call for an immediate ceasefire across the Blue Line, and for full and symmetrical implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). We call on all partners to respond to the growing humanitarian crisis in Lebanon and continue to provide support to the people affected, including refugees, internally displaced people and host communities. The EU welcomes the mobilization of the international community at the International Conference in Support of Lebanon's People and Sovereignty, held in Paris on 24 October.

We condemn the attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which left several peacekeepers wounded. Such attacks constitute a grave violation of international law, are totally unacceptable and must stop immediately. The EU recalls that all actors have an obligation to take the necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and property and to respect the inviolability of United Nations premises at all times. We support UNIFIL's fundamental stabilization role in southern Lebanon and call on all parties to protect and support its important mission. The EU urges all parties to fully uphold their obligations to guarantee the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel at all times and to allow UNIFIL to continue to implement its mandate.

Let me reiterate the EU's full support for the Secretary-General, stressing that nowhere should the Secretary-General be declared *persona non grata*. The EU reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the rules-based international order, with the United Nations and the Charter at its core.

In conclusion, allow me to turn briefly to the situation in Syria. The fundamental and political rationale of our position on Syria has not changed. We strongly call on the regime to engage in the implementation of resolution 2254 (2015) under the

auspices of Special Envoy Pedersen. In that regard, we deplore the obstruction of the political process by the regime, together with its allies, Russia and Iran, and the regime's continued attacks, including in densely populated areas, in several parts of Syria. The EU stands firm as the main humanitarian donor and reiterates its continued support for the Syrian people, as we have done so far, including through the organization of the annual Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region.

The EU's full statement will be available online.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Iravani (Islamic Republic of Iran): Gaza has endured a relentless campaign of devastation and suffering over the past year. Israel's aggressive and genocidal acts have inflicted unprecedented damage on civilians in Gaza. The northern Gaza Strip is now under a brutal siege, and Israel's military operations have turned densely populated areas such as Jabaliya into active conflict zones, trapping civilians with no access to food, water or medical care. The prolonged siege has forced civilians to make the impossible choice of whether to flee under fire or risk death where they are, while humanitarian aid remains blocked, in clear defiance of international humanitarian law. Civilians, including countless children and families, are being systematically deprived of essential services, facing starvation, a lack of medical aid and a constant threat of displacement. The Israeli apartheid regime continues to use starvation as a weapon. For more than two weeks, all humanitarian aid to Gaza has been halted. The blockade has suspended efforts to deliver essential vaccinations and other life-saving services indefinitely. Those actions are more than a denial of aid; they are a direct attack on the dignity and rights of Palestinians, an attempt to undermine their fundamental right to life.

Gaza must remain whole, and its people must not be forced into displacement or subjected to such calculated oppression. We strongly condemn the recent Israeli legislation to target the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which seeks to block it from delivering critical support. That act of collective punishment, as recognized by the Secretary-General, directly contravenes the Charter of the United Nations and Israel's legal obligations. UNRWA remains the

backbone of the overall humanitarian response in Gaza. Targeting it denies Palestinians vital support and adds yet another layer of hardship during the crisis.

Israel's unchecked impunity for widespread and systematic atrocities in the Gaza Strip, along with the unconditional political, military and economic support it receives from certain Western backers, including the European Union, and primarily the United States, has only emboldened its aggressive and expansionist policies across the region. That reckless agenda has now extended the conflict to Lebanon, posing a grave threat to both regional and international peace and security. Israel has disregarded the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice calling for it to stop its wrongful acts. It continues its atrocities in Gaza and Lebanon — actions that clearly constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and even genocide. Just three days ago, the regime committed yet another crime and act of aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Israel's apartheid and occupying regime is a real threat to international peace and security. The Security Council stands at a crucial juncture: either act decisively to stop the Israeli war machine and prevent further genocide, war and aggression, or tacitly permit those atrocities to continue unchecked.

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

Mr. Chaivaivid (Thailand): I wish to thank the Swiss Confederation for convening today's quarterly open debate.

Thailand expresses its grave concern about the unprecedented and escalating levels of violence and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the region. We repeat our call for an immediate, full and complete ceasefire. We appeal to all sides to comply with their obligations under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. In that regard, the Security Council must urgently uphold its mandate and act to implement its own resolutions. Thailand opposes all forms of violence and attacks against civilians, regardless of their nationality. We also oppose actions that would result in the forced displacement or transfer of civilians from Gaza. The protection of civilians must

be a priority at all times. That includes the protection of United Nations staff and premises. We also reiterate our plea for the immediate and unconditional release of all remaining hostages, including Thai nationals, as well as their proper treatment and care pending their release.

As hostilities continue intensively, Thailand calls for the continued provision of the needed humanitarian assistance for all civilians. We emphasize the need to ensure uninterrupted humanitarian access, the protection of humanitarian personnel, their freedom of movement and the unimpeded provision of urgently needed basic humanitarian services in Gaza. In that regard, the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East is indispensable and irreplaceable. It is the backbone of aid response to generations of Palestinian in Gaza and the wider region. It is a pillar of regional stability. Thailand commends the Agency's unwavering dedication to fulfilling its mandate in line with the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. We echo the Member States' concerns about the serious humanitarian, political and security risks that would result from any interruption or suspension of its irreplaceable work.

At this time of heightened tensions, Thailand is alarmed by the threats and dangers posed to United Nations personnel, including peacekeepers, and its premises. As a long-standing troop- and police-contributing country, we urge all parties to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and to respect the inviolability of United Nations premises at all times. Thailand adheres to the fundamental principles of the Charter and emphasizes the vital role of the Secretary-General in advancing the purposes of the United Nations in pursuit of international peace and security, including lasting peace in the Middle East. We continue to call on all parties for a de-escalation of this volatile situation. Thailand reaffirms its support for genuine dialogue to find a mutually agreed, peaceful solution to the issue, in accordance with the two-State solution, whereby the States of Israel and Palestine live side-by-side in peace and security, within secure and recognized borders, consistent with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

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

Mr. Gómez Hernández (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): More than a year has passed since the brutal Hamas

terrorist attacks against Israel, and Spain reiterates its support for the families of the victims and the hostages kidnapped by Hamas. Violence in the region, especially after the start of Israel's ground offensive in Lebanon and Iran and Israel's attacks against one another, have changed the situation there. We are deeply concerned about the dramatic military escalation and the risk it poses to the entire region and urge all parties to exercise maximum restraint and end all hostilities immediately. The suffering of Gaza's civilian population, with more than 43,000 casualties, and the long duration of the hostages' captivity are unacceptable. The recent attacks on hospitals and schools throughout the Gaza Strip demonstrate that there is nowhere safe for civilians in Gaza. Spain condemns in the strongest terms such unjustified acts of deliberate violence and demands immediate compliance with the interim measures issued by the International Court of Justice. A permanent ceasefire remains key to regional de-escalation and the only means to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population in Gaza, together with the rapid, massive and uninterrupted entry of humanitarian aid and the safe and immediate release of hostages, in accordance with resolution 2735 (2024). We therefore continue to support the mediation efforts of Qatar, Egypt and the United States.

In the context of the humanitarian crisis, the United Nations and especially the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) play a vital role for millions of Palestinian refugees in Gaza and throughout the region. We therefore condemn the adoption of legislation preventing UNRWA from operating in the occupied Palestinian territory and condemn the deaths of 231 of its workers. As Chair of the UNRWA Advisory Commission, Spain is actively working to raise the Agency's profile, build bridges between donor and recipient countries and prepare UNRWA for the stabilization and reconstruction phase in Gaza. Obstructing humanitarian work is unacceptable. Respect for international law and international humanitarian law must guide the actions of the international community.

The day after the end of hostilities, it will be essential to move towards stabilization and reconstruction. To that end, we underline that Gaza and the West Bank must be ruled by a unified Government in both Gaza and the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority, which is our partner for peace and will require the full support of the international community. That is why

such support must be directed to the ambitious reform programme that Prime Minister Mustafa has begun to implement. However, it will not be enough if the Palestinian Authority does not have access to its own resources, which Israel must release.

In order to face the challenges ahead, both the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people need a political perspective that offers a horizon of future potential and dignity. The recognition of the State of Palestine is a key factor in the political solution — a first step in the materialization of the two-State solution, which is the only path to peace in the region. We therefore reiterate our call for a peace conference, with the parties and the international community, as the best framework in which to move forward. The United Nations must adopt that proposal as its own and turn its every aspect into a reality so that it can be carried out with the greatest possible level of international legitimacy. The upcoming meeting of the global alliance tomorrow in Riyadh will provide us with the opportunity to implement the two-State solution and find concrete ways to move towards a just and lasting peace in the region.

We are concerned about the increasing level of violence in Lebanon and the number of civilian casualties and displaced persons. A ceasefire is urgently needed to allow for the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), which includes the elements necessary to finding a long-term solution. Lebanon's sovereignty must be respected. Spain has condemned the attacks against densely populated areas in Lebanon, just as we have repeatedly condemned Hizbullah's attacks against Israel. We have raised €5 million of humanitarian aid in 2024, which includes €1.6 million raised in recent weeks. Two aid shipments have arrived in Beirut with 12 tons of medical and healthcare supplies.

Attacks against peacekeeping operations are a violation of international law. We condemn the attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and demand that the parties comply with their obligations and ensure the safety of all its personnel. Under the command of Spanish Lieutenant General Aroldo Lázaro Sáenz, UNIFIL has been working in a very complex environment for the past year to prevent a further escalation of tensions. We are also concerned about the attacks against the Lebanese Armed Forces, which must not be drawn into the conflict. They have a crucial role to play in ensuring the stability of Lebanon,

which must be preserved, and Spain will maintain its support through UNIFIL and bilaterally.

There is no military alternative to a political solution to the conflict. We support the efforts of the United States and France to achieve a political agreement between Israel and Lebanon, which necessarily involves the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). We stand ready to support additional implementation mechanisms to achieve that goal, but ultimately it is up to the parties to implement the resolution. Any changes affecting UNIFIL's mandate must be addressed in close coordination with troop-contributing countries.

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

Mrs. Narváez Ojeda (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Switzerland for convening this quarterly open debate and for its presidency of the Security Council this month. We have taken note of the briefing by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the statements by the representatives of other Member States.

Chile aligns itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We reiterate that Chile promotes the two-State solution and the right of Israel and Palestine to live in harmony, within secure and recognized international borders, and with full respect for the human rights of all their citizens. We reiterate our support for the State of Palestine to become a full-fledged member of the United Nations. In that regard, we urgently call for full and prompt compliance with the relevant resolutions that support the right of the Palestinian people to a sovereign State, including General Assembly resolutions 181 (1947) and 242 (1967), as well as 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 basis and constitutes a violation of international law. Therefore, we reject Israel's policy of expansion and confiscation of land in the occupied West Bank. The policy does not solidify one of the parties' positions, but rather fuels tensions and is a step in the wrong direction that veers away from finding a negotiated two-State solution.

That is why our country co-sponsored the resolution submitted by Palestine, entitled "Advisory

opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and from the illegality of Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" (General Assembly resolution ES-10/24), which was adopted by a large majority at the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly.

Chile has unequivocally condemned the actions of Hamas, as well as all terrorist acts, acts of violence and hostilities against the civilian population. We demand the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages still held by Hamas, ensuring their well-being and treatment in accordance with international law. Undoubtedly the terrorist acts perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and the indiscriminate response by 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.

We are alarmed by the conflict's repercussions on and ramifications for the rest of the region. We join others in demanding an immediate and permanent ceasefire, a greater flow of humanitarian assistance to Gaza, guarantees for full, immediate, safe, unimpeded and sustained access for humanitarian aid, which is to say the removal of all obstacles to such assistance and the facilitation of the use of all available land routes into the Gaza Strip. We are concerned about the siege imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip because it has meant depriving its population of basic necessities, such as food, water, medicine and fuel, causing widespread hunger and disease. We welcome the fact that the first polio vaccination campaigns in Gaza have managed to take place during the agreed humanitarian pauses. We encourage aid teams to achieve the goal of reaching more at-risk children. But it was with dismay that we learned that the campaign had to be postponed in some areas of the north owing to violence. It is clear that polio will spread should the final phase of the vaccination campaign continue to be delayed in reaching the north.

We encourage all parties involved, as well as the international community, to continue working towards ending the war. That will be possible only through diplomacy and dialogue. We recognize the efforts that friendly countries have made in attempts to reduce tensions. There is no doubt that the protection of human life must be our top priority, but the Security Council has thus far failed to achieve it. We call for genuine

awareness of the devastating consequences of the war on present and future generations. It is maddening to know that the spiral of violence continues to cost the lives of thousands of Palestinian civilians, while food insecurity is affecting virtually the entire population in the Gaza Strip. We are particularly sensitive to the plight of the innocent women and children who have suffered in this catastrophe. We underline the fact that violence cannot be resolved with further violence. We extend our deepest sympathies to those who have been injured.

We call for the full implementation of the four resolutions adopted by the Council in the past year, namely, resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023), 2728 (2024) and 2735 (2024). We recall that all resolutions of this organ are binding and must be complied with and respected. We highlight the press statement issued by the Council on 10 May regarding the mass graves in Gaza. We recall resolution 2730 (2024), adopted on 24 May, which demands that the parties to the conflict comply with their obligations under international law and urges all States to immediately undertake thorough and impartial investigations into violations perpetrated against United Nations and humanitarian personnel.

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. It is with deep regret that we mourn the deaths of 237 of its staff members in this war, as well as personnel of other humanitarian agencies. In that regard, we condemn all attacks on UNRWA staff and headquarters, including schools and shelters. We recognize the essential role of UNRWA for millions of Palestinian refugees and the need for the Agency to have the resources necessary to carry out its activities.

In that regard, we share the concern expressed by Commissioner-General Lazzarini in his letter circulated to Member States yesterday, alerting them to legislation passed by the Israeli Parliament that restricts and blocks the Agency's activities to provide humanitarian assistance and other services to Palestinian refugees in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories in East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank. As stated in that letter, my country, Chile, is particularly concerned about the humanitarian consequences of the implementation of such legislation, leaving millions of Palestinian refugees even further behind. We condemn

the decision of the Israeli Parliament and wish to stress that UNRWA's mandate was granted to it by the General Assembly, and that such legislation represents a serious precedent for the international system.

Once again, we echo the calls of the Secretary-General himself and of the respective heads of various United Nations agencies for the de-escalation of tensions. Throughout the conflict, the work of the Secretary-General has been essential, and we therefore thank the more than 115 States that joined us in signing the letter of support for him after Israel declared him persona non grata. We also encourage the efforts of the Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza, Ms. Sigrid Kaag, in her work.

We underline that the provisional measures adopted by the International Court of Justice must be complied with by all parties. On Thursday, 12 September, Chile submitted to the International Court of Justice its statement of intervention in the case *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*. That statement was submitted in accordance with the provisions of article 63 of the Statute of the Court, which establishes the right of any State to intervene with regard to the interpretation of a convention to which it is also a party.

We recall that Chile, together with Mexico, submitted a referral to the International Criminal Court regarding the situation in Palestine with the aim of strengthening the investigation of alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity that have occurred in Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Israel — crimes covered by the Rome Statute. As there is currently an ongoing investigation by the Office of the Prosecutor of the Court regarding the situation in Palestine, the objective of Chile's submission is to support the Prosecutor in his investigation. For Chile, the clarification of facts and responsibilities, as well as accountability, are essential to ensure that such situations do not recur.

We participate in these meetings on a quarterly basis and regret that the situation is dramatically worsening. There can be no sustainable future if we do not address and resolve situations as serious as the one in the Gaza Strip today. It is essential, first and foremost, for the lives of the people who live there, but also for the United Nations as an Organization that was created to ensure peace and security. We must commit ourselves

to striving for a world in which the agreements we have reached are honoured. Trust in the multilateral system is contingent on a strong and effective response from this organ to the armed conflicts we face today.

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

Mr. Al-Fatlawi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the delegation of the Swiss Confederation for its efforts in presiding over the Security Council. We welcome the participation of His Excellency Mr. Ignazio Cassis, Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, and we thank Mr. Wennesland for his briefing.

We value the stance of the Secretary-General and his efforts to end the war against the Palestinian people, to put a stop to their suffering and to deliver humanitarian assistance. We also highly value the efforts and diplomatic engagement by various States towards that end.

The war in Gaza and the West Bank has entered its second year, and the Security Council has failed for more than a year to end the crimes and grave violations committed by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people. That has emboldened the occupying Power to continue implementing its military operations and massacres, using all types of heavy and prohibited weapons. It also led to an increase in the number of victims and to the large-scale destruction of infrastructure, residential complexes, service facilities and educational institutions, in addition to blockades, starvation and forced displacement. That has aggravated the suffering of the Palestinian people and exacerbated the humanitarian situation in an unprecedented manner, demonstrating Israel's utter disregard for laws, international instruments or humanitarian pleas, without any deterrence.

The ongoing escalation by the Israeli occupation forces, the war in occupied Palestine and its grave consequences have expanded the scope of the conflict to include other States, including Syria, Lebanon and Iran. That has also increased instability in the Middle East and constitutes a serious threat to regional and international peace, security and stability.

Many peoples around the world, multiple States and the international community are now asking: how long will the occupying Power persist in disregarding laws, resolutions and international norms without

deterrence or accountability? How can the world stand idly by in the face of those blatant violations against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples? Although numerous United Nations resolutions condemn Israeli practices and violations, the failure to implement those resolutions through legal accountability mechanisms and the fact that political cover is provided to the Israeli entity have allowed such violations to continue. Those are valid questions that remain unanswered.

We express our gratitude to those States that have adopted measures to prevent the supply of weapons to the Israeli occupation forces. We call on all Member States to adopt similar measures.

The Israeli occupation forces are no strangers to attacking United Nations humanitarian personnel and international organizations working in the Gaza Strip, especially the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, in a blatant violation of international humanitarian law. Those acts of aggression include, but are not limited to, attacking the headquarters of humanitarian organizations and hindering the delivery of essential aid to civilians. They also include repeated assaults in South Lebanon against peacekeepers, namely, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

The previous warnings by Iraq at several meetings and international forums on the consequences of the escalation were clear since the beginning of the war. The current situation requires intensified international efforts to put an end to the violence and find a just and comprehensive solution that respects the rights of the Palestinians, ends the aggression and rebuilds what has been destroyed.

While we strongly condemn those crimes and violations, we reiterate our call to the international community to act urgently and immediately to end the genocidal war. The Security Council needs to discharge its functions and legal responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. The Council needs to take effective measures to end the military operations by adopting explicit resolutions condemning the aggression, ending the plight of the Palestinian people, addressing that serious situation, guaranteeing the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, protecting the civilians and establishing effective mechanisms to hold the occupation forces accountable for their violations and end their aggression.

In conclusion, maintaining peace security and stability in the Middle East will happen only by putting an end to the Israeli aggression, ending the occupation and securing justice and dignity for the Palestinian people. Through its communication and regional and international engagement, Iraq is supporting serious international efforts to reach a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. That is the way to restore stability in the region, end the current tensions, find sustainable solutions to the Palestinian question and achieve sustainable security in the region.

Iraq expresses its solidarity with the Government and the people of Lebanon in view of the Israeli aggression. We express our solidarity with the Syrian Arab Republic. Iraq reiterates its support for the Palestinian people in achieving their aspirations and right to self-determination and establishing their independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

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

Mr. Román Morey (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): More than a year has passed since Hamas's terrorist attacks on Israeli and other civilians on 7 October 2023. Peru condemned those attacks immediately and strongly, because as a country that suffered an onslaught of terrorism in the past, it rejects all its forms and manifestations.

Regrettably, the situation in the Middle East has deteriorated seriously and has continued to escalate since then, with a number of violent events and worrisome developments. This increase in hostilities on various fronts throughout the Middle East is a threat to international peace and security.

Over the past year, we have noted with particular concern the reports of the serious and continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, where the civilian population suffers from alarming levels of food insecurity and lacks access to essential health services. Furthermore, it is of particular concern that, since 8 October 2023, more than 200 workers of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have died as a result of attacks by the Israel Defense Forces. UNRWA's humanitarian work is critical in the Middle East. Peru rejects any action that would impede its operations and awaits the report on the subject to be submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.

In the Gaza Strip and around the Blue Line alike, hostilities continue to cause forced displacement. Peru contributes personnel to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). That is why we are shocked by reports of attacks on positions of that peacekeeping operation.

Given this devastating picture, Peru reiterates, once again, that all parties must comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, especially the protection of civilians. That also applies when the right to defence is exercised, and the parameters established in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations must therefore be strictly followed. It must be underscored that international humanitarian law must be complied with in all circumstances and its application does not depend on reciprocity. With regard to the situation in the Gaza Strip, Peru joins the Secretary-General's calls for a ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and the guarantee of full, rapid, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian aid to the civilian population. Concerning the situation around the Blue Line, the parties must strictly comply with resolution 1701 (2006) and refrain from any action that endangers the members of UNIFIL or impedes the fulfilment of its mandate. In that regard, we support the decision of the Secretary-General and the UNIFIL command to maintain their positions. Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity must also be respected.

The situation in the Middle East is complex, and a long-term solution requires important political decisions to fulfil the commitments we have made. The first of them is the two-State solution, which must be implemented in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular those of the Security Council, given their binding nature. The political horizon is for Palestine and Israel to be two sovereign States that coexist peacefully, with internationally recognized borders and as full Members of the Organization. Another important point is that all Member States must comply with the decisions of the Security Council and the International Court of Justice, as those decisions are binding. That is the commitment we made when we ratified the United Nations Charter.

Lastly, Peru calls on all Member States to do their part in strengthening multilateralism. In that regard, Peru reiterates its strong support for the work of the Secretary-General, António Guterres, and the United Nations system as a whole.

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

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): The recent escalating and unprecedented level of hostilities in the Middle East and imminent risk of the crisis spilling over to the wider region has been astoundingly alarming. Viet Nam renews its urgent call for an immediate, enforceable and lasting ceasefire, not only in Gaza, but throughout the Middle East region, alongside the unconditional release of all hostages. We urge all parties involved to exercise the utmost restraint, engage in dialogue and adhere strictly to international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

We reiterate Viet Nam's strongest condemnation of all indiscriminate violence targeting civilians and essential civilian infrastructure and categorically reject any actions that violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any State. We call for more effective measures to ensure uninterrupted humanitarian relief for civilian populations in Gaza, Lebanon and other affected areas in the region. In that connection, we reaffirm Viet Nam's support for and appreciation of the indispensable role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in safeguarding the rights of, and providing essential humanitarian assistance to, Palestinians in distress.

Viet Nam is concerned about the unjustified criticisms and actions that have undermined the Secretary-General's efforts to carry out his mandate, especially in mediating peace and promoting dialogue among the parties concerned towards long-term and sustainable solutions. Viet Nam remains supportive of all diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalating tensions and ending hostilities in Gaza and other hotspots in the region, which is crucial for halting civilian casualties and suffering. It is our continued conviction that a lasting, equitable and peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict in Gaza, as well as the broader Middle East peace process, must be in line with the two-State solution, based on the pre-1967 borders and include East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

As we reflect on the situation in Gaza and the wider region over the past year, Viet Nam urges the Security Council to intensify its efforts to promptly address these multidimensional crises. We cannot afford

missed opportunities for peace and let another year go by without taking meaningful and united actions to end the suffering of the people in Gaza and beyond. The international community more than ever counts on the Security Council to deliver on its critical mandate.

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

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): More than a year has passed since the most recent and most catastrophic spiral of violence, death and destruction that has ravaged the Gaza Strip began, claiming, according to official figures, the lives of more than 43,000 Palestinian men, women and children. That figure, however, which does not include those who may still be under the rubble, is only a fraction of the actual death toll. We express our condolences to the families and loved ones of all innocent civilians who have been killed or injured as a result of the ongoing Israeli genocide and the deliberate efforts to foment famine, spread disease, destroy homes, communities, schools, hospitals, United Nations facilities and other vital civilian infrastructure. This is an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe. We renew our commitment to the just cause of Palestine and our solidarity with its people, whom we stand with in their struggle to achieve their inalienable right to self-determination and to realize their legitimate national aspirations. We insist on the need to redouble efforts to immediately promote a process of accountability for the commission of atrocity crimes by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people, in which all relevant mechanisms of international justice are called upon to play a responsible role, with a view to putting an end to the prevailing cycle of impunity.

The Security Council has a responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine, one which it has not yet fulfilled. It is the body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations. However, it has been prevented thus far from exercising its functions, owing to the continual use of the veto by the United States. Over time, that veto has given rise to a framework of impunity that only benefits the occupying Power, causing great loss and suffering to the Palestinian people, especially in these dark days in the Gaza Strip. In that context, we condemn Israel's decision to systematically violate its legally binding obligations, including those arising from the rules of international humanitarian law, as well

as the Security Council resolutions on the question of Palestine — which are legally binding under Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations — and the orders for provisional measures issued by the International Court of Justice. We demand that the occupying Power, which is not above the law, put an end to its disregard for international law.

The time has come for this body to adopt a resolution demanding an immediate and permanent ceasefire that is respected by all parties and to take urgent measures, within the scope of its powers under the Charter of the United Nations, to stop the direct or indirect provision of any means that could be used to further prolong this tragedy and extend it beyond the occupied Palestinian territory. That will be a step in the right direction towards ending the years of collective punishment and suffering endured by the Palestinian civilian population, and widespread destruction. It will also enable humanitarian actors on the ground, including the United Nations specialized agencies, led by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) — whose indispensable role, work and contributions we recognize and value — to provide prompt and unhindered support and assistance to those in desperate need. That includes alleviating the acute food insecurity affecting the entire population and the horrendous famine conditions in northern Gaza and providing desperately needed medical care, shelter and other assistance to the civilian population.

We reject any attempt by the occupying Power to prevent UNRWA from implementing its mandate and effectively continuing its work on the ground. We reject any attempt to oust the Agency from its offices in East Jerusalem and to seize that United Nations property, or any attempt to strip it of its privileges and immunities. Those illegal actions must cease.

Today the situation on the ground is very serious, given the lack of political will on the part of Israel, the occupying Power, to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution, as demonstrated by its rejection of all efforts aimed at ending the bloodshed. That is confirmed by its most recent actions: from threats against more than 470,000 civilians in northern Gaza, as part of a policy of ethnic cleansing known as the “Generals’ Plan”; to attempts to ignite the Middle East region as a whole; to its attempts to oust UNRWA; and, most recently, to efforts aimed at undermining the role of the United Nations, including by declaring the Secretary-General persona non grata. We reject such a decision

and further condemn Israel's repeated aggressions against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. Those aggressions demonstrate a clear intention to expand the conflict to the entire Middle East region, with devastating consequences, both regionally and globally, should the occupying Power be allowed to continue its military incursions against the territories of other sovereign and independent nations. Furthermore, we take this opportunity to reiterate that the establishment of peace in the Middle East requires Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and the Lebanese territories.

In conclusion, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its commitment to contribute to the preservation of a credible political horizon that can lead to a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the exercise of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. It is time to make real the promise of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Mauritania.

Mr. Mohamed Laghdaf (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Group of Arab States would like to thank the Swiss Confederation for convening this open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

This debate is being held at a time when the situation is continuously deteriorating in the Middle East, as the Israeli occupation army is launching a genocidal war against defenceless civilians in the Gaza Strip. The war has expanded to include Lebanon and Syria. The situation requires an honest and open debate to consider the most effective and fastest way to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control.

To that end, the Security Council must act to enforce a ceasefire and ensure the return of displaced persons to what were previously residential neighbourhoods, in addition to enabling relief agencies to deliver aid and medicines to those in need in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

A full year has passed since the beginning of the brutal war on the population of the Gaza Strip. In that war, no distinction is being made among civilians, including women, children, the elderly and the sick, leading to the killing of tens of thousands of people and displacing hundreds of thousands more, and entire neighbourhoods and residential areas are being razed to the ground. Without any deterrence or legal accountability before the international community and without conscience or a sense of human responsibility, Israel is continuing its genocidal war, using various forms of the most lethal means.

The current situation in the Gaza Strip, and in the northern part in particular, is further proof of the genocide perpetrated by the Israeli war Government, as 500,000 civilians there are in imminent danger as a result of the Israeli killing machine. There are limited options for civilians, including women, children and the elderly. They must either evacuate and be forcibly displaced or stay and die by starvation or bombing by the most lethal weapons. That is the so-called plan of the generals — to clear the area by bombing refugee camps and hospitals and turning the northern part of the Gaza Strip into a military zone.

Under the ongoing genocidal war, famine and the absence of basic services have begun to kill the remaining residents of the Strip — as if they were living on a distant island on which the world does not hear their pain or feel the horrible conditions under which they suffer. The world has abandoned them, thus emboldening Israel to fully disregard all the instruments and values on which the international system is based by targeting the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and launching attacks and unfounded accusations in an attempt to eliminate the Agency. That Agency has been present for decades to provide assistance to the Palestinian people after each of Israel's successive wars.

Israel's actions are irresponsible and inhumane. In addition to the catastrophic damage that would be caused by depriving Palestinians of the services provided by the Agency, Israel plans to revoke the Agency's immunity and terminate its operations. That is disrespectful to the United Nations and its most representative organ, the General Assembly, which conferred on UNRWA its mandate seven decades ago and has continued to renew it and provide the Agency

with the necessary resources to continue carrying out its noble mission.

We call on the Council to stop that genocidal war by achieving an immediate, effective and unconditional ceasefire, ensuring the delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance to the population of Gaza. The Council must also exert political pressure in support of the Agency so that it can serve the Palestinians and alleviate their ongoing suffering caused by the repeated Israeli wars and decades-long occupation.

The Arab Group stresses the need to act immediately, before it is too late. In that context, we appreciate the tireless efforts by the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Qatar to reach a ceasefire agreement and alleviate the suffering in Gaza.

The fact that Council is standing idly on the sidelines just watching what is happening in the Middle East emboldens Israel to continue undermining international peace and security by launching indiscriminate wars throughout the region and continuing to completely disregard the resolutions of the main organs of the Organization, including the General Assembly — the only organ authorized to terminate the mandate of UNRWA. The International Court of Justice stressed very clearly in its recent advisory opinion on the *Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem* (see A/78/968) that the continued presence of the State of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory was illegal; that Israel was under an obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence there as rapidly as possible; and that all United Nations Member States were under an obligation not to recognize as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by the continued presence of the State of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory.

We once again call upon the Council to fulfil its mandate and responsibility to maintain international peace and security and ensure the implementation of the rules and principles of international law in the occupied Palestinian territory by compelling Israel to comply with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and end the illegal and inhumane occupation of Palestine. We call upon all Member States, especially members of the Security Council, to abide by the advisory opinion of the Court and to immediately

stop providing Israel with weapons or any assistance that would prolong the occupation or contribute to the further killing of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. We remind those countries that continue to supply the occupation forces with weapons and ammunition of their legal and moral responsibility for the lives of civilians, including women, children and the elderly, whom the Israeli killing machine has been ruthlessly murdering for an entire year.

The ongoing killing and displacement in the Gaza Strip have resulted in 43,000 martyrs, hundreds of thousands of people wounded and hundreds of thousands of people displaced, who have been left to suffer hunger, disease and a siege. That is why we have to ask: when will it be the right time for the Council to act? How many Palestinians must pay with their lives or suffer until that aggression stops? As we have emphasized many times before and will continue to reiterate, stopping the genocide is not only an urgent humanitarian necessity; it is a true test of multilateral action for the United Nations and the Council. In short, it is a test of international law and humanitarian values.

The Israeli war has expanded to include Lebanon, with repeated attacks against Syria. The Arab Group condemns that disregard for international peace and security by Israel. We stress that we stand with the brotherly people of Lebanon, thousands of whom have been killed in just a few weeks, including women, children, journalists and paramedics. Basic infrastructure in Lebanon has been destroyed as well. Since 1 October, the Israeli occupation forces have continued their ground invasion of Lebanon in blatant defiance of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Charter of the United Nations and resolution 1701 (2006). That has led to an escalation of the humanitarian crisis, as a result of violent raids on civilian targets in the villages of southern Lebanon, the Bekaa area and the southern suburbs of the capital, Beirut. The Israeli aggression has so far displaced more than 1.4 million people — equivalent to one fifth of Lebanon's population — including 400,000 children.

The Arab Group also expresses its deep concern about the reports by the United Nations of repeated Israeli attacks on the positions of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) along the Blue Line, resulting in injuries to peacekeepers and damage to UNIFIL headquarters. The Arab Group strongly condemns all attacks on UNIFIL and emphasizes that peacekeepers and their headquarters should be

inviolable, and that the safety and security of their personnel and property must be guaranteed by all parties at all times, in accordance with international law. The Arab Group calls on the Council to compel Israel to immediately cease its aggression, end its violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, commit to an immediate ceasefire, withdraw to south of the Blue Line and comply with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, resolutions 1701 (2006) and 2735 (2024), human rights law and international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, the Arab Group demands an end to the Israeli aggression against Palestine and Lebanon, as well as the repeated Israeli attacks on Syria. We call for immediate measures to deter the occupation entity from continuing its criminal approach based on spreading death, shedding the blood of innocent people, spreading destruction and chaos and threatening peace and security in the region. Israel must be held accountable for those crimes and must not go unpunished. The Arab Group also stresses the need to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions to end the Israeli occupation of Arab territories in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.

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

Mr. Kwoba (Uganda): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the 121 member States of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

At the outset, I congratulate the Swiss Confederation upon its accession to the presidency of the Security Council this month and express appreciation for its granting NAM the opportunity to present its position on the question of Palestine.

NAM affirms its long-standing, common and principled position on the question of Palestine — a position which has endured for the past seven decades. NAM reiterates that respect for the Charter of the United Nations, international law and United Nations resolutions constitutes the foundation of a just solution to the question of Palestine, which is a cornerstone of peace and security, globally and regionally, in the Middle East.

The Security Council has 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. The Security Council must uphold its mandate to maintain international peace and

security and must act to implement its own resolutions. The question of Palestine cannot be exempted from international law and the authority of the Council. NAM calls on the Security Council to overcome its paralysis on the Palestinian question so as to achieve a just resolution of the protracted conflict and the tragic injustice. The peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine is central to establishing wider peace and stability in the Middle East and is an issue of wider concern to the international community as a whole as it pertains to global peace and security.

NAM condemns in the strongest terms all forms of violence, particularly Israel's military attacks against, and collective punishment of, the Palestinian people, which constitute grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and have included the killing and injuring of tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians, many of them women, humanitarian workers and journalists. Since October 2023, the Israeli occupying forces have besieged the Gaza Strip, and extremist settlers and settler militias have descended on the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, leading to the wanton destruction of lives and property. NAM demands an immediate and complete cessation of all forms of violent repression and the illegal Israeli policies and practices against the Palestinian people and other nations in the region. NAM demands an immediate and permanent ceasefire in accordance with the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 2735 (2024), which also called, *inter alia*, for the release of hostages, the exchange of Palestinian prisoners, the return of Palestinian civilians to their homes and neighbourhoods in all areas of Gaza and the safe and effective distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale throughout the Gaza Strip to all Palestinian civilians who need it.

Alarmed by the growing number of victims, the majority of whom are children and women, NAM stresses the urgency of ensuring immediate and unhindered humanitarian access to address their medical and other material needs, including those resulting from the grave impact of the forced starvation and forced displacement of the civilian population throughout Gaza. NAM members also express their grave concern about the treatment of Palestinian prisoners by Israel, especially child prisoners and detainees, and about the harrowing reports of violence; torture; solitary confinement; prolonged administrative

detention; inadequate access to proper medical care, education and family visits; and military trials. In that regard, NAM calls for proper international access to Palestinian prisoners and detainees, including children and women.

NAM expresses support for the ongoing diplomatic efforts by the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Qatar and the United States to reach an agreement on an immediate and permanent ceasefire. We also issue a collective call for immediate steps to be taken to halt the provision or transfer of arms, munitions and related equipment to Israel, the occupying Power, in all cases where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that they may be used in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem, in order to ensure an urgent ceasefire, as stipulated in General Assembly resolution ES-10/24, of 18 September.

NAM recalls resolution 2334 (2016), which provides for a viable path to peace, setting forth the essential requirements and parameters for the realization of a just outcome on the basis of a two-State solution that is based on the 4 June 1967 borders and ensures the Palestinian people's enjoyment of their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and to an independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just solution to the plight of the Palestinian refugees, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

Similarly, the member States of the Movement continue to call for full respect for, and the implementation of, the provisions of resolution 2334 (2016) and all other relevant resolutions regarding the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities and the status of occupied East Jerusalem. In that regard, NAM expresses grave concern about the deteriorating situation on the ground, which has been marked by an escalation of Israeli settlement activities in grave breach of international law and rising violence, provocation and incitement, particularly settler violence and terror, leading to countless human rights abuses and violations of international law.

Action must be taken immediately to help to de-escalate that volatile situation, and it must include a halt to all unilateral unlawful measures by Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem. Actions that violate Security Council resolutions, including violations of the historical and legal status quo of Jerusalem and

its holy sites are provocative, dangerous and destroy prospects for peace. NAM reiterates the call for full respect for the historical and legal status quo and the historical Hashemite custodianship of the Christian and Muslim holy sites in the city, for the protection of the sanctity of the holy sites and for compliance with all relevant provisions of international law and Security Council resolutions. NAM also commends the efforts of His Majesty Mohammed VI as Chair of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation.

NAM condemns the Israeli aggression against Lebanon that has been ongoing for over a year, resulting so far in 2,546 civilian deaths and 12,000 injuries, among them children, women, paramedics and first responders. The aggression has so far caused the displacement of more than 1.2 million people — equivalent to one fifth of Lebanon's population — including 400,000 children, and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure. NAM strongly condemns Israel's ground invasion of Lebanon, launched on 1 October. Those violations constitute blatant breaches of the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law, international humanitarian law, Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and resolution 1701 (2006). NAM further expresses deep concern regarding United Nations reports of Israel's direct attacks on United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) positions along the Blue Line, which have occurred on multiple occasions, resulting in injuries to peacekeepers and damage to UNIFIL installations. NAM strongly condemns all attacks on UNIFIL and reiterates that peacekeepers and their premises are inviolable and that their safety, security and property must be guaranteed by all parties and at all times, in accordance with international law. NAM calls on Israel to immediately cease its aggression against Lebanon, to put an end to its violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, to commit to an immediate ceasefire, to withdraw to south of the Blue Line and to abide by its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, resolution 1701 (2006), resolution 2735 (2024), human rights law and international humanitarian law.

NAM calls for the continued provision of the needed humanitarian and socioeconomic assistance to the Palestinian people, including Palestinian refugees. The Movement reaffirms that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinian refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continues to be

indispensable, alongside other United Nations agencies and international organizations, in alleviating the refugees' plight and safeguarding their rights and urges the international community to unequivocally support their continued operations. Furthermore, NAM rejects the legislation by Israel's Knesset for the closure of UNRWA operations as an unprecedented assault on the United Nations humanitarian agency and on the United Nations as a whole, in direct violation of the Charter of the United Nations, numerous international conventions, including the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, and the relevant resolutions.

In that connection, the Movement reiterates its grave concern regarding the lack of accountability for all violations committed by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Israel must comply with international law and must be held to account for its blatant contempt of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice and the grave breaches of its international legal obligations. NAM member States therefore continue to call for international action to ensure the cessation of hostilities, the protection of civilians and accountability for violations of international law.

Concerning the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan, the Movement reaffirms that all measures and actions taken, or to be taken, by Israel, the occupying Power, such as its illegal decision of 14 December 1981, which purports to alter the legal, physical and demographic status and the institutional structure, as well as the Israeli measures to apply its jurisdiction and administration there, are null and void and have no legal effect. In that regard, in line with NAM's principled position, the Movement once again demands that Israel abide by resolution 497 (1981) and fully withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan to its 4 June 1967 borders, pursuant to resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). NAM Member States also emphasize that Israel must withdraw from all Lebanese territories, including Sheba'a Farms, Kfar Shuba Hills and the occupied territories on the outskirts of the town Al-Mari, which partly includes the urban expansion of the village of Ghajar, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006).

In conclusion, the Movement seizes this opportunity to reiterate its call for collective international efforts to uphold international law in order to end to this grave and

historical injustice. NAM member States reaffirm their commitment to promoting a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. NAM reaffirms its support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve justice and fulfil their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations, including to self-determination, freedom and independence in their sovereign and independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and stands ready to cooperate with and support the Security Council for the fulfilment of its responsibilities in that regard.

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

Mr. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to commend you, Madam President, on your work during your presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also thank you for convening this open debate, which merits the attention of the entire international community. I also thank Mr. Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his valuable briefing. We appreciate his efforts and endeavours in that regard.

As we have entered the second year of the Israeli war against the Gaza Strip, we continue to see an escalation in violence and killing and a daily deterioration of the humanitarian situation. The occupation forces would not have persisted in perpetrating such crimes if not for the lack of accountability and the failure of the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities. The failure to achieve progress in ending conflicts is deeply concerning. As we have seen in Gaza, it raises legitimate concerns about the failure of the global system to end aggression. The suffering of civilians, particularly that of women and children, creates an urgent need to act immediately to achieve a ceasefire and ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The war that has been waged by the occupation forces has led to unprecedented levels of human suffering for the people of the Gaza Strip. The war has entailed serious crimes, mass destruction, intentional killings, systematic displacement and deliberate starvation. The war has not been limited to the Gaza Strip; rather it has expanded to include Lebanon. It is important in that regard to underscore the importance of respecting the sovereignty of Lebanon in line with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

My country warned against the ongoing Israeli aggression and its repercussions on regional and international security. We have called for ending the Israeli aggression, which is preventing the establishment of peace. Since the beginning of the crisis, my country has called for an immediate ceasefire, the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance, the release of hostages and a serious commitment to lasting peace. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reiterates its categorical rejection and strong condemnation of all the heinous crimes committed by Israel against the brotherly Palestinian people. The recent crimes perpetrated against defenceless civilians in the Gaza Strip are yet another chapter in the suffering of our brotherly people, which they have endured for decades.

Since last year, Israel's wanton aggression has claimed the lives of tens of thousands of civilians, most of them women and children. It has led to the injuring and maiming of hundreds of thousands, and the displacement of nearly 2 million people from the Gaza Strip.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been aware of the seriousness of the situation. My country hosted the Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit in Riyadh, on 11 November 2023. The Summit adopted resolutions calling for an end to the bloodshed, the unhindered delivery of aid and a response to the Palestinian people's legitimate demands, including the establishment of their independent State. The Kingdom presided over the joint Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee in its visit to several countries to call on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities to end Israel's aggression and protect civilians.

With regard to our efforts to recognize the independent Palestinian State, we announced last month, together with our partners in the Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee, the Kingdom of Norway and the European Union, the establishment of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, based on our belief that ensuring the Palestinians' right to self-determination is the only way to achieve a lasting peace. Riyadh will also host the Global Alliance's first meeting tomorrow, Wednesday, 30 October. I take this opportunity to reiterate the invitation to all States to join the Alliance.

In that context, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution

ES-10/23, which recognizes that the State of Palestine is qualified for membership of the United Nations. My country has also welcomed and commended the decision taken by the Kingdom of Norway, the Kingdom of Spain, the Republic of Ireland, the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Armenia to recognize the State of Palestine. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls on other States to follow suit and bilaterally recognize the State of Palestine.

On the humanitarian level, the Kingdom has allocated more than \$5 billion in assistance to the brotherly Palestinian people. We recently provided monthly financial support to our brothers in Palestine to address the humanitarian situation in and around the Gaza Strip. Since the beginning of the current crisis in the Gaza Strip, through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, the Kingdom has provided relief and humanitarian assistance totalling approximately \$185 million. We have signed agreements with several humanitarian organizations to implement humanitarian projects, which have totalled more than \$106 million. The Kingdom will continue supporting the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) so that it can provide its relief services to our Palestinian brothers. The Kingdom's overall support for UNRWA has surpassed \$1 billion. In that context, my country strongly condemns the adoption by the Israeli Knesset of laws and legislation banning the activities of UNRWA in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Kingdom also welcomes the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem* (see A/78/968), which stressed the illegality of Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territory for 57 years.

In conclusion, my country will continue supporting the Palestinians' right to self-determination and the establishment of a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We will continue to support efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive peace in line with the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant international resolutions.

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

Mr. Yıldız (Türkiye): I echo my colleagues who urgently call for decisive action by the Security Council to end the war in Gaza. In Gaza, every rule

is disregarded, and every line is crossed. Israel is committing unprecedented war crimes and bringing our region closer to the brink of an all-out war each day that passes without a ceasefire. In Gaza, an unlawful war continues unabated. The death toll now exceeds 43,000, with injuries surpassing 100,000. Gaza is in ruins, and nearly the entire population has been displaced several times. Severe shortages of food, clean water and medical supplies constitute collective punishment for the civilian population, with humanitarian aid systematically denied or limited. Currently, more than 470,000 civilians in northern Gaza face imminent threats to their lives, from bombardments to starvation. Humanitarian personnel, aid convoys, refugee camps, hospitals and shelters have been targeted. The International Court of Justice has established reasonable grounds to believe that serious war crimes are occurring in Gaza.

In the West Bank, record numbers of deaths are being reported. Illegal settlements expand while settler violence escalates. Amid the crisis, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) faces deliberate assaults on the physical, operational and political fronts. We condemn the adoption of legislation by the Knesset to prevent UNRWA from operating in the occupied Palestinian territories. The bills are targeting the Agency and the Palestine refugees by halting the life-saving service of UNRWA. Indeed, the main target is the refugee status itself. The legislation is a clear violation of Israel's obligations under international law.

We also condemn Israel's attacks on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which was established under the mandate of the Security Council. It is imperative that UNIFIL fulfil its mandate, especially given Israel's clear intention to spread the conflict across the region. Following its massacres in Gaza and the West Bank, Israel is now inflicting harm on Lebanese civilians. The brutal assaults in Gaza and Lebanon also have dire implications for Syria. In Iran,

Israel's attacks mark a new phase in its efforts to drag the entire region into chaos.

Israel has repeatedly violated the Charter of the United Nations, Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, international law and international humanitarian law; targeted United Nations personnel and the Secretary-General himself; attacked peacekeeping forces; and now is openly seeking to dismantle a United Nations agency. We urge the Security Council to use all the tools at its disposal to enforce an immediate ceasefire, the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid and adherence to international law and to ensure compliance. It is imperative that Member States, and particularly those on the Security Council, take all necessary measures to bring an end to this dangerous trajectory without further delay.

In that regard, Türkiye, along with a core group of countries, has initiated a joint letter calling for a halt to arms transfers to Israel. We make this collective call for immediate steps to halt the provision or transfer of arms, munitions and related equipment to Israel in all cases where there are reasonable grounds to suspect they may be used in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, as stipulated in General Assembly resolution ES-10/24, of 18 September. That is essential to end Israel's illegal occupation; deter further violations against civilians in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as in Lebanon; and prevent further regional escalation. We urge all States to take a principled stance, remain on the right side of history and join the collective initiative. The bloodshed has to stop now.

The President (*spoke in French*): 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 tomorrow afternoon.

The meeting was suspended at 6.35 p.m.