



**Statement by H.E. Archbishop Gabriele Caccia  
Permanent Observer of the Holy See  
at the General Debate of the High-level International Conference  
for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the  
Implementation of the Two - State Solution  
New York, 28-30 July 2025**

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, my Delegation wishes to express its appreciation to France and Saudi Arabia for convening this Conference, and to thank the Chairs of the Working Groups for their dedicated efforts. In an era where strength is frequently regarded as a prerequisite for peace, this gathering should serve as a poignant reminder that only through patient and inclusive dialogue a just and lasting conflict resolution can be achieved.

Mr. Chair,

In the light of the profound anguish and terrible human suffering that has befallen the region, the Holy See reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of the heinous terrorist attack of 7 October by Hamas against the people in Israel. Terrorism can never be justified. At the same time, the Holy See emphasizes that the right to self-defense should be exercised within the traditional limits of necessity and proportionality.

The Holy See remains gravely concerned by the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. The devastating impact on civilians, especially the number of children killed, has been compounded by the destruction of homes, hospitals, and places of worship, with the recent attack on the Holy Family Church further wounding an already distressed community. This is deeply concerning given that Christians in the region have long played a

vital role as a moderating and stabilizing presence, promoting dialogue and peace.

The mass displacement of families, the breakdown of essential services, growing famine, and widespread deprivation shock the human conscience and require an immediate, coordinated response from the international community. Therefore, the Holy See urgently calls for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all Israeli hostages, the restitution of the bodies of the deceased, the protection of all Palestinian civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law, and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance.

Mr. Chair,

The Holy See remains convinced that the Two-State Solution, based on secure and internationally recognized borders, is the only viable and equitable path toward a just and lasting peace. To support this vision, the Holy See has already taken meaningful steps. It formally recognized the State of Israel through the 1993 Fundamental Agreement and the State of Palestine through the 2015 Comprehensive Agreement. It continues to uphold the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination. The Holy See supports their legitimate aspirations to live in freedom, security, and dignity within an independent and sovereign State.

Mr. Chair,

Jerusalem is a city of universal religious and cultural significance. It is sacred to Christians, Jews and Muslims alike. Therefore, it requires a status that transcends political divisions and ensures the preservation of its unique identity. To this end, the Holy See reiterates its longstanding call for an internationally guaranteed special statute capable of ensuring the dignity and rights of all its inhabitants and the faithful of the three monotheistic religions, the equality before the law of their

institutions and communities, safeguarding the City's sacred character and exceptional religious and cultural heritage.

Furthermore, it must ensure the protection of the Holy Places, guarantee the unhindered right to access them, and to worship there. It must also preserve the "Status Quo," where applicable. In Jerusalem no one should be subjected to harassment. Therefore, it is regrettable that Christians feel increasingly threatened in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Mr. Chair,

My Delegation sincerely hopes that this Conference will help build trust and strengthen the commitment of all parties to pursuing peace.

In this spirit, allow me to conclude with the words of Pope Leo XIV: *"I once again call for an immediate end to the barbarity of war and for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. I renew my appeal to the international community to uphold humanitarian law, to ensure the protection of civilians, and to respect the prohibitions against collective punishment, the indiscriminate use of force, and the forced displacement of populations."*<sup>1</sup>

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Leo XIV, *Angelus*, 20 July 2025.