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Provisional

10003rd meeting

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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Cho/Mr. Sangjin Kim	(Republic of Korea)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria.	Mr. Attaf
	China.	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Denmark	Mr. Rasmussen
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Greece	Mr. Gerapetritis
	Guyana	Mr. Todd
	Pakistan.	Mr. Dar
	Panama	Mr. Hoyos Boyd
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Kabba
	Slovenia.	Ms. Fajon
	Somalia	Mr. Ali
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Cooper
	United States of America.	Mr. Waltz/Ms. Locetta

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 1.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: I would like to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, presidents, prime ministers, ministers and other high-level representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Egypt, Kuwait, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in this 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 the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States; and Her Excellency Ms. Kaja Kallas, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission.

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

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: We are confronting one of the darkest chapters of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nearly two years after the horrific Hamas terror attacks of 7 October 2023 and the devastating Israeli military response that followed, the violence has only deepened across the occupied Palestinian territory, with grave threats to regional and global peace and security.

The Israeli military onslaught in Gaza City is compounding an already catastrophic humanitarian crisis. Countless Palestinian civilians and the remaining hostages are trapped under relentless bombardment and deprived of food, water, electricity and medicine. Famine is a reality, with the population constantly forced to move and being starved. To call this situation untenable and morally and legally indefensible does not begin to capture the scale of human suffering.

I have repeatedly appealed for an immediate permanent ceasefire; the immediate, unconditional release of all hostages; and immediate, unconditional and unhindered humanitarian access. United Nations resolutions continue to be ignored and international humanitarian law violated. Impunity prevails and our collective credibility is being undermined.

The violence is spreading from Gaza into the occupied West Bank and beyond, including several countries in the region and, recently, even Qatar. Efforts to secure a ceasefire and hostage release deal, led by Qatar, Egypt and the United States of America, suffered a serious blow on 9 September. The Israeli attack was not only a violation of Qatar's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It also threatened the very norms and mechanisms we rely on for diplomacy and conflict resolution.

The viability of a two-State solution is steadily eroding, now reaching its most critical level in more than a generation. Relentless settlement expansion, de facto annexation, forced displacement and cycles of deadly violence, including by

extremist settlers, have entrenched an unlawful Israeli occupation and pushed us perilously close to a point of no return.

Israel's recent approval of settlement construction in the E1 area is especially alarming. If implemented, it would sever the occupied West Bank, destroying the territorial contiguity of a Palestinian State. Israeli settlements are not just a political issue. They are a flagrant violation of international law.

At the same time, the Palestinian Authority is facing an existential crisis. Fiscal, political and institutional pressures are undermining its ability to function. Israel's withholding of clearance revenues, the suffocation of the Palestinian economy and a sharp decline in donor aid have left the Palestinian Authority unable to pay salaries or deliver basic services. Urgent international support, financial and political, is needed to stabilize the Palestinian Authority and preserve its viability as a partner for peace.

And yet, amid the darkness, a glimmer of hope emerged yesterday with the resumption of the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. I commend France and Saudi Arabia for co-chairing this important meeting and for helping to reignite political momentum. I welcome the recognition of Palestinian statehood by many more countries, including permanent Council members France and the United Kingdom. This is the clearest path to a two-State solution: Israel and an independent, sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, on the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, based on international law and United Nations resolutions. We must seize this momentum. The so-called "day after" in Gaza must be anchored in international law, reject any form of ethnic cleansing and have a clear political horizon towards a viable two-State solution.

As I said to the General Assembly this morning (see A/80/PV.4), we must urgently reverse the dangerous trends on the ground. Relentless settler expansion and violence and the looming threat of annexation must stop. The calls of the International Court of Justice must be heeded, including for Israel to immediately cease settlement activities and end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The illegal occupation must end. And we must support Palestinian institutions politically and financially to carry out essential reforms and ensure fiscal stability.

(spoke in French)

A just and lasting peace will never be built through more violence. Peace demands a collective commitment to diplomacy, to international law and to the dignity of all people. There are actions that the Security Council must take. There are responsibilities that each Council member must uphold. We cannot let this fragile moment slip away.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea.

I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. It is yet another stark reminder that the situation in Gaza stands as one of the greatest challenges to international peace and security. The immense scale of human suffering and the implications for regional stability demand our urgent and united attention. This is not an abstract challenge; it is measured in lives lost every day. Nearly two years have passed since Hamas' terrorist attacks on 7 October 2023. In that time, more than 64,000 people have been killed. The humanitarian crisis worsens each day, with people in Gaza — particularly women, children and other vulnerable groups — facing constant threats to their lives and safety. Equally troubling is the famine now unfolding in

Gaza. According to the recent Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report, more than half a million people are already facing famine. The crisis is projected to spread to Dayr al-Balah and Khan Yunis in the coming weeks. We must prevent any further devastation for civilians already in desperate conditions. Safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access must be guaranteed without any further delay. We call for the immediate lifting of all restrictions on the entry and distribution of humanitarian assistance.

The Republic of Korea is deeply alarmed by Israel's ground operation to seize control of Gaza City, which risks further exacerbating an already catastrophic humanitarian crisis. We are also gravely concerned that its decision to resume construction in the EI settlement area would threaten to isolate Palestinian communities in the area. Given the dire situation, upholding international law, and in particular international humanitarian law, is imperative. These rules are not aspirational ideals, but binding obligations designed to safeguard human dignity even in the darkest moments of conflict. We urge all parties to comply fully with these principles.

In this difficult context, the Republic of Korea remains gravely concerned about Israel's recent attack in Qatari territory. This act is unacceptable. It not only violates the territorial sovereignty of the State of Qatar, one of the key mediating countries, but also jeopardizes ongoing negotiations to achieve an immediate ceasefire and secure the release of all hostages held by Hamas.

We reaffirm our full support for the tireless mediation efforts of the United States, Qatar and Egypt. We commend the unwavering commitment of Qatar's diplomatic mediation, which remains indispensable to ending the cycle of violence and creating a pathway towards stability. The Republic of Korea also reiterates its steadfast call for an immediate ceasefire and the unconditional release of all hostages. Securing their freedom, together with establishing a permanent and fully respected ceasefire, are indispensable steps towards a just and lasting peace.

The Republic of Korea deeply understands the Palestinian people's aspirations to establish their own State. We believe that the two-State solution is the only viable pathway to resolve the Israel-Palestine issue and to build lasting peace. The Korean Government will continue to play its due role in the international community's growing efforts to build peace and stability in the region based on the two-State solution. Taking all considerations into account, Korea is committed to recognizing Palestinian statehood at a time when it would be genuinely conducive to realizing the two-State solution.

As we deliberate today, let us not lose sight of our common goal: a Middle East where peoples of all walks of life can coexist in peace, security and prosperity. Korea stands ready to contribute to alleviating civilian suffering, upholding the principles of international law and helping to lay the firm foundations of a just and enduring peace for all.

I resume my functions as the President of the Council.

I now call on His Excellency, Mr. Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Mr. Dar (Pakistan): At the outset I wish to express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I welcome the participation of all the Ministers joining this important discussion today. I also thank the Secretary-General for his valuable briefing and thoughtful remarks. The Secretary-General's voice has always been one of wisdom and compassion, in Palestine and beyond, to promote peace and alleviate human sufferings. We salute this dedication and devotion.

We meet today in the shadow of a profound and deeply troubling tragedy. The Palestinian people are enduring unimaginable suffering, an unbearable daily toll of human lives, the destruction of homes and neighbourhoods and the obliteration of essential infrastructure. Hospitals, schools and markets lie in ruins. Roads and utilities have been shattered. The very fabric of society has been torn apart. More than 64,000 lives have been lost, and more than 100,000 people have been injured. These are not mere statistics. There are grieving mothers, anguished fathers, suffering children and revered elders. The devastation is immense. The grief is immeasurable. The world must not remain silent.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza has reached catastrophic proportions. Starvation grips the population, and famine has taken hold. According to the most recent Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis, famine is now a reality in Gaza City, putting more than half a million people at grave risk. In Khan Yunis and Dayr al-Balah, famine looms imminently, threatening countless more lives. The ongoing military operations in Gaza City inflict a relentless toll. Dozens of Palestinians are killed each day, entire families are displaced and communities torn apart. Already, 300,000 people have been uprooted, and nearly 1 million face imminent displacement. The roar of fighter jets, the plumes of smoke from tank fire and the collapse of buildings — what must this relentless violence mean for women, children and the most vulnerable? And what of the hostages caught in the crossfire, whose lives hang in the balance?

In the West Bank, illegal settlement expansion continues unabated. The latest E1 plan is a grave violation of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions and a stark manifestation of settler colonialism in the twenty-first century — a blow to the two-State solution.

The time for action is upon us. Pakistan calls for the following urgent and concrete measures: first, an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire to halt the bloodshed and prevent further loss of lives; secondly, full, unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza and the immediate lifting of the blockade to allow life-saving aid to reach those who are in need; and thirdly, a categorical end to any forced displacement of Palestinians from their lands, while upholding the right of return for refugees, in accordance with international law, and establishing an international protection mechanism.

Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering support for the Palestinian people in their just struggle for dignity, justice and self-determination through the establishment of a sovereign, independent and contiguous Palestinian State, based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

Pakistan welcomed the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, chaired by France and Saudi Arabia. We also commend the recent recognition of the State of Palestine by numerous Member States — a step that reflects adherence to justice and the principle of international law. Pakistan had the honour of being among the first few countries to recognize the State of Palestine following the Declaration of Independence in 1988. This positive momentum must be sustained with resolute determination, seriousness of purpose and an unwavering commitment to achieving a just and lasting solution.

The people of Palestine are facing a crisis of historic proportions. Their suffering is a stain on our collective conscience. Gaza has become a graveyard for humanity and for the global conscience. We call upon the Security Council and the broader international community to act decisively, uphold human dignity, ensure accountability and deliver justice. The time for words has passed. The time for action is now.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia.

Ms. Fajon (Slovenia): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and his personal commitment to this issue.

Upon joining the Security Council, Slovenia felt the heavy weight of responsibility of the Council to uphold international peace and security — a weight that translates to upholding international law and rejecting double standards, choosing global benefit over national interests and being ready for difficult conversations with partners instead of silence. Every State that joins the Security Council or is a permanent member of this body should know that membership entails a responsibility to act. It does not matter whether a threat to peace and security is unfolding in Ukraine or in Gaza. In both of these conflicts, international law is blatantly disregarded, and red lines are persistently crossed.

This year, we have again witnessed immense numbers of deaths amongst civilians in armed conflicts, many of them women and children, and lives shattered by starvation and displacement. Let us recall that we have built a system that should prevent atrocities, and we promised “never again”. Yet, what we saw this year was a Security Council paralyzed by disrespect for the Council’s resolutions and disregard for the decisions of international courts.

We should stand up to this. When politicians facing charges for war crimes and crimes against humanity are walking free while judges are put under sanctions, we cannot afford to remain silent without becoming complicit. Let me be clear: when all the rules and obligations of the international system we had constructed fail, this itself is a threat to international peace and security.

Gaza has become a textbook example of the failure of the international community. It has become a place in which people dread nightfall and fear what a new day will bring. Gaza has become the deadliest place for children, the deadliest place for humanitarian and medical workers and the deadliest place for journalists, the place of the first-ever proclaimed famine in the Middle East. Marked by continuous offensives and strikes against hospitals, schools, homes, shelters and holy places, it is defined by death and despair, where hostages suffer and civilians count the heartbeats they have left. Gaza is a human-made catastrophe, which is live-streamed across the globe and sustained by those acting in contradiction to everything we stand for.

The existence of “reasonable grounds to conclude” or findings that acts “may amount to” genocide are a threat to international peace and security. We commend the work of the judicial and investigative mechanisms — the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, particularly for its latest report — for sounding the alarm. It is not on us to question their findings; it is on us to act on them. The demands of a large majority of the international community are not performative diplomacy. The calls for a ceasefire, the irreversible political steps and even the simple expressions of solidarity are not stage-managed acts; they paint a dark picture of an international community in despair, which understands that “never again” has become an unfulfilled promise.

The two-State solution is equally in need of concrete and irreversible action. I welcome the new wave of countries recognizing the State of Palestine, and I call on others to take bold steps to recognize Palestine and normalize ties with both States. We must step up to prevent further disintegration of this vision and to counter occupation, annexation, forced displacement, human rights violations, terrorism and extremism. Slovenia firmly supports the role of the United Nations, including the

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, in addressing the ongoing crisis and in paving the way to a two-State solution and to the Palestinian Authority's carrying out reform and assuming full political ownership in the State of Palestine.

I appeal to all of us to not let the future of the Israeli people be defined by terrorism and violence and to not let the future of the Palestinian people be defined by occupation and perpetual human rights violations. And I appeal to Council members: do not let our collective future be defined by the stain of the Gaza genocide; act now.

There is no bigger threat to international peace and security than a cycle of violence perpetrated through continuous fear, everlasting hate and an uncertain future. The stories of children starved to death, the threats to a displaced population and a territory in fear should be all that we need to understand that the time for an immediate, permanent and unconditional ceasefire is now.

The President: I now call on His Excellency, Mr. Ahmed Attaf, Minister of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs, National Community Abroad and African Affairs of Algeria.

Mr. Attaf (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting at the request of the group of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation members of the Security Council. I would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his valuable and comprehensive briefing on recent developments in the Middle East.

The region has become synonymous with destruction and devastation, with injustice and oppression and with criminality in their most egregious forms and manifestations. How could it be otherwise when this region, unlike any other, has been enduring all these horrors for decades. Far from any exaggeration, one-upmanship, qualification or dramatization, the situation speaks for itself, be it on the question of Palestine in particular or the regional landscape in the Middle East in general.

When it comes to the Palestinian situation, we can no longer deny that, for more than two years, we have been witnessing a full-fledged genocidal war in Gaza. That was confirmed by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. There is no longer any room for debate about the threat of famine in Gaza, after the United Nations confirmed and officially declared it. There is no longer any room for interpretation regarding plans for displacement, reoccupation and annexation of Gaza and the West Bank after the Israeli occupation began to blatantly and brazenly implement and activate them.

As to the wider region, the scope of the Israeli aggression is vast. There was an Israeli aggression against Yemen, then an Israeli aggression against Lebanon, then an Israeli aggression against Syria, then an Israeli aggression against Iran, and, just a few days ago, an Israeli aggression against the State of Qatar. Needless to say, this list is likely to continue and expand in the wake of the threats that have affected, and continue to affect, other countries in the region. Such is the unjust and tragic reality that the Israeli occupation is seeking to perpetuate, as it forges ahead launching one front of aggression after another. Now that the Israeli occupation itself is touting its achievements, the Council no longer needs to solve the puzzles.

First, the Israeli occupation is seeking to destroy any prospect of establishing an independent and sovereign Palestinian State, not only on the ground, but also in hearts and minds, if it can.

Secondly, the Israeli occupation is seeking to redraw the borders of the region according to its whims and delusions, based on one of its most dangerous myths — that of a “Greater Israel”.

Thirdly and lastly, the Israeli occupation is seeking to cement its absolute hegemony over the region and establish itself as the sole authority there, attacking whomever it wants, whenever it wants and however it wants. It cares not one bit about international law, the Charter of the United Nations or even the most fundamental rules and norms of civilized and peaceful coexistence.

How is it that in addition to all of this, the Israeli occupation dares to promote its falsehood that the Palestinians want them out, while it is denying them their right to exist, their right to life and their right to establish their own independent and sovereign State? How is it that on top of all this, the Israeli occupation dares to disseminate its false propaganda that it is alone, surrounded by enemies who are seeking to destroy it, when, in fact, no country in the region has been spared from its oppression and tyranny? How is it that, after all of this, the Israeli occupation portrays itself as a bastion of democracy and the rule of law in the region, even though it has proven to the whole world that it represents the greatest threat to justice and the law, the most serious threat to the security and stability of the region and the gravest threat to international peace and security?

The tragedies and horrors that the Middle East region is now confronting demand that we comprehensively and duly rethink the question of peace and security in a way that does not countenance fragmentation or division. The issue of security in the Middle East did not begin with the events of 7 October 2023, and it is therefore unfair, biased and reductive to trace it back to that date. The history of the region spans the history of this Organization of ours and confirms that the Palestinian cause remains the central issue that cannot be blotted out, neutralized or concealed. Today we see with our own eyes how attempts to undermine this cause have only increased its legality and legitimacy as the most just cause on the face of the planet.

The history of the region is engraved in the resolutions of the Council, which affirms that there is no alternative to the two-State solution and the establishment of a Palestinian State on the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, as a just, permanent and definitive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Today we see with our own eyes how the plans to eliminate this State have only bolstered the momentum of its diplomatic recognition, which Algeria welcomes and calls for strengthening by enabling the Palestinian State to become a full Member of our Organization.

The history of the region is rooted in international legitimacy and confirms that putting a end, once and for all, to the unjust and exceptional regime of unaccountability and impunity enjoyed by the Israeli occupation is inevitable. Today we also see with our own eyes how the majority of Member States are convinced of the need to deter and punish those who consider themselves alone to be above all the systems, norms, precepts and laws that others abide by.

Moreover, the history of the region confirms that security and stability in the Middle East will not be achieved unless our Council shoulders the responsibilities entrusted to it. The fate of the Palestinian cause, the fate of the Palestinian people and the fate of all the countries and peoples of the region all remain at the mercy of the Council's will and ability to enforce its resolutions, uphold international legitimacy and deter all breaches, violations and abuses to which it is currently being subjected unchecked, uncontrollably and with impunity.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Musa Timothy Kabba, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Kabba (Sierra Leone): I thank His Excellency Mr. Cho Hyun, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, for convening this meeting at the request of Algeria, Guyana, Somalia, Pakistan and Sierra Leone. I also thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his important briefing. My delegation commends

the principled leadership of the Secretary-General and the work of the United Nations teams in the field.

The overall situation in the Middle East remains fragile and evolving. However, while some areas, such as Lebanon and Syria, are experiencing significantly less violence than before, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, in contrast, are in very dire circumstances, with civilians enduring more than 23 months of unimaginable and increasing violence. We recall the attack by Hamas and other armed groups on 7 October 2023, which led to the killing of Israeli civilians and the taking of hostages from among them, and we reiterate our unequivocal condemnation of that heinous action, especially the taking of hostages. Sierra Leone further recalls that, since the start of this conflict, the Council has remained seized of this subject, having received extensive briefings on the prevailing security, humanitarian and political situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. We regret that efforts by the Council and the mediators to secure a deal that allows for the cessation of hostilities have been met with challenges. In this regard, we have concluded, along with other Member States, that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be resolved only by peaceful means and that the military option is not viable.

The atrocities committed on and since the attacks of 7 October 2023 highlight the urgency of finding a comprehensive and lasting solution to this long-standing conflict. Sierra Leone remains dedicated to supporting international efforts towards a political, just and comprehensive settlement that ends the occupation, stops settlement expansion and addresses extremism and terrorism. Sierra Leone is gravely concerned that the continuation of this war deepens despair among the civilians in the Gaza Strip and the hostages held by Hamas. With intensified hostilities, significant loss of life, the destruction of critical civilian infrastructure, blockades and evacuation orders, the civilians in the Gaza Strip, including women and children, have borne the brunt of this war. The current status quo is unacceptable, as it is unbearable for the civilians with no apparent hope of survival. This is a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the provisions of international humanitarian law and Security Council resolutions.

Guided by the United Nations Charter, international law and the rule of law, we emphasize the following key points.

First, there must be a complete cessation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and an irreversible political process leading to a permanent ceasefire. The parties to the conflict must recommit to ongoing peace efforts and take concrete steps that will prevent further atrocities. We acknowledge and commend the efforts of the mediators — Egypt, Qatar and the United States — to achieve this end.

Secondly, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, including Israeli civilians held by Hamas, and Palestinian detainees held without due process is imperative, as are the immediate and unconditional lifting of aid restrictions and the restoration of full and unhindered humanitarian access. We emphasize the role of the United Nations and its partners, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to achieve this end.

Thirdly, Sierra Leone reaffirms its unwavering support for the two-State solution, based on the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, including resolution 181 (II) of 1947, and consistent with Article 4, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Charter. We welcome the endorsement by the General Assembly of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, and we reaffirm the legitimacy of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including their right to an independent and sovereign State over the entire occupied Palestinian territory, in line with international law and the agreed parameters.

Fourthly, Sierra Leone supports Israel's right to exist in peace and security, free from threats and attacks. Accordingly, we urge all armed groups to disarm and renounce violence, paving the way for the demilitarization of the Palestinian territory. Sustainable peace cannot take root while armed groups continue to operate outside the law.

Fifthly, we deplore and reject any attempts to forcibly displace Palestinians from their land. Palestinians temporarily evacuated must be allowed to return to their homes at the earliest opportunity.

Finally, we emphasize the need for the Palestinian Authority to be fully empowered and supported politically, financially and administratively, in order to enable it to continue implementing its credible reform agenda.

As we celebrate the eightieth session of the General Assembly, let us reflect on the principles on which this very institution was built. Among its core values is to promote peace, justice and the dignity of all persons. We must exercise the political will to deliver peace to the Palestinians and Israelis. Ongoing international efforts are a positive step that must be fully leveraged by both parties in good faith. The time to act is now in order to save the Palestinian people from the scourge of war.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Hugh Hilton Todd, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Guyana.

Mr. Todd (Guyana): As a member State of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Guyana thanks you, Mr. President, for facilitating the group's request for convening today's meeting. I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his remarks and for his consistent and principled advocacy on behalf of the Palestinian people and for peace in the Middle East region.

The protracted Israeli aggression against Palestine cannot continue to be a defining feature of politics in the Middle East. In recent times, the aggression has extended to other countries in the region, heightening instability and insecurity, driving Israel poles away from its neighbours and undermining good neighbourliness.

The ongoing war in Gaza has itself become a catalyst of pain and pressure — pain for the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who are the targets of Israeli instruments of war: starvation, bombs, bullets, displacement, dispossession and other cruelties solely intended to subjugate the Palestinian nation. We have seen, for example, how famine unfolded in Gaza in full view of the international community, and 192 countries could not stop it. The war in Gaza has also become a catalyst for pressure — political pressure — which seems to be the only way that the occupying Power might respond to the international outcry against the genocidal acts being perpetrated against Palestinians. Guyana calls on the States Members of the United Nations to ensure that their engagements with the State of Israel do not in any way contribute to prolonging the war in Gaza and the Israeli oppression of the Palestinian people.

It took a collective effort to dismantle the system of apartheid in South Africa, and Guyana firmly believes that an equally strong and organized international response is needed to ensure the end of the occupation of the Palestinian territory. I must underscore the importance of the recognition of the State of Palestine by all Member States as a pivotal part of forcing an end to the Israeli occupation. Recognition lends greater strength to international efforts to end the occupation and to achieve an independent Palestine.

On the question of the occupation, allow me to recall that more than a year ago, the International Court of Justice issued its advisory opinion confirming that Israel's prolonged occupation of the Palestinian territory is illegal under international law and must be brought to an end (see A/78/968). The General Assembly later demanded

that Israel end its occupation within a year, that is, by 18 September 2025. That date has now passed, without compliance on Israel's part. On the contrary, we have instead witnessed a series of developments that only entrenches the occupation further and destroys the two-State solution. Guyana calls on Israel to respect the Charter of the United Nations; to abide by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and other organs of the United Nations; to cease its contempt of international law; and to commit to true peace in the Middle East.

The occupation of the Palestinian territory and the attendant ills represent a historic tragedy of proportions that should shock the human conscience across the globe. Sadly, however, what we are witnessing is an othering of the Palestinian people that makes it difficult for some to see the Palestinian people as they see their own people. We must all reject this othering and fight for the rights of the Palestinian people as we would for the rights of our own people. The right-minded, the peace-loving and the promoters of justice must continue to defend the Palestinian people and oppose all attempts to erase them from their homeland.

I conclude by reaffirming Guyana's continued commitment to the two-State solution and by underscoring our conviction that the rule of law will ultimately prevail in this decades-long question, as long as all Member States choose to be guided by the principles of the Charter. I also reiterate the calls we have consistently made over the past two years for a ceasefire in Gaza, for the release of all hostages held in Gaza and Palestinian detainees held in Israeli prisons and for unimpeded humanitarian access into Gaza. I also call on Israel to cease all its actions that are dismantling the two-State solution and the possibility of peace in the Middle East region.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Mr. Rasmussen (Denmark): At the outset, I want to thank Mr. Cho Hyun, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, for convening this meeting. I also want to thank the Secretary-General for his very insightful briefing. Through the chaos of this abhorrent war, he has consistently raised his voice and that of the United Nations in support of peace. Denmark commends this kind of leadership, and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations staff on the ground for their tireless efforts and sacrifice.

I am speaking today not only as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, and thereby a politician responsible to the people of Denmark, but also as a member of the Security Council, responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, and as a grandfather, responsible to my grandchildren, who I am totally convinced will one day ask what I did, what we did in the face of such immense suffering. I ask members today, how will we answer them? Will we say that we stepped up and met the challenge of peace or that we idled in inaction and watched helplessly as the horrors unfolded?

Nearly two years have passed since the war in Gaza began. It was unleashed by the horrific terrorist attack by Hamas on 7 October 2023 — an attack that tore through Israeli families, left parents without children and children without parents, a nation wounded to its core and hostages and their families going through unimaginable suffering. Denmark has condemned this attack in the strongest terms possible, and we will continue to do so, just as we will continue to insist on the immediate and safe release of every hostage. Denmark considers itself to be a long-standing friend of the people of Israel. Israel has the right to defend itself against terrorism. This I have always supported and this I will continue to support.

But friends also have to speak the truth to each other. Today, we must face the fact that Israel's war in Gaza has created a humanitarian catastrophe on an unbearable scale. Israel must comply with international law, including international

humanitarian law. The human suffering in Gaza must be brought to an end, and it must happen now. Tens of thousands of civilians have already been killed, including more than 18,000 children. This constitutes a classroom of children every day. It constitutes a humanitarian and human failure on an unprecedented scale.

We are witnessing an ongoing expanded military operation in Gaza City. Children are starving, with no access to clean water or medicine. Doctors are forced to amputate without sedation. Mothers are powerless to feed their babies. A famine is unfolding before our eyes, while the World Food Programme alone has enough food to feed Gaza for months, waiting at the border.

This is also why Denmark, on behalf of the 10 elected members of the Security Council, coordinated a draft resolution (S/2025/583) for the Council only last week. The draft resolution demanded a ceasefire; the release of all hostages; and that the Government of Israel immediately lift all restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza, in line with international humanitarian law. These are demands that the international community has reiterated on multiple occasions, including just yesterday in the General Assembly. I deeply regret that the draft resolution did not receive the support of all 15 Council members. But today, I restate these demands. Israel must change its course, immediately. The war in Gaza must end. The Security Council, as the body responsible for international peace and security, should be able to make these demands. Indeed, this should be the bare minimum that we can do. But around this table, that means all of us, every single member, working in concert and common cause towards this goal. It means setting aside political differences to save lives. Last week, 14 members of the Council were willing to do this. We hope that this can soon become all 15.

In regard to our American friends, just this morning President Trump said that we have to stop the war in Gaza, immediately. He said we have to negotiate, immediately, for peace. Denmark continues to support the dedicated efforts of the United States, Qatar and Egypt to mediate a ceasefire. The unwavering commitment of our American friends to find a path to peace is critical in this context. But we count on them in the Council too. Their leadership is critical in our joint aspirations of bringing peace and stability to the region.

Denmark has consistently contributed to ease the suffering through humanitarian contributions. Together with 24 other countries and the European Union, we have called on Israel to resume medical evacuations from Gaza to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and we stand ready to support the treatment of those patients.

Two weeks ago, I visited the region, which I have done several times since 7 October 2023. I have met with Israeli families of hostages. Their pain is real. Their demand must be immediately and unconditionally answered. I also met with Palestinians in the West Bank who face checkpoints, settlements, settler violence, property destruction and land grabs. Their pain is real as well. Their longing for freedom and dignity is evident.

The two-State solution remains the only solution to lasting peace for two peoples, both deserving of security, both deserving of dignity. This was confirmed during the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, yesterday.

It is clear that the momentum is growing and that we are witnessing a renewed energy and enthusiasm for peace, based on the two-State solution, a solution that Denmark is prepared to build on. This is why I said yesterday, and I repeat today, that the keys to recognition of a Palestinian State should no longer lie in the hands of the Israeli Government. The Palestinians themselves must become masters of their own destiny. The time for the end to this decades-long struggle is now. The only path to lasting peace is the two-State solution, for both Palestinians and Israelis.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Yvette Cooper MP, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Ms. Cooper (United Kingdom): I thank the Secretary-General for the briefing at the beginning of this crucial meeting.

Yesterday, alongside other Ministers here in New York this week, I hosted a session to hear from doctors who have recently returned from Gaza. The stories they told will stay with me forever. One told of the screams of toddlers and the scream of a toddler on whom she had operated without full anaesthetics, and how she hoped and prayed that he would not feel pain. Another told of the seriously malnourished pregnant women, affecting their babies. They talked about doctors and nurses whose family members were killed, but who still came back to work in hospitals, in unimaginable conditions, to help others. They told of how the absolute basics of modern medicine, such as antibiotics and anaesthetics, things that we around this Council table take for granted for ourselves and our loved ones, were unavailable, blocked and denied. We say the words humanitarian crisis, but this is what it means: the pain and the screams of toddlers who cannot get the basic healthcare that they need.

Only 18 out of 36 hospitals in Gaza now remain open, all of them struggling to operate amid severe shortages of fuel, medicine, equipment and staff. More than 1,700 healthcare workers have been killed in Gaza and more than 300 have been detained. This is what the catastrophic collapse of Gaza's healthcare system looks like.

As we are gathered here, Israeli forces are escalating the conflict in Gaza City, pounding more homes into rubble, sending frightened families scattering. It is incomprehensible. It is inhumane. It is utterly unjustifiable. And it must end. All that this action by the Israeli Government will do is make a catastrophic humanitarian situation worse, with more healthcare in crisis. It will make it harder than ever to get desperately needed aid to those who need it, with more innocent children enduring a human-made famine and with more civilians killed. However, it will make it harder to get the remaining hostages out, who were seized by Hamas in the barbaric terrorist attack of 7 October 2023 and who are still being held in the most horrendous conditions, prolonging the anguish for their families. And I reiterate our condemnation of Hamas and that barbaric terrorism on 7 October 2023.

I met with some of the United Kingdom-linked hostage families again last week. Their ask of all of us is to keep the hostages at the forefront of our minds, to do everything we can, to give their loved ones the chance of coming home and to achieve a ceasefire that gives them the chance to do that. That must be our task. We know what needs to be done. We need a ceasefire now. We need the release of all the hostages. We need the immediate restoration of aid and support for medical care, and we need a broader framework for the lasting peace, and I welcome and support the mediation efforts being made by the United States, Qatar and Egypt to seek an end to conflict and to seek peace.

We know too that Gaza cannot be seen in isolation from the West Bank. The Israeli Government is tightening its stranglehold on the Palestinian economy and continuing to approve illegal settlement construction, including just recently in the El area of East Jerusalem, which is a further blow to the viability of the two-State solution. We urge Israel to reverse these plans.

After two years of bloodshed, I believe the world is united in wanting this awful war to end; united in wanting all the hostages released; united in rejection of any role for Hamas in the future of Gaza or the future of a Palestinian State; united in wanting Israel to unblock aid and end the humanitarian catastrophe; and united in wanting a better and more peaceful future for the region, with the reconstruction of Gaza,

dignity for its people and a new era of relations to support their collective security. That future must be based on a two-State solution.

The United Kingdom's historic recognition of the State of Palestine this week is part of our commitment to peace, part of acting to protect the viability of the two-State solution as the only path to a just and lasting peace and to security for Palestinians and Israelis alike; part of rejecting extremist ideas on all sides, which, too often, involve fantasies of the destruction of the State of Israel or the expulsion of the Palestinian population, both of which we reject; and part of our wider effort to work with partners on a long-term peace, not just to halt the immediate crisis but also to advance a pragmatic plan for what comes next. None of this can happen without an immediate ceasefire, and that is where all of this has to start.

Yesterday, one of the doctors described the impact on children of growing up in trauma and devastation, and those will be the consequences for generations to come if we do not act now. We owe it to all of those children growing up in Gaza, across Palestine and across Israel. We owe it to all of them to build a better future. The time for peace is now.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Georgios Gerapetritis, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic.

Mr. Gerapetritis (Greece): I would like to thank you, personally, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting today, at a very critical moment for the Middle East.

Words fail to describe what we have been witnessing in the Gaza Strip. The humanitarian catastrophe is ongoing. For almost two years, the civilian population has endured conditions that are unsustainable and deeply concerning. No one should be compelled to live under such circumstances. The expansion of military operations in the city of Gaza has led to further displacement and risks worsening an already dire humanitarian crisis. This reality is endangering civilian lives. Any further escalation in Gaza that worsens the already dramatic situation for civilians must be avoided. The plight of children underscores the urgent need to guarantee safe, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access at scale to all parts of Gaza, in full compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law.

Greece is actively engaged in all efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people in Gaza. We have consistently provided humanitarian assistance. We have welcomed injured children from Gaza for treatment in Greek hospitals. In another strand of effort, we voted in favour of every draft resolution that would address the crisis in Gaza, the latest of which demanded the lifting of all restrictions on humanitarian aid (S/2025/583). And, in May, I stood alongside the representatives of 80 United Nations Member States here, in New York, reaffirming the significance of protecting civilians in armed conflicts.

Humanitarian access is crucial to alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian population. Safe access to food, water, shelter, clothing and medicines throughout the territory must be guaranteed, and international humanitarian law must be respected. Initiatives to expand deliveries in Gaza by land, air and sea must be further strengthened. At the same time, the hostages are continuing to suffer horribly at the hands of Hamas. We were appalled by the images and videos released last month, showing two hostages, visibly emaciated, as they described the appalling conditions of their captivity. We reiterate our call for the unconditional release of all the remaining hostages.

We recall that the Council rightly addressed the recent strikes in Doha earlier this month (see S/PV.9992), which are even more concerning given Qatar's crucial role in hosting and mediating, alongside the United States and Egypt, negotiations

for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. We continue to believe that diplomacy remains the most effective tool, even in the most difficult circumstances. Greece has unwaveringly supported the negotiation efforts and will continue to do so. And we urge all parties to rise to the gravity of the situation, to return to the negotiating table as soon as possible and to be guided by international law.

Recent settlement expansion in the West Bank and settler violence are further impairing the prospects for peace. We express our profound concern at announcements about the construction of additional settlements in the E1 area of the West Bank. Such plans, were they to be realized, would further undermine the prospects of a two-State solution. The escalation of settler violence, including against Christian communities, is also a cause for grave alarm. It needs to stop now.

However remote or difficult the prospect may seem today, the two-State solution remains the only viable path forward. We need to provide the Palestinian people with a credible prospect of hope for the future. This is an indispensable condition for peace, stability and security in the region, including for the long-term security of Israel. We appreciate, in this vein, the leadership demonstrated by France and Saudi Arabia in co-chairing the High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. We stand in support of all international initiatives, including the relevant plan by the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and Arab States towards realizing this vision. We will continue to contribute to every effort that revives the political process towards a two-State solution — a political process, which, we firmly believe, must lead to the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian State through a revitalized and comprehensive approach and which is essential for lasting peace and stability in the region.

Against this backdrop, we see no role for Hamas — neither in governance, nor in future discussions concerning the day after in Gaza. Therefore, Greece has repeatedly stressed that an empowered and reformed Palestinian Authority must play a central role in Gaza's future and remains the best partner for peace. The European Union has already stepped up, approving a three-year package worth approximately €1.6 billion, which is crucial to preventing fiscal collapse and enabling the Palestinian Authority to fulfil its task.

To Greece the stability of the Middle East is not an abstract concern; it is an indispensable necessity. As a country of the Eastern Mediterranean, at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa, developments in the region have a direct impact on our own security, prosperity and stability and on Europe as a whole. We are convinced that only through dialogue and the rule of international law can we build a safer neighbourhood — one in which peoples can coexist in dignity and security.

Mr. Hoyos Boyd (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama welcomes the convening of this briefing at the request of the delegations of Algeria, Guyana, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Somalia. We also thank His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres for his briefing, which underscored the Council's obligation under the Charter of the United Nations to respond with unity and in responsible fashion to the magnitude of the catastrophic situation in the Palestinian territories.

For more than seven decades, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been marked by a lack of political will to resolve its root causes, breeding mistrust, extremism and violence. The consequences of this lack of political will were laid bare in brutal fashion on 7 October 2023, with the atrocious attacks by Hamas, which, once again, we roundly condemn and which claimed more than 1,200 lives and entailed the abduction of 251 persons, 20 of whom are believed to be still alive, suffering in the darkness of the tunnels, deprived of the support of their families and the most basic dignity. That episode triggered a spiral of violence that led to a war unprecedented in its level

of devastation in the Gaza Strip. More than 65,000 Palestinians, including 18,000 children, have lost their lives, tens of thousands have been injured; millions have been forcibly displaced from one place to another over and over again and entire communities have been reduced to rubble, leaving an indelible mark of suffering on thousands of families.

During the 59-day ceasefire between January and March, it was possible to halt human suffering, facilitate humanitarian assistance in Gaza and make progress on releasing hostages. Since its collapse, the catastrophic humanitarian situation has worsened day by day — more than 14,000 Palestinians have lost their lives, and tens of thousands have been injured. The hostages and their families continue to pay an unbearable price, trapped in uncertainty and suffering.

As if violence were not enough, hunger is also claiming lives every day. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification has declared famine in Gaza. More than 425 people, including 125 children, have died of starvation, not because of lack of food but because of barriers to its entry and distribution. This tragedy has been worsened by the development of the military operation on Gaza City, still inhabited by hundreds of thousands of people, which has become the scene of intense bombing and ground operations that have led to further mass displacement and dozens of deaths, including among children.

The devastation is also affecting essential services: damaged hospitals and health centres, collapsed water and sanitation networks and extreme precariousness for those trying to save lives or tell the truth. Humanitarian workers and journalists, hundreds of whom have been victims of violence, nevertheless continue to carry out their work in untenable conditions and under constant threat. No objective can justify means that violate international law or the protection of human life. For that reason, Panama once again calls for an immediate and sustained ceasefire, the immediate, dignified and unconditional release of all hostages and safe, sufficient and unhindered access of vital humanitarian aid to Gaza. These are the basic conditions of humanity that cannot be put off any longer.

The crisis is not limited to Gaza. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, violence has reached alarming levels. Territorial fragmentation, insecurity and the lack of prospects undermine the chances of any peaceful and sustainable political solution. So far this year alone, more than 186 Palestinians and 16 Israelis have lost their lives in incidents caused by the intensification of the conflict. There are also hundreds of injured people and thousands affected by restrictions that condition their daily lives. Military operations and mass arrests have displaced entire families, including children and the elderly, while further closures and obstacles threaten to isolate communities and cut off access to schools, hospitals and workplaces, further exacerbating an already untenable situation. On top of this, the recent unjustifiable violation of the territory of Qatar — an act that Panama also strongly condemned — reiterates the need to bring an end to the conflict in view of great concerns about escalation.

Panama reiterates that there is no military solution to this conflict. The only solution is a serious, comprehensive and sustained political process, based on international law and the relevant resolutions of the Council, allowing Israelis and Palestinians to live in security and dignity, with internationally recognized borders, guaranteed rights and with verifiable guarantees for both. That is the only possible way to bring an end to decades of suffering and make room for reconciliation.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Abdisalan Abdi Ali, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

Mr. Ali (Somalia): At the outset, I would like to thank the Korean presidency for convening this meeting based on the request from the Organization of Islamic

Cooperation members of the Security Council. I would like to welcome all the ministers participating in this meeting today. I would also like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his briefing.

We remain gravely concerned about the continued escalation of the Israeli military operations in Gaza. As we speak, these military operations are expanding rapidly, and for the 2 million people still trapped in Gaza, it is a death sentence, literally and figuratively. Since this war began, over 65,000 Palestinians have been killed, the majority of them women and children. Last month's report of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification has removed all doubts about what is happening in Gaza. Famine is no longer looming; it is taking place now, before our eyes. The death of children from hunger and disease is not a forecast; it is a daily reality. Let us be absolutely clear: this is a human-made disaster, created through the siege, blockade and systematic obstruction of humanitarian aid. The starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited, and the use of hunger as a collective punishment is a grave violation of international law. We must act with moral clarity. The International Court of Justice's advisory opinion (see A/78/968) unequivocally reaffirmed the legal obligations of all States regarding the occupied Palestinian territory. These obligations are binding, and they must be enforced. The blatant disregard for these binding decisions, including the provisional measures issued in January and March, is a direct challenge to the international legal order.

In that regard, I would like to make the following points.

First, we reiterate our call for an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire. It is clear that there is no military solution to this conflict. Somalia recognizes and supports the ongoing ceasefire efforts led by Qatar, the United States and Egypt and commends their unwavering commitment. The Israeli air strikes on residential areas in Doha, the capital of Qatar, on 9 September mark a grave and perilous escalation. It is appalling that this military air strike unfolded when negotiators were engaged in talks over a United States-backed ceasefire proposal. We stress that mediators must not be targeted and should be protected to ensure that a pathway to peace remains viable.

Secondly, my delegation calls for the immediate and full restoration of humanitarian access for all United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, throughout Gaza. Israel, as the occupying Power, bears the legal responsibility under international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. Somalia reiterates its call for the immediate release of all arbitrary detainees to allow them to return to their families and loved ones.

Thirdly, we must revive a credible political track towards the recognition of the State of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations and stress the importance of the unification of Gaza and the West Bank under a single Palestinian Authority. We call for international support for reconstruction and development in the Palestinian territories, including Gaza.

There is no doubt that addressing the root causes of the conflict begins with the end of the occupation and the establishment of a sovereign, independent State of Palestine with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

In that regard, we welcome the resumption of 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 France and Saudi Arabia.

We commend the States that have recognized the State of Palestine and urge others to do so.

In conclusion, Somalia reaffirms its commitment to working with all partners towards a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, in line with international law, and advancing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and his commitment to supporting the two-State solution in favour of peace and security for Israel and Palestine.

Yesterday, from the rostrum of the General Assembly during the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, the President of the French Republic forcefully recalled what brings us together: the urgency of ending the war in Gaza and giving peace a real chance. Today, in the Security Council, it is our collective responsibility to translate that demand into concrete action.

France unequivocally condemns the terrorist attacks of 7 October 2023. Nothing can justify the use of terrorism. France also condemns the serious attacks on so many innocent lives in Gaza. Hundreds of thousands of human beings there have been plunged into hunger, fear and mourning. Lastly, France rejects the unacceptable prospect of the forced displacement of the Gazan population. The extension of the Israeli military offensive to Gaza City over the past week has only inflicted further suffering on the people of Gaza. It is up to us to build a realistic alternative that is in line with our values and consistent with international law.

As famine continues to spread in the Gaza Strip, France is concerned that the Council failed to reach agreement last Thursday to call for a response to the humanitarian emergency.

France's message is clear: all lives are of equal value, and all lives must be protected.

The immediate and unconditional release of the hostages still being held by Hamas is a priority. This demand must go hand in hand with a permanent ceasefire in Gaza in order to end the suffering of the people of Gaza and allow for the safe, large-scale and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid.

Yesterday the President of the French Republic announced France's recognition of the State of Palestine. This gesture reflects a deep conviction that the security of Israel and justice for the Palestinians are inseparable. They can be guaranteed only through the coexistence of two sovereign and democratic States living side by side in peace and security, with Jerusalem as their capital.

This decision, shared by many other States, opens up a political path that we must consolidate. This path is based on a road map, that of the New York Declaration, which France, together with Saudi Arabia and many other partners, submitted and led the General Assembly to adopt thanks to the support of 142 States (decision 80/506). This road map is based on two essential phases.

The urgent first phase is aimed at securing the release of hostages, the cessation of hostilities and large-scale humanitarian access. We call on all parties concerned to resume negotiations as soon as possible and in good faith. In this regard, we commend the tireless mediation efforts of Qatar, Egypt and the United States.

The second phase is that of stabilization and reconstruction. A transitional administration excluding Hamas must be established in Gaza under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority, with the support of the international community. It must ensure security, undertake the effective disarmament of Hamas and address the urgent needs of the population.

France, together with its European partners, stands ready to contribute, including by participating in an international stabilization mission to be decided by the Security Council at the appropriate time.

This process also requires renewed and reformed Palestinian governance that fully implements the commitments made. It requires Israel to make clear choices in favour of negotiation and respect for international law.

The European Union, together with France, will make its future cooperation conditional on these commitments.

The alternative is simple: either we preserve the possibility of two States and, with that possibility, peace, or we allow a permanent conflict to take hold, with disastrous consequences for the region and far beyond.

France calls on the Council to act with the determination and sense of responsibility that it deserves. History will judge our ability to seize this moment.

Mr. Waltz (United States of America): I find it — and we find it — deeply regrettable that Council members have opted to convene this high-level Security Council briefing on Gaza on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, knowing full well that that decision excludes Israel.

And frankly, it is a testament to how the Council has prioritized a lot of performance over serious efforts to actually advance peace — serious efforts that President Trump, Secretary Rubio, his team and partners such as Egypt and Qatar are engaged in right now as we speak to end this horrific war. There have been more than 80 Council meetings on this issue since 7 October 2023. The main outcome of these meetings unfortunately has been to embolden Hamas, to undermine and disrupt negotiations that are aimed at freeing all of the hostages and ending the war and ending the suffering that we all want to end.

Unspoken today is the fact that, in the past two weeks alone, Israel has suffered two terrorist attacks: in Jerusalem on 8 September and at the Allenby border crossing on 18 September. We condemn these attacks, we offer condolences to the families of those killed, and we call upon other countries to join us in a clear and explicit condemnation of this violence by Hamas and its ideological allies.

Extremists like the terrorists who killed two Israel Defense Forces soldiers on 18 September have shown their utter contempt for the people of Gaza. Hamas has shown its utter contempt for the people of Gaza. They struck the very border crossing through which nearly half of all aid delivered to Gaza between May and September has passed. Let me say again: Hamas struck the border crossing through which half of all aid through the better part of this year has passed. No country here would willingly allow terrorists like this to threaten its people. Israel should not be expected to be any different, and of course, has the right to defend itself from groups that wish to do it harm.

As Secretary of State Rubio recently said, “As long as Hamas exists, there will be no peace in the Middle East.” And every member here has seen evidence of how Hamas has starved hostages and has tortured them. We have heard the testimony of freed hostages on what they have endured, and sadly, some endure still, in captivity. We the United States again demand that Hamas immediately release all 48 remaining hostages and their remains, cease putting civilians in harm’s way, cease sacrificing their own people for propaganda aims, disarm and surrender. This war could end today if that happened. But Hamas refuses, while Israel has accepted the negotiators’ proposals. Rewarding Hamas’s refusal, whether with performative conferences or one-sided Security Council resolutions, undermines and delays achieving the peace we all want.

Unfortunately, yesterday's conference spoke to domestic audiences, but it will prolong this tragic war in Gaza, and it will prolong the suffering. Hamas stands emboldened today after that conference. We have rewarded its obstruction. We have undermined efforts to achieve peace in both the short and the long term. Unilateral recognition statements do not alter the reality on the ground — it does not alter the fact that there is not a Palestinian State to recognize. And at this point there is no credible Palestinian partner for peace.

The Palestinian Authority leaders from Ramallah are absent from New York this week because they failed to meet their Oslo commitments. The commitments were basic, including renouncing terrorism, renouncing violence and resolving issues through direct negotiations with Israel. The Palestinian Authority has failed to clear even those low bars. And I note its attempts to bypass negotiations through what can only be called lawfare, including at the International Criminal Court and at the International Court of Justice, and its pushes for unilateral recognition of statehood.

This charade is disappointing. It is clearly fuelled by domestic politics and has given Hamas a reward for refusing to surrender, as well as an incentive. It is now incentivized to keep holding the hostages in subhuman conditions.

We call on the Council membership and the United Nations to change its course, to focus instead on how to prevent Hamas from ever doing this again and on how to eliminate it, to focus on how Hamas should free the hostages and create a framework so that the people of Gaza can have a better future than the life they have endured under terrorists.

Secretary of State Rubio recently travelled to Israel and Qatar to address the threat posed by Hamas, to advance the immediate return of all hostages and to ensure humanitarian aid actually reaches civilians. And the United States will continue working tirelessly towards those ends. And the Secretary was clear: the United States supports a negotiated settlement that will lead to the release of every single hostage. The President was clear today in his statement in the General Assembly to that same end — we must lead to the elimination of Hamas, and we must end the war.

In the interim, the United States has worked to support the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza, with actual meaningful results. The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation has securely delivered more than 170 million meals directly to civilians. We have also seen the increased flow of humanitarian aid, including through United Nations entities. However, looting and diversion are undeniable and remain serious problems that must be addressed. The Organization's own data shows that approximately 85 per cent of United Nations aid sent to Gaza since 19 May has been looted.

The fighting must end so that the international community can concentrate on the very hard work of building a new Gaza, one that embraces peace and coexistence and rejects terrorism and violence.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Algeria, Guyana, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Somalia for their initiative to convene this meeting. And I thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his briefing.

The Palestinian question is at the core of the Middle East issue, bearing on the Middle East's peace and stability and global peace and security. Over seven decades or so, the Palestinian-Israeli situation has, time and again, fallen into turmoil and even led to the outbreak of wars, shaping the evolution of the international landscape and the development of international relations. Since the start of the current Gaza conflict, the Palestinian people have been deeply mired in suffering. Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iran, among others, have witnessed escalating tensions, and even Qatar has come under attack. The mounting conflicts and volatility in the Middle East have

worsened the global security environment, dampened the economic outlook for the world and run counter to the common interests of the international community. It is therefore imperative to make this issue a top priority and accelerate the resolution of the Palestinian question, which lies at the heart of the current turmoil.

I will make four points in that regard.

First, we must bring an end to the tragedy in Gaza without delay. The conflicts over the past two years have left Gaza devastated and scarred, with scenes of misery and destruction everywhere. Yet Israel continues to escalate its military offensive, causing even greater civilian casualties and displacements. There is no military solution to the problem. An immediate ceasefire is the right way to save lives and bring the hostages home. We urge Israel to cease all military actions in Gaza without delay, fulfil its obligations as an occupying Power under international humanitarian law and fully restore access to humanitarian supplies. Last week, the Security Council draft resolution on Gaza was vetoed once again by a permanent member (see S/PV.10000). We are deeply disappointed, and we expect the relevant country to actively shoulder its responsibility and make earnest efforts to end the war.

Secondly, we must de-escalate tensions in the West Bank. Israel continues to expand settlements there, forcibly demolishing Palestinian structures while conducting frequent raids, arrests and attacks and condoning settler violence. Recently, the occupying Power also approved and advanced the E1 settlement plan. This dangerous action constitutes a grave violation of international law and Security Council resolutions, undermining the territorial contiguity of Palestine and eroding the foundation for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. We call on Israel to immediately cease all settlement activities, curb settler violence and lift restrictions on Palestinian economic activities.

Thirdly, we must rectify the historical injustices suffered by the Palestinian people. Israel has long established itself as an independent State. The Palestinian people, however, remain without a homeland. This is the root of the problem. The two-State solution is the only viable way to solve the Palestinian question. It is irreplaceable and must not be denied. Yesterday, the General Assembly High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution once again issued a strong call in support of the two-State solution. A number of Western countries have recently recognized the State of Palestine, one after another. The international community should sustain the current momentum, strive to revitalize the prospect for the two-State solution and support the early establishment of an independent Palestinian State and its early admission as a full Member State of the United Nations. Both Gaza and the West Bank are inalienable parts of the Palestinian territory. We must resolutely oppose unilateral actions that undermine the foundation of the two-State solution. Any day-after governance and reconstruction arrangements must respect the will of the Palestinian people and uphold the legitimate rights of the Palestinian nation.

Fourthly, we must maintain peace and stability in the Middle East. From the onset of the current Gaza conflicts, there have been frequent abuses of force and military adventurism, which have triggered profound changes in the regional landscape. The Middle East is once again standing at a historical crossroads. Relaxation or escalation, dialogue or confrontation, peace or war — these are the choices that the countries of the region and the international community should make collectively. We call on all parties to effectively respect the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of countries in the Middle East. We call on Israel to earnestly respect the rights to survival and development of the people in the Middle East. And we call on countries of the region to prioritize long-term peace and security, uphold the vision of common security, resolve differences through inclusiveness, address conflicts

through dialogue, come together to shape a regional order based on equity and justice and jointly build a future of peaceful development in the region.

China always upholds fairness and justice on the Palestinian question and always firmly supports the just cause of the Palestinian people. Chinese President Xi Jinping has put forward, in succession, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative, contributing a Chinese plan to resolve conflicts and hotspot issues, maintain international peace and multilateralism and enhance global governance. They also provide important guidance for addressing Middle East issues.

Guided by these initiatives, China is committed to working with the international community to promote a ceasefire, alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe, implement the two-State solution and, ultimately, achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question, so that both Palestinians and Israelis may live in peace and happiness and the Middle East may embrace a future of lasting peace, stability and shared prosperity.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in the Gaza Strip. We welcome the participation of the ministers for foreign affairs of regional States and the relevant international organizations in today's meeting.

The crisis in Gaza has inflicted civilian casualties on a scale unseen in recent decades, and has escalated tensions throughout the region, with violent flare-ups in a number of neighbouring countries. In this context, we understand the desire of our Middle Eastern partners to speak out on this urgent issue that directly affects each of them.

In recent weeks, a number of major developments have taken place at the United Nations regarding the Middle East. Those developments clearly reflect a growing international consensus that Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip — regardless of the reasons for those actions — are unacceptable and cannot continue. On Thursday, 14 Council members voted in favour of draft resolution S/2025/583, demanding an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, the release of all hostages held by Hamas, the lifting of the severe humanitarian blockade of Gaza and the provision of safe and unhindered access to those in need. Unfortunately, the United States blocked the adoption of that draft resolution, casting its veto for the seventh time on this issue. And yet, just before that, the Council did manage to adopt a press statement (SC/16163) — albeit a very general one — condemning Israel's attack on the sovereign State of Qatar.

Although the United Nations has thus far been unable to stop the bloodshed in Gaza or to compel Israel to return to the path of a two-State solution, the international conference held in the General Assembly over the past two days achieved a symbolic breakthrough as several States stepped forward to recognize Palestinian statehood. This sends a belated but extremely important signal to Israel's military and political leadership that justice for the Palestinian people must be restored. Regrettably, it took the deaths of more than 65,000 Palestinian civilians during nearly two years of Israeli operations in Gaza for this to happen.

Recognition of the Palestinian State is not a favour to Ramallah but is a historic duty owed to the Palestinian people — one that should have been fulfilled nearly 80 years ago. Russia has been calling for this for decades. Let me remind you that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics recognized the State of Palestine back in 1988.

Israel, however, not only dismisses the calls of the international community but, emboldened by its American allies, responds with threats, claiming that recognizing Palestinian statehood rewards Hamas for the 7 October 2023 terrorist attack.

Officials in West Jerusalem, are already openly discussing the formal annexation of the West Bank after the high-level week. That is why we must now clearly signal that such steps are unacceptable. We must not be deterred by any threats of retaliation, all the more so because, as the Secretary-General said, only our actions can put an end to the current situation.

The solidarity the international community now shows for the Palestinian people's aspirations to live peacefully in their own State generates a momentum that we must collectively seize and translate into concrete, practical action. The immediate imperative is to ensure that the crisis in Gaza is not resolved through imposing cruel facts on the ground — in other words, by completely clearing out all Palestinians, as the Israeli leadership intends — nor through their forced displacement from the enclave for the sake of commercial redevelopment, as proposed by various radical Western plans. Rather, the only path forward is through humane, civilized diplomacy that brings together the efforts of the United Nations and regional Arab States as they strive to help their Palestinian brethren.

Palestinians are not the subject of social experiments; they are a people that deserves to exist as a sovereign nation, just as our own peoples do. However, no diplomatic efforts can succeed unless Israeli authorities abandon their reliance on military solutions and recognize that this approach offers no long-term benefit for Israel, which cannot live in safety and stability while fighting on all fronts. All this must also be recognized by Washington, which must stop treating United Nations platforms and multilateral diplomacy as an enemy that allegedly undermines its own efforts on the ground.

Unfortunately, we are witnessing precisely the opposite trend. Both Israel and the United States continue to claim that West Jerusalem is acting humanely in its fight against terrorism. This is how Israeli officials justify strikes on hospitals and schools, attacks on humanitarian convoys and the deaths of women, children and aid workers. Hate speech and propaganda have resulted in dozens of innocent Palestinian civilians being killed every day by the Israeli military, which firmly believes that this is for the ultimate good of the Israeli State.

In this way, for nearly two years, West Jerusalem has been systematically constructing and imposing a distorted narrative, in which Palestinians are second-class people who can be exterminated, displaced, starved and killed — even at humanitarian aid distribution points. United Nations leadership, its humanitarian bodies and even Member States calling for a ceasefire and humanitarian access are unabashedly being labelled by Israeli representatives as terrorist accomplices.

This radical reality-distorting rhetoric, along with West Jerusalem's clear intent to continuously escalate the situation in the region — a situation that has already drawn in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Yemen and Qatar — undermines any progress towards a peaceful resolution of the Middle East crisis. The Israeli strike on Doha, one of the key mediators in negotiations, clearly demonstrated that Israel is not focused on diplomacy but rather on endless war, even at the cost of the remaining hostages, whom this war leaves with no chance of survival.

It is also evident that Israel's strategy implies bringing the entire Palestinian territory, Gaza and the West Bank, under its complete control. Israeli officials make no secret of their annexation plans; voicing them not only without embarrassment but with pride, as if they were fulfilling their historical mission. And these are not just empty words. Gaza is being systematically cleansed and carved up into so-called security zones, which are shrinking day by day. The West Bank is being built up with new Israeli settlements, while fanatical settlers, in the worst traditions of colonialism of past centuries, harass the Palestinian population and drive them from their homelands as the authorities stand by and do nothing. A policy of aggressive

settlement is in full swing, whereby Palestinians are, at best, relegated to the role of ghetto residents or, at worst, to becoming exiles.

This picture of appalling injustice, violence and the trampling of human dignity unfolding in the occupied Palestinian territory is a call to immediate action. This is what hundreds of thousands of people around the world are demanding of us in the streets all over the world. They are clamouring for an end to the senseless bloodshed in Gaza and the liberation of Palestine. This is also what Israeli hostages and their families are demanding as they protest in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and other cities, calling for a comprehensive deal to release all hostages and end the fighting. No one wants war — not ordinary Palestinians or ordinary Israelis. This heartfelt plea was voiced by Israeli citizen Galit Dan, whose daughter and mother were killed on 7 October 2023. She said: “I don’t want revenge, I want hope. In the name of all those who lost everything, and in the name of all those who can still be saved — please, stop the war”.

We believe in the power of multilateral diplomacy. It has not always been entirely effective, but it is still thanks to multilateral diplomacy that we have managed to avoid a third world war over the 80 years since the establishment of the United Nations. We are confident that this multilateral diplomacy can also help resolve the protracted crisis in the Middle East. This requires the collective will of the international community, which should be demonstrated not only in declarations from high rostrums, but also in concrete actions. We strongly urge our American colleagues to cast aside their rigid positions and engage in the real efforts that the Security Council must undertake in accordance with its mandate to maintain international peace and security. This will only benefit their closest ally, whose security cannot be ensured by force alone. The fact that such an approach is a dead end has been proven by decades of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It is high time that we recognized that only a diplomatic settlement of the Palestinian issue on the basis of the two-State solution can guarantee lasting peace in the Middle East, the security of the Israeli people and the just aspirations of the Palestinian people for their own State. Otherwise, the endless and senseless massacre will continue, claiming ever more civilian lives, sowing discord between new generations of Arabs and Israelis and destroying any prospect that they might one day coexist peacefully and develop freely. We cannot allow that to happen. We hope that other sensible members of the international community share this view. We stand ready to work with them to finally make a peaceful and prosperous Middle East a reality. This is the historic duty of the United Nations, the Security Council and each and every one of us. We urge everyone to deliver on that duty.

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

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): Allow me at the outset to thank the Korean presidency of the Security Council for convening this important meeting and to thank the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries that are members of the Council for requesting this meeting to highlight the horrific situation in Gaza as world leaders meet here in New York. I also want to thank the high-level representatives for participating in this meeting. Allow me to also thank Secretary-General Guterres for his relentless efforts and his very moving and inspiring statements over these past two days. Through him, we wish to also extend Palestine’s gratitude to the entire United Nations and its personnel on the ground, in remembrance of those who were killed while trying to save lives amid this genocide.

On Sunday afternoon, we adopted the Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel on the United Nations North Lawn. The Council has adopted resolutions before on the protection of civilians, including children, women,

humanitarians and journalists. In Gaza not only do they not benefit from protection, but they are primary targets of the Israeli onslaught.

The Palestinian people have suffered from the denial of their existence for decades. Now we are being confronted yet again with an attempt to destroy our nation altogether. Recognition of the State of Palestine is an affirmation that the world rejects such a denial, that it rejects the attempts at our destruction and supports our right to existence and self-determination. These are not gifts; they are rights. The Palestinian people have been struggling for almost 100 years for the attainment of such rights. It was not born recently. Recognition is also a clear indication that the international community refuses to abandon the rule of international law and the two-State solution, the only path to regional peace and security. This recognition is not taking place in a vacuum. It is an integral part of the international mobilization to end this horrific war and move towards peace. The New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, adopted in the General Assembly at the historic high-level international conference co-chaired by Saudi Arabia and France, charts a clear path to the independence and sovereignty of the State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with Israel on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

While all eyes were turned towards New York yesterday, as President Macron took to the podium to announce the historic decision to recognize the State of Palestine alongside other countries, including the United Kingdom, all minds and hearts were turned towards Gaza. Ending the genocide in Gaza is the highest priority — one that can suffer no delay and requires resolute action. Only an immediate ceasefire can save lives: the lives of 2 million Palestinians, children, women and men, and the lives of 20 Israeli hostages. The slaughter must stop. The destruction must stop. The famine caused by the occupation must be brought to an end without delay. Israel must fully withdraw its forces. The Palestinian people should have freedom and dignity.

We support the mediation efforts by the United States, Egypt and Qatar and condemn yet again the Israeli strike on the territory of Qatar, a key mediator, as it was convening a meeting to advance a ceasefire agreement and stop this never-ending regional escalation. Nothing justifies delaying such a ceasefire, which is the only way to stop the bloodshed, release the hostages and prisoners and human remains, and allow unhindered humanitarian access. We need decisive actions to deter the prolongation and escalation of this war, and we thank the countries who have undertaken such measures. The Council has a sacred mandate, in this regard, that it has been prevented from honouring. I thank Algeria and the 10 elected members of the Council for their relentless efforts and for putting forward a draft resolution (S/2025/583) last week to yet again pursue an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, and I thank the 14 Council members that supported that draft resolution, which was blocked by a veto.

The New York Declaration foresees the deployment of an international stabilization mission upon the invitation of Palestine and mandated by the Security Council to protect the Palestinian people, uphold the ceasefire, support the Palestinian National Authority security forces and provide security guarantees to all. This must be supported. The Gaza Strip must be reunified with the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority, as reaffirmed repeatedly by the Council. We call for your support for our policy of one Palestinian State, one Palestinian Government — one law and one gun.

The Arab-OIC reconstruction plan must be implemented without delay. Our people urgently need recovery, food, water, medicine, care, shelter and healing. We are ready to work with the international community, with the United Nations — including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East — leading humanitarian efforts, to make this happen. We

are ready to work with the United States Administration. Our President reiterated this yesterday in the General Assembly, and I will not react to the falsification of our record by the new Permanent Representative of the United States. We will work with this Administration and with Saudi Arabia, regional actors, France and international partners and the members of the Council to advance these goals for peace.

Palestinians are not lesser beings. We are entitled to life, liberty and dignity. The horrors inflicted by Israel upon our people in Gaza can have no justification. Colonization and occupation have no justification. We are not condemned to live under perpetual occupation, nor are Palestinians and Israelis condemned to perpetual war. We are committed to peace in word and in deed, and we will honour our obligations, but Israel must also be made to respect its obligations; it is not only a one-way street. We say no genocide, no dispossession, no forcible displacement, no colonization, no annexation, no occupation. A change is long overdue, and the sea change that we are seeing across the world in support of Palestinian self-determination and independence and in support of peace and security must lead to a fundamental change on the ground. Save Gaza. Save Palestine. Save peace.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Jonas Støre, Prime Minister of Norway.

Mr. Støre (Norway): I have requested to speak in order to make three essential points about the horror that we are witnessing in Palestine. So, let me address them.

First, we join others in expressing our deepest concern about Israel's expanded military campaign, ongoing in Gaza as we meet. We reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire, drastically improved humanitarian access and the unconditional release of the remaining hostages.

Secondly, while this crisis requires immediate action, it is just as important to lay the foundations now for the day after the war and for the end to the conflict. As the conference yesterday made clear, the overwhelming majority of Member States of the United Nations consider the two-State solution to be the only credible basis for peace in the Middle East — peace for Israelis and peace for Palestinians.

My capital city, Oslo, is in many ways synonymous with those efforts, thanks to the Oslo Accords, which created the Palestinian Authority back in 1993. Ever since, my country has worked towards one goal — peace, security and dignity for the Palestinians and the Israelis, living side by side in two sovereign States, enjoying the rights and obligations that follow from the Charter of the United Nations.

Norway recognized the State of Palestine in May last year. That gave a hand to those on both sides who seek a peaceful solution. I need to say on behalf of those who recognized Palestine yesterday that doing so amounts to turning one's back on terror. It amounts to turning one's back on Hamas. It amounts to taking their voice away and handing it to the peaceful among the Palestinians — the overwhelming majority — who want to live, enjoying the rights and obligations under the Charter. Our decision reflected a realization that the old approach of waiting for a negotiated outcome before recognizing Palestine was no longer a feasible option. One party simply refused to engage and vetoed progress. We cannot live with that. So let this be clear: a Palestinian State has been part of the vision for decades. Today, we are far from realizing it on the ground. But the international support for, and recognition of, the State of Palestine is gaining momentum; the majority is growing. And I commend France and Saudi Arabia for arranging the historic meeting in the General Assembly yesterday. This week, two additional permanent members of the Security Council declared that it was time.

That brings me to my third point: let us use this momentum to also mobilize the necessary financial support to support the Palestinian authorities in the necessary

reforms, to implement the road map that was agreed in the General Assembly on 12 September and to resume meaningful engagement and decisive peace talks. Norway will host, as it does every year, a ministerial meeting of the international donor group for Palestine — the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians — in New York, this week. As stated by Prime Minister Mustafa, the severe lack of funds represents an existential and immediate threat to Palestinian State-building. Together with a broad group of countries, we are working to raise emergency funding for that Palestinian Government. We encourage all Member States to contribute, and we continue to call on Israel to release tax revenue owed to Palestine. This is Palestinian value creation being held and kept away, and that has to end. There will be no State of Palestine or body to govern Gaza the day after the war ends without a functioning, reformed and legitimate Palestinian Authority. That is critical for peace and security in the region, including for Israel.

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

Mr. Al-Sabah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council States, namely the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar and my country, the State of Kuwait.

At the outset, we would like to thank the Organization of Islamic Cooperation States in the Security Council for requesting this emergency meeting, and we extend our thanks to the Republic of Korea, which is presiding over the Council, for convening this meeting at this critical time.

We meet today after nearly two years of tragedy in Gaza, in which the defenceless Palestinian people are confronting the most horrific suffering, inflicted by an oppressive, unjust siege and widespread devastation. The lives of thousands of innocent civilians have been claimed. Most among the more than 60,000 martyrs are women and children. What is happening in the Gaza Strip is no less than a living example of genocide and ethnic cleansing — an open wound on the conscience of humankind that cannot be ignored. We have followed, with concern, the recent military escalation and condemn in the strongest terms the treacherous Israeli attacks against the brotherly State of Qatar. We affirm, in no uncertain terms, that any violation of the security of any Gulf State is an attack on all the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council for our security, defence and destiny are shared.

A just and lasting peace in our region can be achieved only through a two-State solution based on resolutions of international legitimacy, foremost among which are the resolutions of the Council and the Arab Peace Initiative. This is the only way to end the occupation, guarantee the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people and establish their independent State along the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We warn against attempts to undermine or circumvent this solution through settlement policies, displacement and the imposition of a fait accompli. The international community, and the Security Council in particular, must shoulder their full responsibilities to prevent these violations from continuing, ensure that the perpetrators of crimes are held accountable and guarantee the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination.

In this context, we welcome the recognition by some countries of the brotherly State of Palestine yesterday at the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. These are welcome and courageous steps that are in line with international law and in line with human rights.

In conclusion, the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council States reaffirm their steadfast solidarity with the Palestinian people. We stand by all countries that are under attack,

and, at the same time, we would like to emphasize that these crimes are not only against the Palestinians. They present a threat to regional and international security. We call upon the Council to translate its words into deeds, through tangible steps, to end the aggression immediately, to guarantee immediate humanitarian access, to protect civilians and to put an end to the illegal and unjust occupation. Otherwise, we will never know security and safety.

Our utmost goal today and every day is peace. Enough Palestinian blood has been shed and too many innocent souls have been lost. We cannot remain silent anymore, and it is up to the international community to shoulder its responsibility and to chart a course conducive to the two-State solution.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Aboul Gheit.

Mr. Gheit (*spoke in Arabic*): It has become clear that the Israeli war machine cannot be stopped with appeals alone. The leaders of the occupation, intoxicated by racist illusions, religious extremism and extremist nationalism, have been stripped of all humanity and morality. What is required today are strict punitive measures that convey the right message that the world today does not accept that genocide should be part of its vocabulary.

We deeply regret the failure of the Council, time and again, and most recently a few days ago, to put an end to the genocidal war waged by Israel against Gaza. This war has lost even its abstract military logic, if it ever had such a logic. The use by a permanent member of the Security Council of the veto, for the sixth time, to prevent the adoption of a draft resolution (S/2025/583) that would put an immediate end to war emboldens the leaders of the occupation to continue perpetrating crimes and horrors indefinitely.

What Gaza is witnessing is unprecedented in its barbarity and brutality. Israel's objectives are now clear. The goal is to erase the Palestinian community from existence and to displace the population, outside the Strip, after rendering their land uninhabitable. I state unequivocally that yielding to this brutal and insane plan deprives the Council of much of its legitimacy. It undermines its role in preserving international peace and security. What is happening in Gaza will not remain confined to Gaza, and the plan, relentlessly implemented by Israel, to reoccupy the Gaza Strip and to displace its inhabitants will destabilize security in the entire region. It will expand the cycle of conflict and it will create ongoing hotspots of tension and violence.

It is time for the Council to make the right decision, morally and practically, to end this war, a war that has entered the realm of madness and that no longer has any logic other than blind revenge against 2 million Palestinians, most of whom are women and children.

Let us end this war today, not tomorrow. Let us start to rebuild Gaza immediately. Let us return the children of Gaza, who have been out of school for two years, to their deserved childhood. This was the appeal of the Secretary of State of the United Kingdom.

Let us return this cause to its true path, which is the two-State solution, to which there is no alternative, in order to establish a lasting peace and to end the cycle of violence. Violence will inevitably recur in the future if the mindset of blind revenge prevails, revenge that is based on racial superiority.

We say loudly, enough. End the bloodshed and the killing that have stained our collective humanity. This is the Council's responsibility to history.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Kallas.

Ms. Kallas: If a military solution were possible in Gaza, Israel's war on Hamas would already be over and the hostages would have been released. Instead, the war continues, and famine has set in, a famine that was avoidable, had aid been let in.

We have a collective responsibility to change this situation. Therefore, I repeat here the calls for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages and the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza at scale.

Europe has been the most active global actor in Gaza. We are the largest humanitarian donor. We have helped the Palestinians more than any other party. We negotiated, with the Israeli Government, a humanitarian understanding with specific benchmarks. Since then, more trucks have entered Gaza, more aid has been delivered, the Jordanian and Egyptian routes have been reopened and repairs to critical infrastructure have been carried out. In August, a ship carrying 1,200 tons of aid departed from Limassol, Cyprus. Further shipments will continue.

But we all know it is not enough. That is why the European Union is pulling other levers to try to push the Israeli Government to change its course of action. We recently proposed sanctions on extremist ministers in the Israeli Government, sanctions on violent settlers in the West Bank and entities supporting their impunity, additional sanctions on Hamas terrorists and the suspension of trade concessions with Israel. This is a message to the current Israeli Government: change course and address the humanitarian suffering.

In addition, another fundamental question hangs over us: how to square Israel's legitimate right to live in safety and security with the future Palestinian State. We have always believed that there is one answer: two States, side by side. As we saw during yesterday's conference, the weight of the world is behind the two-State solution. The European Union has worked hard to make this possible.

The European Union is also the leading supporter of the Palestinian Authority. We will provide €1.6 billion over the next three years. We also kept Palestinian institutions functioning during this war, including education. We have now launched the forum to finance the future for the Palestinian people, the Palestine Donor Forum. The Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution remains the best mechanism for discussions on how to turn commitments into actions.

There must be a turning point in this war. It cannot be at the expense of either the viability of a Palestinian State or the legitimate concerns of Israel. We have the power to change the course of this conflict, to see the release of remaining hostages, to prevent further civilian suffering and see an end to this war.

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

Mr. Yılmaz (Türkiye): I am delivering this statement on behalf of Minister for Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States belonging to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in my capacity as the Chair of the OIC Group.

Let me express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, which is taking place on the very auspicious occasion of the eightieth annual session of the General Assembly.

There is no doubt that the unprecedented crisis and the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, have further deteriorated as a result of the continued Israeli onslaught against the Palestinian people. Prior to the recent official confirmation of the Israeli genocide in the occupied Palestinian territory by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

including East Jerusalem, and Israel, the OIC Group also decried the unprecedented humanitarian consequences of the long-drawn-out Israeli military onslaught in Gaza and elsewhere in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Group has also drawn the attention of the Council to the dangerous escalation of the war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Israeli occupying Power against the Palestinian people through the systematic targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, including the siege and the disruption of and attacks on food supply chains, water and medical facilities, among others.

We note that the actions of the Israeli occupying Power amount to ethnic cleansing, illegal blockade, the use of starvation as a weapon of war, colonial settlement, apartheid policies, acts of settler colonialism and terrorism. Land confiscation and home demolition, including attacks on Islamic and Christian holy sites, are acts of genocide and crimes against humanity and constitute a grave violation of the historic status quo in the holy sites of Jerusalem. Consequently, we reaffirm the decision of the twenty-first extraordinary meeting of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on 25 August 2025 on the significance of the case *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, presented to the International Court of Justice on Israel's violation of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. We therefore call on the Council to take urgent measures to hold Israel accountable for these genocidal acts, including by invoking Chapter VII measures, to bring a halt to the bloodshed and to all of these crimes and to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people.

While we had earlier condemned the Israeli military attack against Qatar on 9 September 2025, we consider the unjustified and illegal action on the part of the Israeli authorities as a desperate move to frustrate the global efforts to achieve a ceasefire and put an end to the siege on Palestine. We commend the declaration by Qatar on the continuation of its mediation efforts, along with Egypt, towards securing a permanent, immediate and unconditional ceasefire and an end to the war in Gaza. Consequently, we support the urgent implementation of the Arab-OIC reconstruction plan to allow for early recovery and reconstruction in the Gaza Strip, while rejecting forced displacement and ensuring that the Palestinian people remain in their land, and we encourage all Member States to participate actively in the international conference in Cairo, which is aimed at mobilizing political and financial support for the plan.

In the same vein, we commend States Members of the United Nations and the citizenry of the world for their overwhelming support for the legitimate cause of the Palestinian people and for their inalienable rights, including to return, to self-determination, to the independence of the State of Palestine and to the implementation of the two-State solution. To this end, we hail the recent adoption of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution through an overwhelming vote in the General Assembly on 12 September 2025 (General Assembly decision 80/506). We commend the actions taken by many States towards the recognition of the State of Palestine and to bring an end to this illegal occupation and ensure the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the achievement of a just and lasting solution.

We reiterate that the time has come for the Council to assume its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, including by approving the admission of the State of Palestine as a full-fledged Member of the United Nations. We reiterate that the pathway to the resolution of this prolonged and historic injustice is the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to their national homeland, the implementation of the International Court of Justice advisory opinion

and of the relevant United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and the implementation of the two-State solution. That is the key to peace and security in the Middle East and in our world.

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

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): We welcome the briefing presented by the Secretary-General to the Security Council today, and we thank him for his tireless efforts to achieve peace in the region.

From day one, Egypt has strived to end the war in the Gaza Strip, driven by its firm belief that if the situation is not kept under control, the region will be plunged into an unprecedented period of instability. The ensuing days have proven those estimations correct. Attempts to end the war have been met with unjustified intransigence on Israel's part on more than one occasion, and at no point has it been possible to end the war or stop the bloodshed.

Israel's true intentions vis-à-vis Gaza and the Palestinian question are no longer a secret to anyone, as Israel's declarations and actions reveal a bona fide attempt to re-engineer the Palestinian existence in Gaza. This includes the displacement of a significant portion of the population by means of military operations, starvation and the elimination of the essentials needed to sustain life in Gaza. The ongoing ground military operation to storm Gaza City is part of the bid to carry out that malevolent scheme. Egypt affirms its categorical rejection of that scheme and of all its repercussions. Such measures lack any legal or moral basis, and they imperil the peace that has reigned for nearly five decades in a manner that poses unimaginable potential threats to all the countries of the region.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip has reached a catastrophic stage. That is due to the many obstacles created by Israel to impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and of other United Nations and humanitarian organizations working inside the Strip. These measures have led to an unprecedented catastrophic situation and subjected the people of Gaza to famine. The results of the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel were conclusive. It was confirmed that Israel has perpetrated the crime of genocide and that the moral and material elements of genocide were committed against civilians in the Gaza Strip.

Egypt has approached this catastrophic situation with the utmost wisdom, refusing to be dragged into any polemics or to escalate the matter in a way that would further exacerbate the situation. Egypt has taken care to avoid any provocation, out of its conviction that a ceasefire is the first step required to set in motion a political process that will defuse the crisis and serve as the starting point for serious discussions about Gaza's future and the future of the Palestinian question as a whole. Egypt is determined to continue its efforts with all mediators to achieve this noble goal.

Egypt also intends to host a conference on early recovery and reconstruction in the Gaza Strip as soon as a ceasefire is reached. This will mobilize the necessary support for implementation of the Arab-Islamic plan for the reconstruction of Gaza at the hands of Palestinians, with a view to countering any plans for displacement. The first task for all of us must be to empower Palestinian decision-making to carry out the administration of the Strip in a way that will preserve the unity of the Palestinian territory from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem, under one authority, one government, one law and one gun.

It has become clear to all that in addition to reconstruction, security arrangements on the ground and an end to the current catastrophic situation in Gaza are absolutely

necessary steps. They cannot be taken practically on the ground without a political horizon that includes a comprehensive and just settlement of the Palestinian issue based on the two-State solution and the establishment of the Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital on the lines of 4 June 1967. This must be accompanied by genuine international will in support of peace and stability in the Middle East.

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

Ms. Al-Misnad (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, we would like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea for convening this meeting. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The past month, and particularly the high-level week, has seen crystallization of an unprecedented consensus in support of a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue and the two-State solution in accordance with international law and international resolutions. This has been borne out by the speeches delivered by Presidents and Heads of State and Government during the general discussion in the General Assembly and during the ministerial conference held on Monday and co-chaired by Saudi Arabia and France, in which Qatar participated at the highest level. Many States declared their recognition of the State of Palestine, as part of the international momentum to resolve the longest outstanding issue on the United Nations agenda.

This consensus has been embodied by numerous General Assembly resolutions, of which the most recent was the resolution on the participation of the State of Palestine (resolution 80/1). We would hope that the Security Council will join this consensus by adopting the draft resolution put forward by the elected members. The Council, by virtue of its basic mandate, has the responsibility to take the measures necessary to end the human disaster in Gaza, prevent genocide and forced displacement and adopt a binding resolution under Chapter VII to compel Israel to comply with an immediate ceasefire.

Experience has shown that mediation and diplomacy are the only ways to resolve conflicts. Efforts undertaken by Qatar alongside the Arab Republic of Egypt and the United States of America have garnered wide appreciation; the importance of those efforts was underscored in resolution 2735 (2024). However, those efforts received a treacherous blow when, on 9 September, an Israeli air attack targeted a residential zone in Doha that is home to some 5,000 citizens and residents. In the course of that attack, a member of our domestic security forces, Badr al-Dosari, age 22, was killed, and 18 others were injured. This attack on a mediating State is not only a blatant violation of our sovereignty, international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. It is also a direct attack on the principle of mediation as a choice for resolving conflicts. Protecting mediators is not just a political issue, but a cornerstone of protecting international peace and security. International solidarity with Qatar has been clear, whether in the statement issued by the Council on 11 September (SC/16163) or in the communiqué adopted by the Doha ministerial conference, which called the attack a major threat to regional security that undermines prospects for peace and efforts to restore calm.

Israeli violations of international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territory are continuing in systematic fashion. Civilians are being targeted. Starvation is being used as a weapon. Infrastructure and hospitals are being destroyed. Forced displacement is being implemented. There is also the threat to illegally annex the West Bank. Settlement expansion continues. There are repeated attacks on Islamic and Christian places of worship. These are all major violations of international law and a threat to the two-State solution.

There have also been repeated Israeli attacks on the territory of neighbouring States, including Syria and Lebanon. That undermines stability and increases the chances of the theatre of conflict widening. That threat to international peace and security places on the Council an urgent responsibility. A just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved by ignoring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people or by imposing facts on the ground by force. It can only be achieved by sticking to the Arab Peace Initiative and complying with the relevant international resolutions.

We therefore call on the international community, and the Council in particular, to assume its legal and moral responsibility and take practical steps to set a binding timetable to end the Israeli occupation and ensure the full recognition of the State of Palestine within the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Lastly, we call on the United Nations to use all possible mechanisms to bring about an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. Unconditional entry of humanitarian assistance must be guaranteed, the siege must be lifted, and mediators and mediation efforts must be protected as an essential tool for conflict resolution and peace. Action must be taken to reach a final political settlement based on the two-State solution in order to maintain international peace and security.

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

Mr. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Gaza Strip is suffering from a catastrophic reality that is deteriorating day by day on all levels, due to an unprecedented military escalation and the absence of an effective political horizon. This has led to a collapse of all the elements of life and security. Continued attacks and the years-long siege have made the Strip a central hotspot that is a threat to the stability of the entire region and a real danger to peace and security in the region and the world. These repeated Israeli attacks, which fly in the face of the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the most basic international norms, are the result of the absence of accountability and penalty mechanisms. The Security Council and the international community have been unable to deter the aggressor and stop the violations. The situation has reached an extremely dangerous point that threatens to empty the concept of national sovereignty of all meaning. It threatens the credibility of this Organization and the foundations of international legitimacy and undermines diplomatic and negotiated solutions. It poses an ominous threat to the security of the region and the world.

In years past, we have made clear before the Council the dangerous situation in Gaza and the repercussions for the Middle East of the aggressive regional conflict approach of the Israeli authorities. They are insisting on dragging the countries of the region down a dark path surrounded by folly, hatred and war at the expense of security, peace and coexistence among its peoples. We are still witnessing the repercussions of the lack of any firm measures to deter Israel from continuing its violations and trampling on the laws and norms that prevail among the members of the international community. Its unilateral attacks continued unabated. Can sound logic accept that it targeted the territory of the sisterly country of Qatar and violated its sovereignty just as it was embarking on its most recent effort to mediate an end to the war? What we see repeatedly is the insistence of the Israeli side on blocking the path to finding a peaceful solution to stop the bloodshed, put an end to the suffering of civilians and protect the region in the wake of continued escalation and the scourge of war.

In the face of this reality, we renew our calls for the Council to fulfil the responsibilities that are its *raison d'être*, by taking deterrent international measures for accountability vis-à-vis the recklessness and folly of the Israeli Government in order to safeguard regional and international peace and security and preserve

what remains of the credibility and legitimacy of the international system. Such immediate and serious international action is a necessity that cannot be delayed to stop the aggression, end the siege and pave the way towards a comprehensive and just peace through the two-State solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State along 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

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

Ms. Locetta (United States of America): I must take the floor to respond to my Palestinian colleague's comments.

As Ambassador Waltz noted, the Palestinian Authority has failed to meet its own Oslo commitments, to renounce terrorism and violence and to resolve issues through direct negotiations with Israel. These are not falsehoods but facts.

We call on the Palestinian Authority to halt its pushes for the unilateral recognition of statehood. Instead, it must focus on actions that will not empower Hamas but rather will create a better future for the people of Palestine. We reiterate again that all hostages — living and deceased — must be released immediately.

The meeting rose at 3:50 p.m.