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Eightieth year

9950th meeting

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New York

Provisional

President: Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana)

Members:

Algeria.	Mr. Koudri
China.	Mr. Fu Cong
Denmark	Ms. Landi
France	Mr. Bonnafont
Greece	Mr. Sekeris
Pakistan.	Mr. Ahmad
Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
Republic of Korea	Mr. Sangjin Kim
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
Sierra Leone	Ms. Swallow
Slovenia.	Mr. Žbogar
Somalia	Mr. Dhakkar
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Eckersley
United States of America.	Mr. Kelley

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Israel to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite the observer of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Khiari.

Mr. Khiari: Today's briefing is devoted to the Secretary-General's quarterly report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) (S/2025/415). Since the 17 June cut-off date for the written report, hostilities continued between Israel and Hamas, including Israel Defense Forces (IDF) air strikes, artillery shelling and ground operations across Gaza. The devastating human toll is mounting.

According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, the total number of Palestinian fatalities since 7 October 2023 exceeded 56,500, with 1,068 fatalities since 17 June — an average of 82 per day. On 19 June, Israeli forces reportedly struck three houses in Jabalia, killing at least 14 people from the same family, including two children and one woman. On 20 June, 12 people, including four women, were reportedly killed when the IDF struck a residential building in Deir Al-Balah. Amid renewed evacuation orders and intensified air strikes in Gaza City and Jabalia, another larger-scale military operation is expected in the area.

According to Israeli sources, since 17 June, nine members of the IDF were killed in hostilities in Gaza, including seven soldiers killed when Hamas targeted their armoured vehicle with an explosive device. Israeli sources reported that more than 1,748 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed in attacks in or originating from Gaza since 7 October 2023. Fifty hostages, including one woman, are still being held captive by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Gaza.

Attacks on Palestinians seeking aid continued, including frequent casualty incidents in the vicinity of militarized food distribution points and aid convoys. Since 17 June, at least 580 Palestinians have been killed either trying to reach Gaza Humanitarian Foundation distribution points or waiting for other aid convoys, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health. On 17 June, at least 50 people were killed and 200 were wounded in Khan Younis when an IDF tank opened fire on a crowd of people waiting for World Food Programme food trucks. On 24 June, IDF troops reportedly opened fire near Gaza Humanitarian Foundation sites north of Bureij camp and north-west Rafah, killing 49 Palestinians and injuring 197 others.

In the occupied West Bank, Israeli security forces continued operations in the northern part of the occupied West Bank. On 25 June, a 15-year-old Palestinian was killed during an Israeli operation in Al-Yamun, west of Jenin. On the same day, an

elderly woman was reported shot and killed by Israeli security forces in the Shu'fat refugee camp in East Jerusalem.

Attacks by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank have intensified in recent days. On 19 June, armed Israeli settlers, in the presence of Israeli forces, reportedly opened fire on Palestinians in the town of Surif, north-west of Hebron, killing one and injuring seven others. On 25 June, three Palestinians were killed during an assault by Israeli settlers on Kafr Malik, which included arson, carried out in the presence of Israeli security forces. The following day, Israeli security forces dismantled the nearby Ba'al Hatzor settlement outpost, leading to repeated clashes with settlers over several days. According to Israeli security forces, settlers threw stones at and assaulted Israeli soldiers and, on 27 June, threw stones and attempted to ram a military vehicle, with Israeli security forces using live ammunition in response and possibly leading to the injury of a 14-year-old Israeli boy.

Allow me to highlight some of the Secretary-General's observations regarding the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) during the reporting period.

The Secretary-General once again strongly condemns the horrific attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Israel on 7 October 2023 and their continued holding of hostages in horrific conditions. Nothing can justify those acts of terror. We remain appalled that hostages may be subjected to ongoing ill-treatment and that the bodies of hostages continue to be withheld.

The Secretary-General also unequivocally condemns the widespread killing and injury of civilians in Gaza, including children and women, and the destruction of homes, schools, hospitals and mosques. The level of suffering and brutality in Gaza is unbearable. The continued collective punishment of the Palestinian people is unjustifiable.

We remain deeply concerned about Israeli military operations in Gaza that render large areas of Gaza uninhabitable. We reject the forced displacement of the Palestinian population from any part of the occupied Palestinian territory, which would constitute a breach of international law obligations. We mourn the United Nations personnel killed in Gaza and strongly condemn the killing of health and humanitarian personnel and journalists.

Following almost 80 days of Israel's denial of entry of all humanitarian and commercial supplies into Gaza, supplies have started to enter Gaza at wholly inadequate levels that do not meet the massive needs of the population. We call upon Israel to fulfil its obligations under international law and allow the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need. We strongly condemn the loss of life and the injuries of Palestinians seeking aid in Gaza. We call for an immediate and independent investigation into those events and for the perpetrators to be held accountable. The United Nations will not participate in any aid delivery modality that does not comply with the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality.

I once again echo the Secretary-General's call for an immediate ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages in Gaza.

We remain deeply alarmed by the relentless Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The ever-growing settlement footprint contributes to settler-related violence, further entrenches the Israeli occupation, hampers the free movement of the population and undermines the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

We are deeply concerned about the Israeli Government's decision to resume formal land registration in Area C and the serious risk that this will facilitate further settlement expansion and entrenchment. The demolition and seizure of Palestinian-

owned structures, including internationally funded humanitarian projects, entail numerous violations of international law and raise concerns about the risk of forcible transfer.

The escalating violence in the occupied West Bank is alarming. Military operations by Israeli security forces in the northern West Bank have resulted in high levels of fatalities, including women and children, significant population displacement and destruction of homes and infrastructure, particularly in refugee camps. We are concerned that the Palestinian Authority continues to face a deepening fiscal crisis that threatens to further undermine Palestinian institutions and basic service delivery. Increased Israeli clearance revenue deductions and measures that introduce instability to the Palestinian financial sector should be urgently resolved.

The international community must provide immediate support to the Palestinian Government to strengthen its governance capacity, address its fiscal challenges and prepare it to reassume its responsibilities in Gaza. That will require the establishment of political and security frameworks that can relieve the humanitarian catastrophe, start early recovery and reconstruction, address Israel's legitimate security concerns and lay the groundwork for a political process to end the occupation and establish a viable two-State solution.

We welcome the reform steps undertaken by the Palestinian Authority, including the appointment of a Vice-President of Palestine, and encourage continued reforms, urging international partners to support those efforts.

We regret the need to suspend the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and welcome the continued commitment of the co-Chairs, France and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to convene the Conference as soon as possible.

Allow me also to make a brief comment regarding the recent military escalation between Iran and Israel, which the Council has discussed in recent days. I reiterate the Secretary-General's condemnation of the tragic and unnecessary loss of life and injuries to civilians and damage to homes and critical civilian infrastructure. The Middle East region has been devastated by conflict and cannot withstand yet another major escalation. We welcome the 24 June ceasefire agreement announced by President Trump and commend the efforts of the United States, in coordination with Qatar, to end the hostilities.

We hope that that ceasefire can be replicated in the other conflicts in the region. Nowhere is that more needed than in Gaza.

The President: I thank Mr. Khiari for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

The stated purpose of this meeting is to report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). Regrettably, that resolution does not contribute to resolving the underlying issues, but instead distracts from very real, pressing threats to international peace and security.

Resolution 2334 (2016) denies the factual and historical reality that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. It likewise seeks to advance a two-State solution through argumentation, ignoring a political reality that has been evident to all since 7 October 2023. It is the wrong conversation at the wrong time.

Let us be clear — Hamas bears absolute responsibility for the ongoing war in Gaza. Hamas began a war on 7 October 2023, with a massacre of innocent civilians. Hamas has repeatedly rejected ceasefire proposals that Israel has accepted. It holds the people of Gaza for ransom, stopping at nothing to remain in power.

The resolution encourages discriminatory boycotts on Israel — political warfare by another name — that do nothing but reward the barbarity of Hamas.

Shamefully, the United Nations has yet to designate Hamas as a terrorist organization, even as it holds 50 hostages, including the remains of two American citizens. The United States will not rest until those in Hamas' captivity return to their families.

The United States calls on the Council and the United Nations, including Secretary-General Guterres, to join us in pressuring Hamas to end the bloodshed, to disarm and to give the people of Gaza a chance for a peaceful life.

The United States will continue to work on improving the humanitarian situation on the ground, supporting the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation as it delivers life-saving aid to those in need without empowering terrorists.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation has committed to delivering aid consistent with humanitarian principles. Contrary to what Hamas wants the world to believe, it continues to provide vital food aid to Palestinian civilians in Gaza, distributing over 50 million meals as of 29 June.

We know that humanitarian aid coming through other organizations has been vulnerable to seizure by Hamas. And as of 20 June, Hamas had looted over 1,000 aid trucks from international organizations in Gaza. The video footage is available to all.

By contrast, every single Gaza Humanitarian Foundation truck — more than 700 in total so far — has reached its intended distribution site. We urge Council members to support the work of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation as it delivers life-saving aid to civilians on the ground. The alternatives are a gift to Hamas, allowing it to divert aid, profiteer and strengthen its power in Gaza.

With respect to the West Bank, the United States supports the efforts of the Israel Defense Forces and the Palestinian Authority security forces to counter violent extremists.

We call on the Palestinian Authority to condemn Hamas and its brutal attack on 7 October 2023, to stop incitement to terrorism and to fully implement its February 2025 commitment to end the practice of offering cash payments to the families of terrorists.

The United States calls on Iran to end its sponsorship of terrorist groups and proxies, including Hamas, Hizbullah and the Houthis. At this historic turning point, Iran's leaders have an opportunity to finally put their people first and to choose prosperity and integration into the community of nations rather than supporting terrorism and pursuing nuclear weapons. We state again — Iran will never have a nuclear weapon.

The United States will continue to work tirelessly with Israel and our Arab partners to create a brighter and more prosperous future for all the region's people.

Mr. Dhakkar (Somalia): At the outset, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to Assistant Secretary-General Khairi for his comprehensive briefing.

We gather today in the context of resolution 2334 (2016), an instrument that remains as urgent and relevant today as it was at the time of its adoption. Nearly a

decade has passed, yet the fundamental issues that resolution 2334 (2016) sought to address persist with increased gravity and impunity.

The Council's message was unequivocal — settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, are devoid of legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation under international law. That position was further supported by the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of July 2024 (see A/78/968), which called for the cessation of such activities.

Regrettably, recent developments on the ground have deepened our collective concern. We have observed a marked acceleration in settlement expansion, including new construction and the retroactive legalization of outposts, actions that undermine the outcome of a negotiated settlement. Equally alarming are the rising settler violence, forced displacement, demolition of homes, restrictions on movement and other measures that are altering the demographic composition of the territory. Those practices are deeply troubling and raise serious concerns under international law and human rights law.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains catastrophic. The ongoing obstruction of aid, the targeting of civilian infrastructure and the collective punishment of a besieged population must come to an end. Somalia reiterates its call for the immediate, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance across Gaza. Such actions are incompatible not only with the letter and spirit of resolution 2334 (2016) but also with the obligations set forth under the Fourth Geneva Convention. The credibility of our international system is intrinsically linked to the genuine implementation of resolutions adopted by this organ. We must collectively reflect on the implementation of the rule of law when such resolutions are disregarded and when fundamental rights continue to be unfulfilled. In that context, we call on the occupying Power to comply with its legal obligations and to refrain from actions that further diminish the prospects for a viable two-State solution, where two States can live side by side in peace and security within internationally recognized borders.

In conclusion, Somalia reaffirms its steadfast support for the Palestinian people and their legitimate right to self-determination, return and the establishment of an independent, sovereign State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. Our delegation reiterates its call for an end to the occupation and for an immediate and permanent ceasefire to be reached. Somalia remains committed to the pursuit of a just and lasting peace in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to bringing an end to the prolonged suffering in the occupied Palestinian territory and the wider region.

Mr. Eckersley (United Kingdom): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

Let me start by underlining that the ceasefire between Israel and Iran offers a much-needed moment of hope for the region. That hope must extend to Gaza — we need a ceasefire now. That remains the most credible path to end the terrible suffering of the hostages and their families, end Hamas's control of Gaza and allow Palestinians to rebuild. We also need a ceasefire because the suffering in Gaza is appalling and cannot continue. Israel's aid delivery measures are inhumane. The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's operations, which are supposed to be saving lives, are themselves leading to mass casualties. Starving people who are desperate to feed their families are told that food awaits them, but more than 500 have reportedly been killed trying to access it. And meanwhile, UNICEF reports that more than 5,000 children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years old were admitted for acute malnutrition in May alone. It is truly appalling.

We are also deeply concerned about reports that Hamas has targeted Gaza Humanitarian Foundation staff and about reports of widespread looting by criminal

gangs, which are undermining security around aid distribution. That is unacceptable. The more desperate people become, the more disorder becomes inevitable. The United Nations can deliver aid at scale without endangering civilians. Israel must let the United Nations save lives, open all access routes and allow fuel into Gaza.

In addition, humanitarian workers must operate in safety. Just last week, another International Committee of the Red Cross staff member was killed — a tragic reminder of the risks they face. We have repeatedly called for credible Israeli investigations into Israel's killing of aid workers, including from World Central Kitchen, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and the United Nations Office for Project Services strike. Israel must provide accountability for those terrible actions and ensure that they are not repeated, in line with its obligations under international law.

Finally, amid the bloodshed in Gaza, the situation in the West Bank is also deteriorating. Israel's withholding of tax revenues appears to be a deliberate effort to leave the Palestinian Authority crippled and unable to pay salaries. Military operations have displaced more than 40,000 people. Just last week, an attack by violent settlers on Kafr Malik led to the killing of three Palestinians. We condemn settlement expansion and settler violence, and we demand that the Israeli Government put an immediate end to those unlawful acts. We cannot stand by while the foundations of a two-State solution are systematically dismantled.

It is time to bring the war in Gaza to an end and to get the hostages home. And more than that, we must renew our collective efforts towards a just and lasting two-State solution, in which Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in peace and security. It is beyond time to come together behind a sustainable end to the conflict, which has blighted so many generations on both sides.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): We would like to join colleagues in thanking Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his detailed briefing.

The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza defies comprehension. The latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) (S/2025/415) describes the levels of suffering and brutality in Gaza as shocking and unbearable. In the words of the Secretary-General, families have been displaced again and again and are now confined to less than one-fifth of Gaza's land, and even those shrinking spaces are under threat. Children are dying of malnutrition, despite repeated warnings from UNICEF that malnourishment is rising at an alarming rate. In May alone, more than 5,100 children between 6 months and 5 years of age were admitted for treatment for acute malnutrition. Since the collapse of the temporary ceasefire in March, more than 6,500 additional lives have been lost.

The Secretary-General's report also raises grave concerns about Israel's means and methods of warfare and reiterates the urgent need for accountability for atrocity crimes and other violations of international law. It also highlights the alarming number of Palestinians, including children, detained by Israeli forces and the continued surge in administrative detentions. Those are very disturbing developments.

The so-called new aid distribution mechanism is not only contrary to international humanitarian law and human dignity, but it places starving civilians in direct danger, forcing them to cross active combat zones in search of food and water. The result is a grotesque cycle of horror — more than 500 people have been killed while trying to access humanitarian aid. It is a death trap, as rightly described by the Secretary-General. There is no need to reinvent the wheel with militarized, dangerous and unlawful schemes. The United Nations already has a proven humanitarian delivery system grounded in humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. What is needed is unhindered access and the political will to let the United Nations do its job.

The violence is not confined to Gaza. In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israel has intensified its military raids, expanded illegal settlements and enabled unchecked settler violence. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, between 7 October 2023 and 19 June 2025, 949 Palestinians, including at least 200 children, were killed in the West Bank and more than 40,000 forcibly displaced — the largest displacement since 1967. Those actions constitute a blatant violation of international law and resolution 2334 (2016), which unequivocally reaffirmed the illegality of Israeli settlements and demanded an immediate end to their expansion. Nine years since the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), we have not yet seen its implementation. Instead, we have witnessed regression and an emboldening of unlawful practices that obstruct the prospects for peace and the two-State solution. Our failure to enforce the Council's own decisions carries grave consequences for global peace and security and undermines the Council's authority and credibility.

The question of Palestine remains at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To resolve it justly and durably, the Security Council must act with urgency and clarity. Pakistan reiterates the following essential steps in that connection.

First, Israel must immediately cease its military operations in Gaza and the West Bank. A permanent ceasefire must be established without further delay, and we support the ongoing efforts in that regard.

Secondly, the blockade on humanitarian aid must be lifted fully and unconditionally. The United Nations and humanitarian organizations must be granted safe and unimpeded access.

Thirdly, we call for international support for the plan of the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for recovery and reconstruction in Gaza. The plan is essential — not only for rebuilding Gaza but also for restoring hope and laying the foundation for lasting peace.

Fourthly, we call for practical and time-bound measures to ensure the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), which is essential to preserving the viability of the two-State solution and preventing irreversible facts on the ground.

Fifthly, we reiterate the need for a credible and irreversible political process to realize the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as the capital of the State of Palestine. We support the rescheduling of the high-level international conference, to be convened as soon as possible, in order to advance that goal.

This year marks the eightieth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations, which enshrines the principles of justice, peace and the sovereign equality of all peoples. Yet, in Gaza and across the occupied Palestinian territory, we see its most fundamental tenets continuing to be trampled upon with impunity. The Council must not remain a bystander. It is imperative to address and tackle the root cause — to bring an end to the illegal Israeli occupation of the Arab territories. It is disingenuous to put the blame elsewhere. It is time for credible action to reaffirm our shared commitment to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

On Friday we celebrated 80 years since the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations. At the closing ceremony in San Francisco, wise words were shared by President Truman:

“We all have to recognize — no matter how great our strength — that we must deny ourselves the licence to do always as we please. No one nation, no regional

group, can or should expect, any special privilege which harms any other nation. If any nation would keep security for itself, it must be ready and willing to share security with all.”

With the world’s attention shifting to another major crisis in the Middle East, horrors for Palestinians continue to spiral out of control. They continue to be killed and injured, including while seeking aid in Gaza. Civilians are being killed while simply trying to receive aid, amid life-threatening famine. They are being forced to flee time and again, although no place in Gaza is safe for civilians, as we know. Yesterday, we witnessed another wave of deadly attacks on shelters and displacement camps, while new evacuation orders were issued. All humanitarian aid and commercial supplies were entirely blocked from entering Gaza.

From the inflammatory rhetoric of officials to visits to holy sites in Jerusalem and the premises of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the list of destabilizing actions is growing each day. Israel’s planning authorities have advanced thousands of new illegal housing units and the Security Cabinet approved the recognition of 22 new illegal settlements. Additional steps to weaken the Palestinian Authority, in particular through its precarious financial situation, are deeply disturbing. Operations, demonstrations, clashes, air strikes, closures, forced displacement and settler violence have continued in the West Bank. Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures, the fragmentation of Palestinian communities and movement restrictions have carried on.

We condemn the loss of civilian lives as a result of violence and actions that are in sharp contradiction to the International Court of Justice’s advisory opinion of July 2024 (see A/78/968), which clearly outlined the obligation to end the illegal occupation. We regret that the conference on the two-State solution was postponed. We firmly support the co-Chairs and renew our commitment to the two-State solution. We hope that a new date will be identified soon. Slovenia is taking concrete steps to that end, both at a bilateral level and in cooperation with other countries.

Let me clearly state that we reject the licence to do as one pleases. We deny that might is right. We believe in peace anchored in the Charter, international law and diplomacy. International law, including international humanitarian law, must be respected. Aid restrictions must be lifted. Humanitarian workers must be allowed safe access to all in need. Hostages must be released and genuine — truly genuine — efforts for peace must take place.

We concur with the Secretary-General that the untold horrors in Gaza must not be forgotten. Slovenia once again calls for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza. Slovenia is of the view that, 80 years on, our Charter continues to be the cornerstone of our international community. To go back to where I started, no special privileges have been granted to harm nations or civilians, and that should be particularly clear to any Member of the Organization.

Ms. Swallow (Sierra Leone): I would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Khiari, for his insightful briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on resolution 2334 (2016) (S/2025/415).

We acknowledge the findings and observations of the Secretary-General on the provisions of the resolution. A review of the reporting period highlights the severe consequences of non-compliance with Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016). That resolution, which is unequivocal in outlining Israel’s legal obligations to protect all civilians and to end settlement activities and other policies and practices that serve as an obstacle to lasting peace and the two-State solution, has not been implemented.

The Gaza Strip and the West Bank continue to experience a concerning decline in their security, humanitarian and political situations. Israel's rigid restrictions on aid and supplies allowed to enter the Gaza Strip have resulted in very limited humanitarian aid entering the area, and the civilian population is being forced to live with the bare minimum of essentials and, in some cases, is going without food, clean water, medicine and other items. The recent alert about a potential water crisis in Gaza due to the fuel shortage is a critical problem that warrants urgent action.

We are concerned that the reporting period was marked by intensified hostilities between Israel and Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups, resulting in thousands of civilian casualties, massive displacement and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure. We note that Israel took no steps during that period to curtail its expansion and settlement activities in the West Bank, as set out in resolution 2334 (2016). Rather, demolitions and seizures of numerous Palestinian-owned structures have been reported across the occupied West Bank. The illegal forcible closures of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East schools in occupied East Jerusalem are a violation of the right of children to education, as is the continued illegal detention of Palestinian youth.

In practical terms, the rapidly evolving developments in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank require urgent and definitive solutions to avert further catastrophe that will make peace an almost impossible pursuit. To start with, an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank is critical. As repeatedly stated, a military solution will not resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; instead, it only subjects Palestinian civilians to death and suffering, as they are repeatedly under attack and restricted to certain mostly overcrowded areas. It also exacerbates the insecurity of civilians in Israel. We welcome the news of renewed diplomatic engagement by the mediators, the United States, Egypt and Qatar in a bid to secure a deal that will permanently end the war and ensure that all the remaining hostages are released.

We emphasize that the principles of international humanitarian law must be respected and that all restrictions on the entry of humanitarian and commercial aid into the Gaza Strip must be lifted. While we welcome the resumption of limited aid into the Gaza Strip beginning in May, we note with concern that the current aid mechanism raises significant questions regarding its ability to comply with basic humanitarian principles and provide the necessary safeguards for the civilian population seeking aid, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2025/415). It is important that the United Nations and its partners be allowed to operate freely, in accordance with established mechanisms and humanitarian principles.

Furthermore, Sierra Leone recalls General Assembly resolution ES-10/24, of 18 September 2024, which addressed the advisory opinion issued by 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). That resolution calls for an end to all actions that harm the civilian population in the occupied territories and undermine the two-State solution. We deem unacceptable the activities in the West Bank already declared illegal by the International Court of Justice, including the destruction of homes and civilian infrastructure. We urge the parties to refrain from unilateral actions, provocations, incitement or inflammatory rhetoric that erode trust, hinder dialogue and obstruct the path to negotiations. Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank and the demolition of Palestinian homes must cease immediately.

In conclusion, we recall that it has been almost nine years since the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), and its provisions are particularly relevant now, just as they were then. The renewed international momentum for implementing the two-State solution represents the highest degree of international legitimacy and adherence to the provisions of resolution 2334 (2016) and all other General Assembly and Security

Council resolutions and to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations relating to the Palestinian question. Therefore, all parties are urged to act in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, and to uphold the principles of humanity, justice and accountability.

Mr. Koudri (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for organizing this meeting. We also extend our great thanks to the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Khaled Khiari, for his comprehensive briefing.

That briefing leaves no room for doubt that the main obstacle to achieving peace in the Middle East is the Israeli occupation, which continues to disregard Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), rendering them dead letters, to be consigned to the archives of oblivion.

Since 7 October 2023, the toll of the Israeli aggression against Gaza has reached 56,500 dead and 133,419 injured. Those figures are not just statistics. They are names and dreams cut short by weapons that cannot tell the difference between human bodies and stone walls or between children and fighters. More than 18,000 children have been killed, and 12,400 women have perished under the rubble. Four thousand elderly persons have been killed while awaiting food or medicine, and 11,100 people are missing — 4,700 of them women and children. Who can convince us that those people posed a threat to the occupation's security? What military doctrine permits the bombardment of cradles and infants? Indeed, it is killing for the sake of killing. It is the custom of the occupier and the charter of the criminal.

As body parts are torn to pieces, the stomachs of Gazans remain empty. Starvation is being used as a weapon, and malnutrition has come to afflict every Palestinian in Gaza. Even children have starved to death, owing not only to a lack of milk but to an excess of criminality. Who can convince us that the prohibition of milk for children is subject to military considerations? It is, instead, a lack of humanity.

Amid a famine, the dignity of Palestinians is being trampled at the gates of the falsely named aid distribution centres, which have become death traps. More than 600 Palestinians have been killed, and another 4,000 injured while trying to find something to eat. In spite of that, some Israeli occupation officials shamelessly state that the entry of aid into Gaza is a disgrace that must be cut off altogether, not just suspended. As the Secretary-General has noted, the pursuit of food must not be a death sentence.

We would like an answer and an explanation from those who do not believe that the time has come to end this bloodshed, to establish a ceasefire, to open the crossing points unconditionally, to deliver assistance without humiliation and to hold accountable the murderers who have turned Gaza into a cemetery for childhood, justice and conscience. The healing of Gaza will not come about through painkillers, but through responsible collective measures that we take together — not as a favour, but out of loyalty to humankind.

As for the West Bank, the situation there is not better than in Gaza. Israel has not yet had enough; it wants to erase our memory, to bury the narrative and to place dignity under siege. Laws are being enacted to legitimize dispossession, wipe Palestine off the map and silence the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the last remaining witness of the continuing Nakba. There, a people is being exterminated; here, a Council is adopting resolutions that are effectively dead letters.

Resolution 2334 (2016), which declared that the settlements are not legal, is disdained every day on the soil of Palestine. The Secretary-General's most recent report on its implementation (S/2025/415) documented the following data during its reporting period of only three months: 47 Palestinians, including 10 children, were

killed by the gunfire of the occupying forces; 1,124 people were injured, including 231 children and 223 people hit by live ammunition; and there have been more than 2,380 search-and-arrest operations, and 1,500 people have been detained, including 76 children. Seventy Palestinians have died in the occupation's prisons since 7 October, most of them without trial. More than 453 Palestinian buildings were demolished in the West Bank, leading to the displacement of 599 people, including 308 children.

As for settlement activity, its spectre continues to spread, as 6,570 settlement units were promoted in Area C, 22 new settlements were approved and the policy of land registration was revived not to consolidate rights, but to erase them. Settler terrorism has reached unprecedented levels. Under the protection of soldiers, settlers kidnap children, as they did in Bayt Furik, set fields ablaze and destroy homes. They arrested more than 30 Palestinians. Over the past week, the United Nations documented an attack by settlers, including armed settlers, accompanied by Israeli forces, against the village of Kafr Malik, in which three Palestinians were murdered and others were injured as homes were set ablaze with their residents still inside.

What kind of peace is built on the rubble of homes, atop confiscation and rubble? The land of Palestine — all of Palestine — has become an open graveyard, and the Security Council is silent, unable to say anything. Silence is no longer wisdom. It has become complicity. Either we protect international legitimacy or we officially declare its demise.

Law is what governs civilized nations. As for nations that rely on power, their law is the law of the jungle, in which the strong devours the weak. We are facing blatant disregard for international law in the Middle East because of the Israeli occupier's encroachment and barbaric conduct, whose destructive consequences will not only affect the Middle East, but extend beyond it until no one is left who respects the authority of the law or pays heed to international legitimacy.

Coming to grips with the question of Palestine before it is buried — as elusive as that prospect may appear today — is, in fact, an urgent necessity, not only to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, but also to protect the international order as a whole. Therefore, we must all come to that understanding and work to make it a reality. May the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution be a starting point for a serious and earnest process that leads to the establishment of a Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Panama.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting. Panama thanks Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, for his very clear briefing, and it acknowledges the work of Mr. Khiari and his team in an extremely complex environment. We also welcome the presence of the delegations of Israel and the Observer State of Palestine in today's meeting.

Eighty years since the establishment of the United Nations, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains the epicentre of prolonged instability in the Middle East, with devastating human consequences. Almost eight decades on, we have not yet been able to replace military action with a sustained political solution, despite countless efforts. Resolution 2334 (2016) and many others were adopted to prevent the continued entrenchment of facts on the ground that would render any sustained future solution non-viable. In the West Bank, certain actions run the risk of further deepening territorial fragmentation, eroding trust and undermining the possibility of any lasting solution. Panama calls for all measures on the ground to align fully with the resolutions of the Council and the provisions of international law.

While the situation in the West Bank remains disturbing, developments in Gaza have reached even more extreme levels of human suffering and devastation. According to the data presented, more than 5,500 Palestinians have lost their lives between March and June, and the total number of victims since October 2023 has already exceeded 56,000 people, most of them women and children. For almost 80 days, the delivery of humanitarian assistance and essential goods was completely blocked. The population of Gaza, consisting of approximately 2.1 million people, is facing unprecedented acute food insecurity. Half a million people are on the verge of starvation, and more than 70,000 children under the age of 5 are suffering from acute malnutrition, including at least 14,000 children in critical condition. Even though limited supplies have recently been allowed in, they are not enough, and conditions in Gaza remain devastating. Attempts to establish alternative mechanisms to distribute aid have shown significant operational and security limitations, to the point that more than 500 people have lost their lives while desperately searching for food. Panama reiterates its support for the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations, which have already shown that they have the experience, trained personnel and protocols necessary to operate on a large scale in a safe, transparent and effective manner. The moment calls for strengthening — not substituting or replacing — established and proven humanitarian assistance and response capacities. All parties must also ensure the effective protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel, civilian infrastructure and United Nations facilities.

This tragic reality cannot be examined without noting that a substantial share of the suffering faced by the population in Gaza today is a direct consequence of Hamas' extremism. Panama yet again reiterates its condemnation of the attacks perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October 2023, which unleashed this violence and devastation, the weight of which has fallen mainly on the civilian Palestinian population. We demand the immediate, dignified and unconditional release of the 50 hostages who are still being held captive. The future of Gaza cannot continue to depend on the control of those who have instrumentalized pain and imposed violence as a form of power. We urge those with direct influence over the parties to do what is needed to achieve an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, as a first step, in order to alleviate human suffering and open space for a lasting political solution.

In line with what I have mentioned, Panama reiterates that no solution will be sustainable unless it guarantees the security of both Israel and the Palestinian people and respect for secure, mutually recognized borders that are in line with international law. The current status quo offers neither of those elements. That is why we support all efforts aimed at reviving a genuine political process, based on verifiable commitments and with international backing. In the past few weeks, we have observed with optimism how other crises between parties with deep historical differences have found formulas to silence the guns and put a stop to the violence, making way for dialogue and peace. Experience shows that when there is political will and effective mediation, progress can be made towards a cessation of hostilities. Peace is not a privilege that can be reserved for, or granted to, a few — it is an inalienable and universal right. Israelis and Palestinians deserve that right.

Ms. Landi (Denmark): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his comprehensive briefing.

Amid regional escalation and a continued deepening of the suffering in Gaza, the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, risks being overlooked. With each Security Council review of the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), the situation unfortunately appears to have deteriorated further. As our briefer described, just in the few months since the Council's previous deliberations on resolution 2334 (2016) in March (see S/PV.9883), Israel has approved several new settlements and there have been widespread movement restrictions, extensive

security operations, arrests and detentions in the West Bank. There are also reports of the forced displacement of several local communities and demolition orders against Palestinian-owned structures, including in East Jerusalem. Such actions have led to the displacement of more than 41,000 Palestinians in the West Bank. Denmark remains concerned about those developments. We are also concerned about an incident involving Israeli soldiers firing warning shots near diplomats during an official visit to Jenin camp in the West Bank. That is completely unacceptable. We emphasize that the safety and inviolability of diplomats must be respected at all times. We join the Secretary-General and others in urging Israel to conduct a thorough investigation into the incident and to take any measures preventing any other such incidents from taking place.

The Israeli Government's decision to construct a bypass road between the two Palestinian towns of Al-Eizariya and Az Za'ayem is of great concern. To quote the report of the Secretary-General, "[t]he move is ... designed to reduce Palestinian presence in the area ... while facilitating access to settlements" (S/2025/415, *para. 5*). Denmark reiterates that Israeli settlements are a clear violation of international law. They push Palestinians into isolated enclaves, making it virtually impossible to form a connected and viable land for a future Palestinian State. Denmark rejects settler violence, forced displacement, the demolition of Palestinian property and the seizing of Palestinian land. Denmark also calls for the full implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) and the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion. According to the International Court of Justice, policies, practices or other measures that seek to bring the occupied territory under Israel's permanent control constitute acts of annexation contrary to international law. We remain greatly concerned about the deteriorating financial situation of the Palestinian Authority and call on Israel to urgently release the withheld tax revenues that it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. Any action weakening the Palestinian Authority or worsening the economic situation in the West Bank, such as the threat to suspend the bank waiver, must be avoided.

Denmark remains deeply alarmed by the catastrophic situation in Gaza and the severe restrictions on aid. We have all seen the chaotic scenes at the aid distribution sites, and we deplore the killing of hundreds of civilians trying to get life-saving aid from militarized aid distribution sites. The situation is further exacerbated by Israel's continued restrictions on fuel, water and medicine — restrictions that not only prevent the United Nations aid organizations from delivering aid to Gaza but also prevent the United Nations from collecting aid at the border crossings inside Gaza. The level of suffering in Gaza is simply intolerable and must be brought to an end now. Denmark calls for an immediate ceasefire, for the lifting of all restrictions on humanitarian aid and for Hamas to let the remaining hostages — held since the brutal terror attack on 7 October 2023 — see daylight again. They must be immediately and unconditionally released in a safe and dignified manner.

We regret that circumstances did not allow for the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution to take place as planned in June, and we look forward to its convening as soon as it is possible. We must return to a path to peace. Peace is needed in Gaza, and it is needed in the wider region. We continue to believe that the path to peace is the path of the two-State solution. Let us not wait for it — let us take concrete steps now towards making it happen.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his detailed briefing on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory in the context of the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016).

Unfortunately, as made clear by Mr. Khiari's briefing and the report of the Secretary-General before us (S/2025/415), there has still been no progress in

implementing the resolution. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the Middle East settlement process as a whole remains explosive. We have repeatedly warned that the fact that one of the major and long-standing conflicts in the Middle East remains unresolved is having a significant impact on developments in the region and could unleash a full-scale conflict, with the confrontation engulfing neighbouring countries. Unfortunately, our calls and those of other countries for an urgent redoubling of collective efforts on the Middle East peace process have gone unheeded. The result of the persistent disregard for the Palestinian issue was the 12-day war, which unfolded before our eyes when two nuclear States attacked a non-nuclear party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Russian assessments of the acts of aggression by West Jerusalem and Washington, which have been repeatedly voiced within the Security Council, remain valid.

Today, we wish to recall that one of the main impediments to the resumption of the peace process between the Palestinians and the Israelis remains the Israeli authorities' systematic policy of expanding their illegal presence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. As the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2025/415) shows, the level of settler violence, which is being carried out with the connivance and even the complicity of the Israeli security forces, is undiminished. Israel's settlement activity is growing apace. Between March and June alone, plans for the building of almost 10,000 new housing units were approved. In addition, in late May, the Jewish State's Ministry of Defence gave the green light for 22 new settlement blocks to be legalized. At the same time, the leadership of the Ministry of Defence makes no secret of the fact that those steps are strategically important to preventing the creation of a Palestinian State.

At the same time, the practice of demolishing and confiscating Palestinian homes in the West Bank continues unabated. According to the United Nations, there have been approximately 500 such cases in the past three months alone. What is striking is not only the numerous violations of international law, but also the cynical and humiliating methods used by Israel. Palestinians are often forced to demolish their own homes with their own hands and are required to settle the astronomical bills for that service. The systematic policy of creeping expansion by extending Israel's physical control over the West Bank is being accompanied by equally provocative calls from the leadership of the Jewish State for the Gaza Strip to be completely cleansed and for a return of Israeli settlements there. In that connection, we concur with the Secretary-General's view that ethnic cleansing is unacceptable and with his calls on Israel to stop forcibly displacing Palestinians and immediately end its illegal presence throughout the occupied Palestinian territories.

Once again, we must note that Israel is acting with no regard for the catastrophic humanitarian consequences for Palestinian civilians. A striking example of that is what is happening in Gaza, which has received no humanitarian aid for almost three months amid ongoing hostilities. The number of victims and the magnitude of the destruction caused by the Israeli military operation are shocking: approximately 55,000 Palestinians have been killed and approximately 125,000 wounded, of whom at least 50,000 are children. Civilian infrastructure in the Strip is all but destroyed, 80 per cent of the territory having been declared a no-go area by Israel. Four hundred and seventy humanitarian workers have been killed, including more than 320 United Nations personnel. Hamas' attack on 7 October 2023, which we condemned from the outset, in no way justifies the Israeli leadership's brutal, inhumane and disproportionate actions against the peaceful civilian population of Gaza.

Unfortunately, we cannot expect that the day will soon come when we are no longer horrified at the daily reports issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs about the fresh victims of the Israeli operation in Gaza. Immediately upon hearing the news that an understanding had been reached with

Iran on a ceasefire, the General Staff of the Israel Defense Forces announced plans to refocus on combat operations in the Strip, with objectives identical to those we heard more than 600 days ago, including the release of hostages, even though we are all aware that the remaining Israeli hostages can be returned only through an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. Only then will it be possible to start stabilizing the situation in the Strip. In that regard, we would like to point out that the conduct of military operations through such methods as the use of starvation as a weapon, the forcible displacement of people and the imposition of a total blockade could constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, entailing legal proceedings and prosecution.

It is no secret that Washington's position remains key to giving Israel *carte blanche* in Gaza. The United States not only provides Israel with international cover by blocking any Council resolutions that contain even a modicum of criticism of the Israeli authorities, but also continues to supply its Middle Eastern ally with fresh weaponry and military hardware. Reports indicate that, during the 600 days of war, Israel received 800 aircraft and 140 ships bearing 900,000 tons of military cargo. The facts speak for themselves.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore that, against the backdrop of the tragedy unfolding in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the Gaza Strip, in particular, there are growing expectations for United Nations and the international community as a whole to take decisive action, including the recognition of Palestine and the protection of specialized humanitarian agencies, first and foremost, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. In that regard, great hope is being pinned on the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, which was to take place in New York in June, as set out in two General Assembly resolutions (resolution 79/81 and resolution ES-10/24). We trust that the Saudi and French co-Chairs will promptly decide on, and announce, new dates for the forum and that the Secretary-General will provide all the support necessary for preparing and holding the event.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

The Middle East is currently in the throes of intense turmoil. No sooner had Israel and Iran reached a fragile ceasefire than Israel launched an attack on southern Lebanon, resulting in casualties. Meanwhile, the suffering of the Palestinian people continues to intensify. In Gaza, the humanitarian catastrophe has long defied description. In the short time since the Israeli military offensive resumed on 18 March, more than 6,000 people have been killed, with 80 per cent of the territory placed under emergency evacuation orders. As a result of the prolonged and extreme blockade and siege, more than 2 million people are facing severe food shortages. A large-scale famine looms. In the West Bank, Israel has advanced or approved over 9,000 illegal settlement housing units and demolished more than 400 Palestinian structures in the past three months alone. Israeli security forces' operations have resulted in the death of more than 40 Palestinians and wounded more than 1,000.

The tragedy endured by the Palestinian people has shaken the foundations of international fairness and justice and is testing the moral conscience of humankind. The international community must not allow such suffering to continue and must take urgent action. Given the critical nature of the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, we strongly urge the full restoration of humanitarian access. The Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2025/415) states that the militarized aid distribution mechanism promoted by the United States and Israel is violating the principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality, is insufficient to alleviate the humanitarian situation and is, instead, further endangering civilians. The Israeli military opened fire on

civilians as they tried to approach distribution points, claiming more than 500 lives and injuring more than 4,000 people. Seeking food must never mean seeking death.

China firmly opposes the weaponization of humanitarian assistance, strongly condemns attacks on civilians and calls for a thorough investigation and accountability. Israel, as the occupying Power, must fulfil its obligations under international humanitarian law by immediately lifting its blockade on Gaza, fully restoring humanitarian access and supporting and cooperating with the work of the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations. We issue a strong appeal for an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Gaza. Lasting peace cannot be achieved by military means. A prolongation of the war will lead only to more casualties. Ceasefire negotiations and a political solution are the right way forward. We urge Israel to immediately stop all military operations in Gaza. Countries with significant influence on the parties concerned should act in an impartial and responsible manner and take practical actions to promote a ceasefire.

We strongly oppose unilateral actions that violate international law. International law and Council resolutions, such as resolution 2334 (2016), set out the fundamental guidance for resolving the Palestinian question. Israel has continued to advance its settlement policy in the West Bank, resumed land registration in Area C, demolished Palestinian homes, condoned settler violence and expanded its military operations. Such actions violate international law and Council resolutions and erode the foundation of an independent Palestinian State. We call on Israel to cease its attacks and settlement activities in the West Bank, curb settler violence and lift restrictions on Palestinian banks.

We strongly call for the revitalization of the two-State solution. The question of Palestine is at the core of the Middle East issue. The implementation of the two-State solution is the only viable path to resolving the Palestinian question. The international community should strengthen unity, jointly provide support and guarantees to advance the political process of the two-State solution and firmly oppose the forced transfer of Palestinians and the dangerous attempts to annex Gaza and the West Bank. We look forward to the early resumption of the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. China will continue to work with the international community in its unrelenting efforts to put an end to the fighting in Gaza, ease the humanitarian catastrophe, implement the two-State solution and realize a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question.

Mr. Bonnafont (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Khaled Khari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, for his briefing and observations on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016).

Once again, our Council notes the worsening situation, and France would like to reiterate three immediate priorities in that regard.

First, the regional escalation in recent weeks must not make us lose sight of the urgent need to arrive at an immediate and lasting ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. As the President of the French Republic stated yet again recently: there is no military solution in Gaza, and the war must end. France welcomes the mediation efforts of Qatar, the United States and Egypt in that regard. The hostages held by Hamas since the barbaric terrorist attacks of 7 October 2023, which France will continue to condemn in the strongest terms, must all be released unconditionally, without further delay and in a dignified manner.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is catastrophic. We condemn Israel's blockade of humanitarian aid. The mechanism put in place by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation is not capable of meeting the needs of the population in accordance with international law and humanitarian principles, which are

non-negotiable. Furthermore, the tragedies surrounding the distribution of aid by the Foundation have demonstrated, if proof were needed, the radical inadequacy of that mechanism. Humanitarian aid must not be exploited for political means, and it must be delivered safely and without hindrance throughout the Gaza Strip. France reiterates its full support for United Nations agencies and their humanitarian partners, which have proven their integrity and their ability to deliver aid in full compliance with humanitarian principles.

Secondly, the acceleration of settlement activity in the West Bank in parallel, as underscored by Mr. Khaled Khiari in his briefing, constitutes an obstacle to peace efforts in the Middle East. France reiterates its condemnation of settlement activity and its firm opposition to any form of annexation. The annexation policy, which is in contravention of international law and resolution 2334 (2016), obstructs the possibility of establishing a viable and contiguous Palestinian State. As the International Court of Justice recalled in its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024 (see A/78/968), Israel must end all new settlement activity without delay.

The settlement policy is also a factor in tensions on the ground. Attacks by Israeli settlers in the West Bank against the Palestinian population have increased. At least four Palestinians were killed in recent days in attacks. France calls on the Israeli Government to act decisively to put an end to the violence carried out by settlers. France adopted 59 individual sanctions measures against extremist settlers guilty of perpetrating acts of violence against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank.

Thirdly, together with Saudi Arabia, we are actively pursuing the relaunch of a just and lasting political settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. An alternative to war must be built. All our efforts must be guided by the goal of bringing to fruition the two-State solution, which will meet the legitimate aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians for peace and security.

The High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, which France is co-chairing with Saudi Arabia in accordance with the General Assembly mandate, was suspended for logistical and security reasons. However, it generated new momentum for a political solution based on the recognition of Palestine, Israeli-Palestinian normalization, regional integration, the disarmament of Hamas and the renewal of Palestinian governance.

We are working actively to ensure that the Conference helps us promote peace and security for everyone in the region, thanks to the mobilization of all Member States and the concrete commitments that they will undertake in order to implement the two-State solution.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his briefing.

The Republic of Korea is deeply concerned that the protracted armed conflict in Gaza and the worsening situation in the West Bank, compounded by the ongoing heightened regional tensions, could engulf the future of ordinary civilians in the Middle East, reducing them to endless despair and fear.

At the outset, I would like to make three points regarding the deteriorating situation in the West Bank.

First, the Republic of Korea expresses its grave concern about the ongoing violence against, and movement restrictions on, Palestinian civilians. We are particularly worried about the unjustifiable killing of unarmed Palestinian civilians, including children, in the West Bank. We call on Israel to strictly abide by its obligations under international law, including the obligation to ensure the proportional use of force and the obligation to hold those responsible fully accountable. Also unjustifiable is the

daily, organized violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians, frequently in the presence of, and with the support of, Israeli forces. Such injustice and impunity must end. Palestinian attacks against Israeli civilians, including the horrific killing of a pregnant Israeli woman in May, must also cease.

Secondly, the Republic of Korea reiterates its position that the establishment of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, in violation of international law, has no legal validity. Taking serious note that, over just the past three months, Israeli authorities have advanced or approved almost 10,000 housing units in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, we urge Israel to immediately stop all settlement activities. We are also concerned about Israel's approval of the resumption of formal registration of land ownership in Area C. We once again express our understanding that the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and Area C, is not under the sovereignty of Israel.

Thirdly, the Republic of Korea would like to stress its support for the two-State solution as the only viable pathway towards a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian question. The revitalization and reform of the Palestinian Authority (PA) are all the more necessary given its important role in the realization of the two-State solution. That is especially true in the current situation, with Hamas greatly weakened and Gazan civilians in need of legitimate and capable governance. The Republic of Korea has assisted the PA in the fields of healthcare, education and public administration, and we will continue to help it to develop its capabilities moving forward.

Turning to the catastrophic situation in Gaza, we reiterate our strong call for the swift and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid through all available routes, which is a clear obligation of the occupying Power under international humanitarian law. Taking note of the recent deaths in Gaza of civilians searching for aid, the Republic of Korea reiterates its concern about the capacity of the Israeli humanitarian coordination mechanisms and emphasizes that humanitarian assistance should be delivered in an effective and impartial manner, in a way that ensures the dignity of aid recipients. Aid must not be used as a political tool, as desperation will lead to anger and anger will foster extremism. We therefore call on Israel to divert its direction towards full-fledged cooperation with long-standing, trusted humanitarian agencies — particularly the United Nations — to expand and expedite the entry and delivery of humanitarian aid to those in great need.

Since the horrific terrorist attack by Hamas on 7 October 2023, which my delegation has condemned in the strongest terms, the entire Middle East, whether in the Levant, the Red Sea or the wider region, has been in an endless cycle of violence and instability. To sever that vicious cycle and chart a route towards sustainable peace and coexistence for all, the efforts by the mediators — the United States, Qatar and Egypt — should be urgently reinvigorated. We hope that the ceasefire in Gaza can soon be resumed and that all the remaining 50 hostages will be released. We also truly hope that the ceasefire in Gaza, along with the one between Israel and Iran, will pave the way for long-lasting stability in the region.

Mr. Sekeris (Greece): I would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Khiari, for his briefing today.

While the world's attention was diverted elsewhere, amid momentous developments in the region and beyond, the scale of the suffering of civilians — in particular that borne by the children in Gaza — has continued to grow. We are shocked by the images of children suffering from malnutrition and severe injuries, including amputations, and those of Palestinians being killed or injured near non-United Nations militarized distribution sites while trying to reach food supplies, especially at a time when the entire population is at risk of famine. Humanitarian aid must never be politicized or used as a means of pressure. The population in

need must be given safe access to humanitarian aid and care. Meanwhile, the safety and security of humanitarian workers is being undermined on a daily basis. In that respect, we urge Israel to fully lift the blockade and to allow and facilitate the safe, unconditional, massive and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid at scale and restore full access to electricity and water.

It is beyond doubt that that goal cannot be achieved without the valuable expertise of the United Nations. The role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) remains pivotal and indispensable. We once again repeat our position that any humanitarian plan must adhere to the core principles of international humanitarian law, cover all parts of Gaza and support the existing humanitarian operations within the Strip. At the same time, we cannot, and must not, forget that hostages continue to suffer, having been held in captivity by Hamas for 19 months already. Having repeatedly condemned the 7 October 2023 terrorist attacks and the ongoing detention and inhumane treatment of hostages, we reiterate our demand for their immediate and unconditional release. We deplore Hamas' refusal to hand them over.

While the situation in Gaza remains dire, it is equally alarming in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. Reports indicate that more than 40,000 people remain displaced. The recent raid on the Askar camp in Nablus exposed thousands more to the great risk of forced displacement. Strict movement restrictions through physical checkpoints, gates, roadblocks and other barriers isolate communities from essential services and sources of livelihood. Palestinian-owned structures continue to be demolished and seized, civilians are subjected to attacks and arrests and United Nations premises, including UNRWA's schools and health centres, continue to be attacked. We strongly condemn the escalation of violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, following the increased settler violence, the expansion of illegal settlements and Israel's military operations. Settlement expansion is contrary to international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

There is no military solution for Gaza. Political will is the key to ending the war and paving the way towards the revitalization of the political process with the aim of achieving two States living side by side in peace and security. And while the conference under the co-chairmanship of France and Saudi Arabia, initially planned for June, has been temporarily postponed, Greece looks forward to it being held in the near future, so as to bring new momentum to the political process, given that the Palestinian issue remains central to regional stability. The ceasefire between Israel and Iran is an opportunity for the international community to focus, as a matter of priority, on Gaza and a political horizon for the Palestinians. In the same spirit, Greece stands ready to engage towards moving the Arab plan forward, as presented by Egypt. It is a constructive proposal for planning the day after in Gaza, where an empowered and reformed Palestinian Authority will be capable of exerting effective governance in Gaza and the West Bank without any Government or security role for Hamas and without any forced displacement of Palestinians.

Finally, Greece welcomes the recent bold reforms undertaken by the Palestinian Authority and the recent appointment of a Minister for Foreign Affairs and stands ready to assist the Palestinian Authority with the next steps forward.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Guyana.

I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing and note with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) (S/2025/415). The continued non-implementation of that resolution is a matter of serious concern, particularly because of the implications for the two-State solution.

Guyana has taken note of the active steps that the Israeli authorities are taking to advance settlement activities in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, while inevitably reducing Palestinian presence in the area. The advancement or approval of thousands of housing units, moves towards recognizing neighbourhoods in Israeli settlements as independent settlements, continued demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures and plans to construct a bypass road that would effectively reduce Palestinian presence in Jerusalem are all concerning and violations of resolution 2334 (2016). Guyana calls on Israel to end all policies and measures aimed at the alteration of the character and status of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. We also reiterate the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of July 2024, in which the Court concluded that:

“Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and the régime associated with them, have been established and are being maintained in violation of international law” (*A/78/968, p. 9*).

Guyana reiterates its appeal to Israel to comply with international law. We also appeal to the international community, including Member States of the United Nations, to comply with international law, including resolution 2334 (2016).

Guyana is also concerned about continuing violence against Palestinian civilians in both the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In the Gaza Strip, the catastrophic humanitarian situation persists, even though the United Nations and humanitarian partners are willing to implement a plan that would facilitate swift relief of the human-made suffering that has been imposed on Palestinian civilians. We note with deep concern the daily killing and injury of Palestinian civilians seeking aid at the small number of sites operated by the Israeli-run Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. The operations of the Foundation have led many to conclude that the agency is not guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Guyana calls on the Israeli authorities to prioritize the well-being of civilians in Gaza and their urgent need for humanitarian assistance of a quality, and in a quantity, that would meet their needs. We are especially disturbed by the privations to which children, including babies, and pregnant and lactating women are being subjected. We underscore that the use of starvation as a weapon of war is a violation of international law. We must not forget that United Nations personnel have not been spared in the ongoing situation faced by Palestinian civilians in Gaza, with 343 killed since 7 October 2023 — the highest in the Organization’s 80-year history. It is important to have full accountability for all lives lost since 7 October 2023. We also reiterate our call for full accountability for all crimes committed, beginning with the 7 October attacks on Israel, the taking of hostages to Gaza and Israel’s subsequent disproportionate response in Gaza.

We are equally concerned about the ongoing violence against civilians in the occupied West Bank. It is against international law, including international humanitarian law, for Operation Iron Wall to remain active despite the large number of casualties, the extensive destruction of homes and civilian infrastructure and the continued large-scale displacements of Palestinians that it has engendered. We strongly urge Israel to comply with its obligations under international law, including with the International Court of Justice’s provisional measures regarding its responsibility to protect the Palestinian people and to prevent genocide against them.

We were pleased to note the positive steps, as detailed in the Secretary-General’s report, that some Members took to comply with their obligations under resolution 2334 (2016). Guyana is of the firm view that resolution 2334 (2016) will not have the desired impact unless all Member States take the collective stance of complying with its provisions.

I will conclude my remarks by making three appeals.

First, Guyana calls for an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza; for the cessation of Israeli settlement policies and practices in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem; and for the cessation of violence against Palestinian civilians in the occupied West Bank.

Secondly, Guyana urges the taking of steps to rapidly improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza. We call on the Israeli authorities to allow humanitarian access to all parts of the Strip and to lift restrictions on the types of supplies allowed in. We stress that the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's operations are not improving the situation but are endangering civilians, and we call on Israel to allow the United Nations and humanitarian partners to fully resume their operations.

Thirdly, we call for the immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages, who continue to be held in Gaza by Hamas and other armed groups. Likewise, we call for the release of Palestinian civilians, including children, who are being detained in Israeli prisons without charge.

Guyana remains unwavering in its support for the Palestinian cause and the implementation of the two-State solution. We remain ready to work with the Council and the wider United Nations towards that end, and we look forward to the convening of the international high-level conference on the two-State solution at the earliest opportunity.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): I just wanted to be clear in my response to certain remarks made by some colleagues: no one wants to see Palestinian civilians in Gaza go hungry and thirsty. The United States supports getting assistance to civilians in Gaza, but it should happen in a way that does not allow Hamas to benefit.

The United Nations and other Member States should focus their efforts on working with the United States-supported mechanism, which has proven to effectively help Palestinian civilians receive assistance. We call on all Members to support the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Bamy (Palestine): Allow me to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2025/415) on the implementation — or rather, the continuous breaches — of resolution 2334 (2016).

The report shows two important things.

First, the ongoing killing and mass displacement of Palestinians is also occurring in the West Bank, as is the colonization and annexation of Palestinian land.

Secondly, it shows the price of not holding accountable those who breach the resolutions of the Council and how that allows for the perpetuation of crimes and illegal actions to this day. The settlements have been continuously condemned for 60 years, yet settlement activities continue to this day because of that lack of accountability.

Allow me to start by saying that there is a consensus around the need for a ceasefire, the release of hostages and prisoners, the delivery of humanitarian aid and the withdrawal of Israeli forces. But what happens in the meantime, while the mediation efforts of the United States, Qatar and Egypt continue? We reject the idea

that there is a right to slaughter Palestinians. That has been our position from day one; this is day 632, and the slaughter is ongoing. Nothing can justify a genocide.

A nation is fighting for its survival in the face of an existential threat. What Palestinians want is to see their children grow up without agony and death, and they refuse to accept that the only horizon available to them is the shroud of death or the shackles of oppression.

There are still some who wonder — very publicly — whether we even exist, or who recognize our right to existence merely to justify killing us. There are still some who wonder if we are entitled to find life and freedom in our land. There are still some who treat us as a burden, as expendable, as parasites, as a people too many, as having deserved to be killed and maimed. That dehumanization, that denial of our rights, that demonization of Palestinians has reached its ultimate expression in Gaza, where the genocide continues as we speak and meet — again and again and again. And while the whole world stands with Gaza — and we recognize the solidarity that we see from all Council members' countries every day, Gaza stands alone and will continue to do so for as long as the genocide continues.

The decisions to hold those responsible accountable, to deter the continued commission of crimes and to ensure that the killing stops and aid flows in a dignified manner throughout the Gaza Strip cannot be deferred any longer. Every single day, 100 Palestinian civilians are killed — in tents, in the streets and while trying to provide food for their families. They are bombed, shot at and confronted with occupation-made famine and thirst as weapons of war and with the obliteration of all the requirements for life in Gaza — from homes to hospitals — as their lives and limbs are taken away, day after day after day. And now aid is being used to torment our people, to squeeze them into 16 per cent of the Gaza Strip. Gaza was the most densely populated area on Earth, with more than 2 million inhabitants. They now are being squeezed into 16 per cent of that area in order to render them more desperate and to force them to leave their land.

We are no different than the nations represented here, which achieved their independence and took their rightful place among the community of nations. We are entitled to life. We are entitled to freedom. We are entitled to security. And we are entitled to our independent State.

There is something unbearable — and honestly, a bit humiliating — about having to proclaim over and over again that we are part of humankind and that we should be treated like human beings. Palestinians were not born to live their lives under foreign occupation or to repeatedly endure death, destruction, displacement and dispossession. That is not our fate. We are not lesser beings than those who have claimed those rights for themselves around the world and across history, who proclaimed the self-evident truths that all people are created and remain equal, that they are endowed with certain inalienable rights and that among those rights are life, liberty and dignity.

I ask those who contest our right to our independent State and our land: what are they proposing? Is it a one-State solution between the river and the sea, with equal rights for all and with everyone enjoying the right to vote and being able to exercise their political and human rights? I doubt that that is their intention, given the overwhelming evidence to the contrary. What, then, are they proposing? There are only three options left: genocide, ethnic cleansing or apartheid, or a combination of all three — the destruction and removal of a nation by force, or the continued subjugation of a people. That is horrible and unacceptable, and it is what we are witnessing before our very eyes.

There should be a consensus against those criminal options, but when it comes to the Palestinian people, it is better to check. We have experience of seeing people

justifying the unjustifiable when it comes to us. Therefore, there is no viable solution without an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel in peace and security. We are not saying that while there is calm or while our people are thriving and living their lives. We are still speaking of the two-State solution and of living side by side with Israel while the Israeli Government is attempting to annihilate our nation. It is the two-State solution, on the 1967 borders, that the world rallied around and demanded that the parties accept. One party does. What about the other?

In a two-State solution, there are no negotiations, no debate and no conditions on the existence of either State. Neither side has a veto power over the existence of the other. That is the premise of that solution. Palestine recognized Israel more than 30 years ago and is still awaiting Israel's recognition of Palestine. Israel demands that we recognize not only its existence but its right to exist — something specific to Israel, its right to exist — while it arrogates to itself the right to veto our State and deny our very existence as a nation. In fact, Israel not only claims that veto power over Palestinian statehood or imposes condition after condition to make it impossible. It actively pursues the destruction of that State and the displacement of our people. Some suggest that the solution would be for Palestinian statehood to be adjusted to accommodate Israel's illegal actions, effectively ensuring the perpetuation of the occupation instead of ending it. Council members know what a State is. Sovereignty is a corollary of statehood. They are inextricably linked. Independence is freedom from foreign occupation and domination in all its manifestations, and we are entitled to sovereignty and security as well.

Netanyahu held up a map in the General Assembly in September 2023 conveying his vision for the new Middle East (see A/78/PV.10). In that map, Palestine had disappeared altogether. It was Israel, from the river to the sea — not as a slogan like the one that upsets Israel so much, but as a reality that its occupation forces, its bulldozers, its settlers and its settlements are trying to build through violence. There is a new massacre on the ground every day. Palestinian cities and towns look like an archipelago in an ocean of Israeli settlements and closed military zones, as communities are confronted with a shrinking space delineated by occupation forces and settler attacks, by illegal military orders and illegitimate measures. It is as if they were drowning under that constant violence and pressure. From Masafer Yatta to Kafr Malik, Tayyiba and Deir Dibwan, from Jerusalem to Jenin, from Nablus, Tulkarm and Tubas to Bethlehem and Al-Khalil — everywhere, Palestinians are confined, fragmented and suffocating under this occupation.

Under the pretext of ensuring the security of the occupying Power, Israel is threatening the very survival of the occupied people. The only way forward is to end the occupation and the violence once and for all. Palestine is committed to non-violence in words and deeds. It condemned attacks against all civilians without distinction, Palestinians and Israelis. It reaffirmed its commitment to the two-State solution on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. It was and remains ready to cooperate fully with the High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, co-chaired by Saudi Arabia and France, and it started by spelling out its commitments in the letter from President Abbas addressed to President Macron and to the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. And we are acting upon those commitments. But we also have rights that need to be upheld, and that is what the letter affirmed as well. We implemented reforms, exceeding expectations in impossible circumstances.

We are asked to do a lot. And we are saying that we are ready to assume all our responsibilities, including in the Gaza Strip, to ensure sole governance and security responsibilities and to have a monopoly over governance and weapons. And we are

being denied the ability to do that, to deliver to our people, by Israel. The Council must help us get rid of the chokehold that Israel has over us politically, militarily, physically and financially. Imagine a Government that was forced to deal with daily incursions by a foreign force, by forces and settlers, into its towns and cities day after day. Can Council members imagine their natural resources and money being stolen? Israel is withholding \$2.3 billion in Palestinian revenues. That means that we have been unable to pay most of our public employees the equivalent of several months of salaries. Council members can imagine what would happen in their countries if they did not pay the salaries of public employees for one month. But what are Palestinian civil servants doing? They are showing up anyway, in spite of that, in order to deliver for their people. We are doing the impossible in impossible circumstances, and Israel wants to make sure that we fail. Israel will eventually regret it if that effort was to succeed. However, the Council has a duty to ensure that we do not fail and that we succeed, for the sake of the Palestinian people and their rights, but also for the prospects of peace in our region.

We accepted every international mechanism and every verification. We ask the Council to come and verify that we are upholding our obligations as long as it is prepared to verify that Israel is upholding its obligations as well. We have called for the deployment of forces to ensure that the ceasefire is respected under the United Nations mandate and, upon the invitation of the Palestinian side, to protect the Palestinian people and to ensure security for all, with regional and international forces. There is a plan today, an Arab-Organization of Islamic Cooperation plan supported by the whole world, that would make it possible to bring this situation to an end, to start the recovery process in Gaza and to rebuild Gaza while the Palestinians remain in it. Israel is undermining all those international, regional and Palestinian efforts. None of the decisions that we are making are easy, especially when Israel is sparing no effort to destroy our State and harm our people. I urge members of the Security Council not to take us or those decisions for granted. I urge them to help us to demonstrate to our people that there is a peaceful path to liberation. If they lose that hope, members cannot imagine the reverberations. We must demonstrate that there is a peaceful path to liberation. Israel wants to convince them that there is no path to liberation because it believes that they will then disappear, by either being killed or displaced. That is a horrible, inhumane and crazy bet that endangers the security of everyone, and it cannot be allowed to continue.

Calls for ending the killing in Gaza, ending colonization and upholding international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions must be accompanied by actions that allow those goals to be achieved, including in line with the determination of the International Court of Justice. We are asked to restate and prove every single day our commitment to non-violence and the two-State solution, while the other side is unleashing brutal violence on our people and destroying the two-State solution. There is nothing that will allow the justification of the double standards of demanding Palestinian pacifism while justifying, fuelling or even tolerating Israeli militarism. That is not the way forward. There is always a way to justify violence, but the only way forward for the benefit of all is to break the cycle of violence.

There is a Palestinian leader from Jerusalem who was an icon of the non-violent Palestinian struggle called Faisal Al-Husseini. In an attempt to convince the people as to why the non-violence way was the right one, he used a metaphor. He said that he could challenge Muhammad Ali or Mike Tyson and defeat them, not in the boxing ring but around a chess set. And that image, which had an impact on me and many Palestinians, made a lot of sense. However, imagine what would happen if Faisal Al-Husseini were sitting around that chess set, on the verge of winning and achieving liberation, and Mike Tyson stands up and knocks him out. Faisal Al-Husseini rises — as he has done in real life after being beaten time and again in the streets of Jerusalem — puts the chess set forward and says “let us try again”. Just

as Faisal Al-Husseini is about to win, Mike Tyson rises and knocks him out again. Do members not think that some of the people observing that scene would ask why he does not swing at him, even if it sounds crazy given the asymmetry of power? However, there is one way to prove that Faisal Al-Husseini is right — by upholding the rules, preventing such violence from taking place, not allowing one side to knock out the other time and again. That is the way we preserve life. That is the way to ensure security. There is no Israeli security at the expense of Palestinian life and Palestinian rights — there is shared security and shared life.

The sad reality is that, as part of that dehumanization of Palestinians, once the slaughter ends — and it must end — there is an expectation that Palestinians should move on, regardless of the lives lost, the limbs lost and the loved ones lost, regardless of the fact that their lives have been turned into ruins and every inch of Gaza has witnessed tragedies and methodical devastation. There is an expectation that parents will walk the Earth with the shadow of their killed children and do nothing about it and that the children who were orphaned will hold on to the memory of their parents but not the anger over how they were killed. There is an expectation that a nation will be able to move on from the reality of parents carrying their children in plastic bags, of families buried under the rubble or sand or in the tents they found shelter in after everything else was destroyed. There is an expectation that we will be able to move on as a nation from the images of burning children and starving infants, the impact that bombs have left behind on the lives of many Palestinians — on their scarred bodies and in their hearts and minds — and the impact that a single bullet lodged in a child's head or heart will have on an entire family forever.

We said long ago that we made a choice to seek justice, not vengeance, but we cannot be prevented from seeking either. We cannot continue to be denied our right to life, to liberty and to dignity. We cannot be denied recourse and reparation. No one has a rightful claim to supremacy, exceptionalism, domination, oppression — no one. Justice is the only way forward and the only viable path to peace, and we are still pursuing peace despite everything that has been done to us. How many times have we heard the claim that the Middle East was one war away from peace only as a prelude to another war and another war? How many times have we heard the claim that the Palestinian question no longer matters or has finally been put to rest? No one should succumb to those lies and illusions any longer — they cost lives, and we have already lost far too many lives.

A different reality is possible for Palestine, Israel and the region — a reality of shared peace, security and prosperity. It starts with ending the genocide, releasing the hostages and prisoners, delivering humanitarian aid and Israel's full withdrawal from Gaza. It starts with putting an end to the annexation of our land and the displacement of our people, and it will materialize with the independence of the State of Palestine. Shared security will be achieved by the fulfilment of our inalienable rights, not their continued denial. There is not one people too many in the Middle East — there is one missing independent State. We ask for nothing more than what international law has determined as our rights, on a par with other peoples around the world. But we will accept nothing less. Our freedom can no longer be denied or delayed.

The President: The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): Accusations of genocide are categorically false here and fuel antisemitism around the world. America fully supports Israel's right to defend itself. Israel has taken numerous measures to limit harm to civilians and address humanitarian needs. The loss of civilian life in Gaza is tragic, but the responsibility for that rests with Hamas, which could stop the fighting today by freeing the hostages and agreeing to the ceasefire terms already accepted by Israel.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Danon (Israel): First, I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

Jonathan Samerano's parents had prayed every day for a miracle. Instead, last week, we received the cold confirmation of tragedy — the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) recovered Jonathan's body in Gaza. He was just 21 and was abducted on 7 October 2023 by an employee of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East — a terrorist who received his salary from the United Nations. The United Nations paid the wages of the man who stole Jonathan's body and dragged him into Gaza. Where are the condolences of the Secretary-General or even an apology from Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini? Their silence rings louder than any empty statement that they have ever offered. No one in this building can claim ignorance. No one can hide behind the excuse of not knowing, because Jonathan's mother, Ayelet Samerano, came to this very building many times and looked Commissioner Lazzarini in the eyes. We demanded accountability; we demanded answers. We reminded him that the United Nations badge must not be a shield for terrorists. There has been no reply to this day. Last week Ayelet buried her son, while the United Nations buries its head in the sand. That stain will never wash out.

As ancient Rome faced a brutal and unrelenting enemy, Cato the Elder would end every speech with the same words: "*Carthago delenda est.*" — "Carthage must be destroyed." In every statement that I deliver here, I say the same phrase. I do not call for destruction, I do not call for vengeance. No, I ask for something far simpler, far more human — and I say it to the Council almost every week: bring them home. It is very simple.

Council members all spoke about what they expect: a humanitarian ceasefire and then the release of hostages. It is the other way around: it starts with the release of the hostages. Then Council members can speak about the rest. Bring them home — all of them. Before anything else, that must happen. The hostages must be released. The war will not end if any of them remain in Gaza. It will not happen.

The same moral blindness that failed Ayelet Samerano and continues to now fail the hostages is threatening the one initiative that is actually feeding Gaza's civilians — the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. In a single month, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation has delivered more than 46 million meals, distributed directly to Palestinian families from three secure distribution sites. Speed and efficiency are rapidly increasing, with over 2 million meals delivered in a single day. They have bypassed the terrorists, who loot the aid, making a profit or diverting it to Hamas' murderous objectives.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation has offered the United Nations full data-sharing, joint logistics and transparent monitoring. What has been the response from the Secretary-General and other officials? We heard it today: indifference, defamation and obstruction. Three weeks ago, Hamas terrorists murdered clearly identified Gaza Humanitarian Foundation staff as they were returning from a day of feeding Gazan civilians. The pictures were horrible. They stopped the bus, tortured them in the middle of the road and executed them. The Secretary-General said nothing, nor did the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs or the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Silence in the face of murder is not impartiality; it is abandonment.

Meanwhile, some officials here have circulated anonymous so-called briefings smearing the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation model. They spread disinformation that Hamas weaponized to justify more attacks on aid workers. Outrageously, the United Nations has also embellished and promoted false allegations against the Gaza

Humanitarian Foundation regarding violent incidents, shamelessly promoting claims made by Hamas-controlled sources. The blindness and hatred have now exploded into absurdity, with some actors even promoting the insane conspiracy that the aid being distributed contains drugs, as if the people risking their lives to feed families were secretly pushing narcotics. It is delusional. I do not understand it. Why not cooperate? Why not work together?

Let us therefore speak plainly. If Council members truly care about Gaza's children, they should stop sabotaging the only programme that reaches them instead of terrorists. They should condemn the murderers and partner with the people delivering bread, not the people burning it. They should get out of their own way and out of the way of those trying to help. They should set aside the bureaucracy, the political calculations and the misguided need to preserve broken systems. The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation is not interested in press releases or technical victories; it is interested in improving the humanitarian situation. If Council members care about the people of Gaza, they should stop the defamation and the lies and help the Foundation to help the people of Gaza.

While the United Nations struggled to regain its moral clarity, Israel acted within hours. During Operation Rising Lion, the IDF achieved full air superiority over western Iran and even Tehran, striking nuclear complexes, airfields and ballistic missile sites. We neutralized more than half of Iran's ballistic missile launchers, which threatened Israel and the entire world. We destroyed more than 1,000 uncrewed aerial vehicles and intercepted approximately 90 per cent of the missiles that were fired at our cities. Not a single Israeli aircraft was lost. We targeted the regime's war machine, not its people. That is another moral line that Iran will never respect, as it intentionally fired its missiles at our population centres, murdering 28 civilians.

Tehran's terror does not stop at Iran's borders. Its money, weapons and orders flow straight into Judea and Samaria. In May, Hananel Gez and Tzeela Gez, who was 30 years of age, were driving to the hospital to welcome their baby into the world. Tzeela was nine-months pregnant. It was supposed to be the happiest day of their lives. Instead, as they drove down the road at night on the way to the hospital, a terrorist opened fire on their car. Tzeela was murdered, and so was their unborn child — a family destroyed, three children left without a mother, a life stolen before it had even started. The rifles and ammunition that find their way into the hands of such terrorists come directly from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' supply chain of death and terror. We will never again allow our families to be hunted. The pattern is unmistakable: Iran funds Hamas to massacre our people, Hizbullah to fire rockets at our cities, the Houthis to hijack shipping lanes and launch ballistic missiles, and terror cells in Judea and Samaria to ambush innocent civilians on their way to giving birth. Israel will continue to sever those Iranian supply lines, whether they run into Gaza or Jenin.

Alongside the darkness, a different future is already taking shape — a future of cooperation and peace. That vision was laid out in the Abraham Accords Peace Agreement, and Israel remains committed to expanding that circle of partnership and normalization. Across the region, nations are choosing a path defined not by old hatred but by shared interest and common hope. That path is open to all who seek it. We believe in a peaceful Middle East, one built not on terror tunnels and ballistic missiles but on innovation, dialogue and mutual respect. We will continue working with all those who share that belief and wish to see a brighter future. We have seen what this region looks like when it chooses war. We have also seen what it can become when it chooses peace. Israel will never stop defending its people, but we will also never stop reaching out and striving for peace.

The President: The observer of the Observer State of Palestine has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

I now give him the floor.

Mr. Bamyá (Palestine): I wonder if that peaceful settlement for the Middle East includes the independent and sovereign State of Palestine — or is it, again, based on the illusion that, somehow, there is a way to destroy the Palestinian people instead of recognizing and upholding their rights.

We have declared very clearly that we are willing to cooperate and work closely with President Trump and the United States Administration, Saudi Arabia and Arab and Muslim countries and European and global partners to achieve true, genuine, just and lasting peace. Let us not distort the meaning of the word. There is no peace without justice and upholding international law. There is no peace at the expense of international law and people's lives and rights.

It is true that there was a complete blockade on humanitarian aid and that starvation was used as a weapon of war, and I note that it was an official decision of the Israeli Government to block humanitarian aid for so long and create conditions of famine in Gaza. The question now that aid is being distributed is how can we complain? We can complain because, while the unacceptable, inhumane and unbearable blockade is now being addressed, that does not mean that everything else is acceptable.

Should we not believe our eyes? Is there anyone here who has not seen the images of thousands of people trying to access aid and being shot at, of people being killed every day? It is not a conspiracy or an imaginary narrative — those are images that we are seeing every day. And we have called several times for international journalists and international investigation missions to be allowed in to tell us what is happening, if we are to believe that everything that we are seeing is not true. Our people are being treated like cattle. They are being shot at like animals. These are human beings. We should not believe the testimonies of Israeli soldiers saying that they were ordered to shoot at the people coming to collect aid while they had no weapons, while they were not an enemy. What if those people who members have seen on their televisions every night and every day were Israelis, starving and trying to get aid? What would happen? Every day, 30 Palestinians are killed trying to get aid.

So yes, aid must be distributed, but it must be distributed in a dignified manner to all Palestinians, not as a means to forcibly displace them, squeeze them into parts of the territory, make them desperate or further humiliate them. We ask to be treated as human beings — that is not too much to ask, and it is a bit insulting to suggest that we are not entitled to be treated that way and should take whatever is thrown our way and be thankful.

Regarding attacks on aid workers, humanitarian personnel, United Nations staff — does the representative of Israel really want to go there?

The President: I wish to request that the decorum of the Security Council be upheld and that we refrain from any personal attacks or crosstalk.

I once again give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Bamyá (Palestine): We have seen attacks on humanitarian workers and United Nations staff. We have seen the narrative that Palestinians are bloodthirsty monsters and that the United Nations was part of a terrorism network. That narrative and incitement led to the real-life consequences of occupation forces killing entire families and children and attacking, detaining, torturing and killing United Nations staff. That should be taken seriously. Hamas is responsible for the actions it takes, and we have been very clear in our position on every matter, whether it be attacks on civilians or the taking of hostages — we reject and oppose those actions.

However, Israel is also responsible for its actions. It cannot defer or deny that responsibility. Is this all about releasing the hostages? Massively bombing entire neighbourhoods, destroying homes whether they are empty or occupied, bombing people's tents, snipers shooting children in the head while searching for hostages, doctor after doctor coming here to explain what is being done to the Palestinians, them being denied the right to life, access to hospitals and schools, their lives being destroyed — that was about releasing the hostages? Or what about pretending that nobody cared about the hostages here when there was legislation upon legislation on that issue, but in parallel to calling for an end to the killing, displacement and arbitrary arrest of Palestinians? But some cannot tolerate the fact that Palestinians are human beings and that they are entitled to equal measures of rights. So, it is not about them. A ceasefire would be the best way to end the bloodshed, release the hostages and finally embark on a path to end the occupation.

I want to be very clear: when we speak of genocide, in no way do we hold Jews around the world responsible for Israel's actions. They are legal determinations, crimes that have a definition. If I say Israel commits war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, nobody can answer that we are fuelling antisemitism, except those who have some confusion between the acts of the Israeli Government and the Jews around the world. That is an unacceptable confusion — we will never go there. Those responsible are those who do the act. One cannot say that they are responsible because of their identity or that they are innocent based on their identity. The identity of the perpetrators and the victims is not relevant here — what is relevant are the actions that are being committed. We can have a legal debate about the qualification of genocide, despite the overwhelming conclusions reached by many legal experts and organizations around the world that are extremely credible. I think that it is more important to focus on ending the killing. But it is not acceptable to use Jewish people or the Holocaust as a shield from holding Israel accountable for the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. It is irresponsible and unacceptable to do so.

We believe in international law, all international law and nothing but international law. We hold ourselves accountable based on that standard. Israel cannot invent its own standard. The same rules apply to all of us, and anyone who breaches those rules should be held accountable. I think that enough Palestinians lives have been lost to finally reach that conclusion. There is nothing that justifies massacres. One cannot refer to the right to security, the right to existence or use big words to hide behind them and justify massacres. We want shared life and two States — Palestine and Israel. We are very clear, and I wish we could have that clarity from the other side. We want two States — Palestine and Israel. Israel has been a member of the United Nations for 75 years now — we are still awaiting our turn. And how can we explain that we are still awaiting our turn? How can we explain that our people are still not free after all these years of having to reach a threshold that no other country on Earth has been asked to reach? We want the same rules for everyone, the right to life for everyone, the right to security for everyone, the right to freedom for everyone and respect for human dignity for everyone.

Some have spoken of human shields to explain the mass bombing of people and shooting randomly at people, when Israel itself — as the most recent United Nations report on children and armed conflict (S/2025/247) shows — has used Palestinian boys in Gaza and the West Bank as human shields in its military operations. That is the problem when someone thinks that what they are doing is acceptable because they are the one doing it. No, the same actions should bring the same level of condemnation and the same clarity. All those people abducted from Gaza who have disappeared, including doctors and children — would that be acceptable? We call on the Israeli people not to believe the narrative of its Government that the whole world is conspiring against them. We are truly extending our hand in peace to end

the violence, but we must end the occupation. We need freedom and justice so that all can coexist in our region. That is the new Middle East we all need and to which we all aspire. That is the right Middle East that we must see — one where no one's existence, freedom or security is denied and one where we can share in life, peace and prosperity.

The President: The representative of Israel has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Danon (Israel): The representative of Palestine spoke for a long time, but in his speech he forgot to mention the responsibility of Hamas. Why is he afraid of Hamas?

I will not answer all his lies. I will ask him one question. Can he agree with me and with my colleagues that there is no future for Gaza with Hamas in Gaza? Can he agree with that sentence, that the future of Gaza will not include Hamas? If he says yes, we can talk about everything.

The Palestinians blame Israel and Israel blames the Palestinians. That is the core of the conflict. We do not want to destroy the Palestinian people. We are not fighting the Palestinian people. We are fighting Hamas, the terrorist organization that brought the Palestinians to where they are today.

Therefore, if the representative claims that he represents the Palestinian people, he must be responsible, be brave and agree with me today that the future of Gaza will not include Hamas.

The President: The observer of the Observer State of Palestine has asked for the floor to make a further statement. He will be the last speaker.

I now give him the floor.

Mr. Bamyá (Palestine): I wonder, if this is not Israel attempting to destroy Palestine, what is it?

We heard that Israel is taking every precaution not to harm civilians. I can only imagine what it would be like if it were not taking those precautions. The representative of Israel asked questions, but as it happens, we are not in an Israeli interrogation or an Israeli jail.

I have spoken, but he has decided not to listen. I am sorry, Madam President, for addressing the person directly, but the representative of Israel addressed me.

We have said that we do not accept and reject all attacks against civilians. We have said that we are willing to take our responsibilities in governance and security in Gaza tomorrow. Sole responsibility — that means there is no Hamas ruling in Gaza. That means there are no weapons there except in the hands of the official Palestinian Government. We have a policy of one State, one law, one gun, one Government.

But Israel is undermining that Palestinian Government, which wants peace. Israel is preventing that from happening.

The more we delay the ceasefire, the more killing there is. Instead of arriving at the solution, proposed by Palestine, the region and the world, of having a Palestinian Government operating in Gaza, with regional and international support, with the deployment of forces at our invitation, Israel is denying that State.

There is always a reason. It is Hamas. It is this. It is that. We did not say this or we should do that.

Look at everything we have done and everything we have said and tell me at which point Israel has done anything that matches the level of commitment we have shown.

Israel's Knesset is voting against the Palestinian State. Israel's officers are destroying it on the ground. The representative of Israel can claim Israel is not trying to destroy the Palestinian State but people have eyes.

Does Israel recognize the State of Palestine? He must say it. Then there would be an important meeting. We would finally have achieved the breakthrough that Israel believes in a Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel.

There are solutions to all problems, as long as we are finally in a context in which our rights are recognized, in which both sides' security can be guaranteed.

Israel claims a right to do anything under the pretext of security. That is not possible. No other State could behave in that way.

I think we have been clear. We cannot be clearer. There is a solution today, but nothing justifies what Israel has done in Gaza.

If we had tried to justify the killing of Israeli civilians, nobody in the world would have accepted that, for any reason, claim or right. Therefore, Israel's systematic killing of Palestinian civilians can never be justified. We are not lesser human beings. We are not expendable.

The United Nations reports are wrong. The human rights organizations are wrong. The journalists are wrong. The Governments around the world are wrong. Israel's closest allies are wrong.

Or maybe Israel is wrong. Maybe it is lying. Maybe it is distorting reality.

To serve policy, the Permanent Representative of Israel wrote about the importance of the voluntary migration of Palestinians — the code name for ethnic cleansing in Gaza.

We want to live in freedom and dignity in our land. That is our right. And we are willing to do so within the two-State solution. It is time for Israel to stop destroying that solution, for the benefit of Palestinians, for the benefit of Israelis, for the benefit of the region and for the benefit of the world.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.