

Statement by Portugal

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Before any other statement or remark, let me be loud and clear:

the war must end!

This cycle of violence and destruction must stop!

This cycle of violence was initiated with the barbaric attacks of October 7th, has led to the killing of thousands of civilians, women and children, to the capture of hostages and to the brutal destruction of almost all of Gaza's basic infrastructure.

We face one of the most brutal sequences of violence between Palestinians and Israelis in their long and difficult history.

We understand the suffering of the Israeli people; we understand the suffering of the Palestinian people. And therefore, we have the responsibility to put an end to this conflict.

Excellencies

Peace and stability in the Middle East will remain elusive as long as Israel is threatened and Palestinians are denied their fundamental right to a viable sovereign State.

For that to happen, the war in Gaza must come to an immediate end and the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid must resume immediately. There is no justification for starvation and the inhumane killing of civilians, including children, seeking to meet their most basic needs. Freedom of movement of Palestinians in and throughout Gaza must be wholly restored and the forced displacement of the Palestinian population is simply unacceptable.

The destruction of Palestinian homes and properties in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, must come to a full halt. Likewise, settlement building in occupied land has to end and settler violence against Palestinians has to be stopped.

All hostages in Gaza must be released, immediately and without any condition. The horror of the October 7th attacks cannot be forgotten. Terrorism can never be justified.

Excellencies

We thank the co-organisers, Saudi Arabia and France, for this very timely High-Level Ministerial Meeting.

Portugal reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the two State solution. Hence, for the last 50 years Portugal have

consistently voted in favour of all Resolutions pertaining to the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

We maintain a staunch support to UNRWA, having contributed more than fifteen million euros in the past two years, and having just approved more 650 thousand euros. Portugal also keeps full support for the Palestinian Authority as a prerequisite for the implementation of the two-State solution.

We welcome the renewed commitment by the Palestinian Authority condemning terrorist acts by Hamas, calling for its dismantling and accepting the principle of a demilitarized Palestinian State.

We welcome the Arab Recovery and Reconstruction Plan presented at the Cairo Summit and support our Arab Partners in their endeavour towards re-establishing living conditions in Gaza.

The recognition of the future State of Palestine is also an integral part of the larger political equation, and Portugal is ...

Excellencies,

As an old Palestinian proverb says, “Kinship is Kinship, but Humanity is closer”. Indeed, may the wretched lessons of such long suffering in the Middle East finally inspire a renewed collective sense of humanity and belief in peace, so that, as written in the Pirkei Avot, “the world [can] stand on three things: justice, truth and peace”.

Thank you.