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Monday, 29 September 2025, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Cha (Republic of Korea)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Sahraoui
China	Mr. Fu Cong
Denmark	Ms. Landi
France	Mr. Bonnafont
Greece	Mrs. Balta
Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Pakistan	Mr. Ahmad
Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Sierra Leone	Mr. George
Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
Somalia	Mr. Osman
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ..	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America	Mr. Waltz/Ms. Wu

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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

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

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Alakbarov.

Mr. Alakbarov: Today's briefing is devoted to the thirty-fifth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). It covers the period from 18 June to 19 September.

Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) calls on Israel to immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and to fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard. Settlement activity has, nevertheless, accelerated.

During the reporting period, the Israeli planning authorities advanced or approved approximately 20,810 housing units in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In Area C, this includes approximately 5,430 housing units which were advanced and some 10,600 units which were approved, while in East Jerusalem, 4,780 housing units were advanced. On 11 August, tenders were published for 4,030 housing units in the settlements of Ma'ale Adummim and Ari'el. On 20 August, the Israeli High Planning Committee advanced a plan for the construction of more than 3,400 housing units in the E1 area. On 2 July, 15 Israeli ministers and the speaker of the Knesset signed a petition calling for Israel to annex the occupied West Bank, and on 23 July, the Knesset adopted a non-binding motion calling for the application of Israeli sovereignty across all settlements in the West Bank.

Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures also accelerated. Citing the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain, Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced people to demolish 455 structures in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 420 persons, including 175 children and 118 women. Thirty of these structures were donor funded. Evictions of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem also continued.

Resolution 2334 (2016) calls for immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and destruction. Acts of violence against civilians continued to escalate, with the high number of fatal incidents across the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel precluding me from detailing all of them.

Israeli military actions intensified throughout Gaza, striking schools, hospitals and residential buildings, and hitting internally displaced person tents and people trying to access aid, resulting in high numbers of Palestinian casualties, the continued massive displacement of civilians and widespread destruction, including to civilian infrastructure.

According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, at least 7,579 Palestinians were killed and at least 37,201 were injured in Gaza, a majority of whom are reportedly women and children in the reporting period. And 1,911 were reportedly killed while attempting to collect aid, including in the vicinity of militarized distribution sites. According to Israeli sources, 37 Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers were killed in hostilities in Gaza. According to Israeli sources, 48 hostages are still being held captive by Palestinian armed groups in Gaza following the recovery during the reporting period of the bodies of five hostages by the Israel Defense Forces. Twenty-five of the remaining hostages are believed to be deceased. Thirty United Nations personnel were killed during the reporting period. Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza continued to sporadically fire rockets indiscriminately towards Israel. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad released four videos appearing to show hostages in an emaciated condition.

On 8 August, the Israeli Government announced its decision to take control of Gaza City. Israeli forces have carried out heavy bombardments of Gaza City since late August, hitting residential areas, including numerous multistorey buildings, tents, schools and other public infrastructure, resulting in high numbers of casualties. On 27 August, the IDF instructed residents to leave for the southern part of the Strip and launched a large-scale ground operation, with intensified attacks forcibly displacing Palestinian civilians and demolishing civilian objects, especially residential building, with reports indicating the destruction of whole neighbourhoods through controlled detonations.

Meanwhile, violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued at an alarming rate. Overall, in the occupied West Bank, 46 Palestinians, including 1 woman and 12 children, were killed during Israeli security forces operations, armed exchanges, air strikes, settler attacks, demonstrations and other incidents. Eight hundred and ninety Palestinians, including 152 children, were injured, including 319 by the Israeli security forces owing to tear gas inhalation and 130 by live ammunition and 230 by Israeli settlers and other civilians. According to Israeli sources, 7 Israelis, including 1 woman, were killed by armed Palestinians and another 62, including 1 child and at least 1 woman and 14 Israeli security forces personnel were injured by Palestinians in shooting, stabbing and ramming attacks and other incidents. The Israeli security forces' large-scale operation continued in northern West Bank cities and refugee camps, particularly in Tulkarm and Jenin, alongside operations across other areas in the West Bank, including Area A. On 31 August, new military orders declared parts of Nur Shams and Tulkarm refugee camps closed military zones. While there have been some limited returns, tens of thousands of Palestinians remain displaced from northern refugee camps.

Children continued to be killed by the Israeli security forces. For example, a 13-year-old Palestinian was shot and killed on 25 June during a search operation west of Jenin. On 22 and 23 July, also in Jenin, two boys — a 15-year-old and a 13-year-old — were shot and killed after reportedly throwing stones at the Israeli security forces. On 8 September, the Israeli forces shot and killed two Palestinian boys, aged 14, who were attempting to enter the Jenin refugee camp. The Israeli security forces carried out at least 2,500 search-and-arrest operations in the occupied West Bank. Israel currently holds at least 2,662 Palestinians in administrative detention, amid persistent reports of abuse during detention. Daily settler-related attacks intensified, often in the presence of Israeli forces. On 25 June, three Palestinians were killed

by the Israeli security forces after dozens of settlers attacked the village of Kafr Malik, north-east of Ramallah. In Aqraba town, south-east of Nablus, on 2 August, Israeli settlers shot and killed a 24-year-old Palestinian man and injured eight others. Palestinian attacks against Israelis also continued. On 8 September, 2 Palestinians opened fire at a bus station at the Ramot junction, north-west of East Jerusalem, killing 6 Israelis and injuring 21 others. The attackers were both killed at the scene.

The Security Council, in resolution 2334 (2016), called on both parties to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. Unfortunately, such acts continued. Hamas praised and claimed responsibility for 8 September attack against Israeli civilians in Jerusalem and praised 18 September attack in which two Israeli soldiers were killed at the Karama/Allenby Bridge calling both heroic operations. Hamas officials continued to call for additional violent attacks against Israelis. Palestinian Authority-affiliated official media and social media continued to glorify perpetrators of past attacks against Israelis. Senior Israeli officials continued to call for the mass displacement of Palestinians outside Gaza, expansion of Israeli military operations towards full control of Gaza by Israel and the re-establishment of settlements in Gaza. Some also called for annexation and the advancement of settlements in the occupied West Bank that would bury the idea of a Palestinian State and called for stopping the entry of all humanitarian aid and life-saving services into Gaza until all hostages are released. A senior official released a statement asserting that there would be no Palestinian State to the west of the Jordan River and highlighting his past efforts to prevent the creation of a Palestinian State. Senior Israeli officials also conducted inflammatory visits to Jerusalem's holy sites, with one openly violating the status quo.

Resolution 2334 (2016) reiterated calls by the Middle East Quartet for affirmative steps to be taken immediately to reverse negative trends on the ground that are imperilling the two-State solution. After 23 months of fighting, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is beyond the breaking point. On 22 August, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification confirmed famine in Gaza Governorate, marking the first time that a famine has been officially confirmed in the Middle East region. More than half a million people are facing widespread starvation. Famine is projected to expand to Dayr al-Balah and Khan Yunis by the end of September. According to Ministry of Health in Gaza, as of 19 September, 440 malnutrition-related deaths, including 147 children, had been documented since October 2023.

Increased mass IDF evacuation orders and the expansion of Israeli militarized zones have pushed people into less than 14 per cent of the Gaza Strip. Since 14 August, more than 380,000 displacement movements have been recorded, with most people moving from Gaza City towards the already overcrowded south, where displacement sites are overpopulated and health and water infrastructure have sustained severe damage, exposing the population to grave health risks. Aid is frequently offloaded from trucks, including by starving and desperate people, and in some cases looted by armed criminal groups before reaching warehouses. Israel has allowed an increase in some types of aid entering Gaza and commercial traffic. This step has helped to reduce the prices of some key commodities but falls short of what is needed to address humanitarian needs in the Strip. Following a shooting attack at the Karama/Allenby crossing with Jordan, the entry of aid for Gaza via the crossing was suspended, along with all other cargo.

The Palestinian Authority continues to face a severe fiscal crisis, undermining public service delivery. Israel continues to withhold all Palestinian clearance revenues, which the Palestinian Authority says now total some \$2 billion in revenues withheld since October 2023. On 20 July, Palestinian President Abbas issued a decree announcing elections for the Palestinian National Council. The decree also established a preparatory committee tasked with making the arrangements for the

organization of the process, which held its first meeting on 7 August. President Abbas also established a committee to draft an interim Constitution via decree on 18 August. It is intended to define the separation of powers, democratic governance, the peaceful transfer of authority and the legal framework for elections.

In resolution 2334 (2016), the Security Council also called on all States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967. On 2 September, Belgium announced its intention to impose sanctions on Israel including, *inter alia*, a ban on the importing of products from settlements, a review of public procurement policies with Israeli companies and restrictions on consular assistance to Belgians living in illegal settlements. Resolution 2334 (2016) also called upon all parties to continue, *inter alia*, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process. From 28 to 30 July, France and Saudi Arabia co-chaired the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. The Conference culminated in the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, outlining an actionable framework for the implementation of the two-State solution. On 12 September, the General Assembly adopted decision 80/506, endorsing the New York Declaration.

In closing, allow me to share the Secretary-General's observations on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) in the occupied Palestinian territory — the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Israeli settlement expansion continues to accelerate, alongside the proliferation of outposts and the taking of steps in the Israeli Knesset to promote the annexation of the West Bank. Israeli settlements have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation of international law and resolutions. They are systematically shrinking the territory of the Palestinian State and further entrenching Israel's unlawful occupation. The advancement of the E1 plan is a calamitous development. If implemented, it would effectively sever the connection between the northern and southern West Bank, further undermining the contiguity of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State, increasing the risk of forced displacement and fuelling tensions.

The Government of Israel must abide by its obligations under international law. I recall the findings of the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024, which declared, *inter alia*, that the State of Israel is under an obligation to immediately cease all new settlement activities, evacuate all settlers and bring to an end its unlawful presence in the occupied Palestinian territory as rapidly as possible. I am also deeply concerned about statements of intent by Israeli Government officials to further annex all or parts of the occupied Palestinian territory.

In addition to settlement activities, Palestinians are facing displacement, demolitions and crippling restrictions on movement and access, which are stifling the economy and severely limiting access to employment, hospitals, schools and agricultural land. These policies are further fuelling frustration and hopelessness, while severely undermining the Palestinian Authority. The demolition and the seizure of Palestinian structures, including internationally funded humanitarian projects, entail numerous human rights violations and raise concerns about the risk of forcible transfer. I call on the Government of Israel to cease the demolition of Palestinian-owned structures, in accordance with its international obligations.

I want to strongly condemn the horrific attack by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October 2023 and the continued holding of hostages in horrendous conditions in Gaza. All hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally. I condemn Hamas' appalling videos, depicting emaciated Israeli hostages. While in captivity, hostages must be treated humanely and be allowed to receive visits and assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

I am appalled by the escalation of Israeli military operations throughout the Gaza Strip, which continues to bring death and destruction to Palestinians at an unprecedented rate. I condemn the killing of civilians in Gaza, including women and children. The situation in Gaza is morally, politically and legally intolerable. Mass casualty incidents have been mounting as operations in Gaza City expand. The collective punishment of the Palestinian people can never be justified and must end immediately. The forced displacement of the Palestinian population from any part of the occupied Palestinian territory is unacceptable and violates international law. I strongly reject any form of ethnic cleansing.

The protection of civilians is paramount in any armed conflict. Parties to conflict have an obligation to respect international humanitarian law. I am concerned about what might be violations of international humanitarian law, including possible non-compliance with the requirements of distinction, proportionality and precaution in attack and with the prohibition on the use of human shields. Member States have an obligation to ensure respect for international humanitarian law. I call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and unfettered humanitarian access across Gaza. I welcome the continued efforts of the mediators to reach a deal and urge all sides to end these devastating hostilities immediately. There is no military solution. The International Court of Justice has issued legally binding provisional measures in the case *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*.

The continued heightened level of violence in the West Bank is deeply alarming. I call on Israel, as the occupying Power, to protect the Palestinian population against attacks and intimidation. I condemn all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror. I am deeply concerned that persistent and intensifying settler attacks, sometimes in proximity to, and with the support of, Israeli security forces, are further displacing Palestinian communities, including in Area C. Residents continue to be denied the right to return home. Palestinian attacks against Israelis must also cease. All perpetrators of violent attacks must be held accountable.

The reported mistreatment of Palestinians held by Israel is deeply disturbing. All detainees must be treated humanely, and Palestinians arbitrarily detained by Israel must be released.

I am also disturbed by the multiple instances in which officials on both sides have glorified violence and engaged in dangerous provocations, incitement and inflammatory language, which must be rejected by all.

I am appalled at the horrific humanitarian situation in Gaza, with unbearable levels of suffering and untenable living conditions. Famine in Gaza is a man-made disaster. I call on Israel to fulfil its obligations under international law, including by allowing and facilitating rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access into and throughout Gaza. The recent limited increase in humanitarian aid is nowhere near what is required. The United Nations and our partners have a proven and principled plan to get aid to a desperate population. We must be allowed to safely and securely distribute assistance to people in need, wherever they are. All parties must respect and protect humanitarian personnel. I mourn the United Nations personnel killed in Gaza and strongly condemn the killing of all health and humanitarian personnel. These incidents must stop and be formally and independently investigated, and perpetrators must be held accountable. I express my deepest appreciation to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the United Nations agencies and personnel and humanitarian aid workers who remain committed to their work across the occupied Palestinian Territory despite the significant security risks. I recall that the inviolability of United Nations premises

must be respected at all times. I also strongly condemn the killing of journalists in Gaza.

Israel's implementation of punitive economic and fiscal measures is destabilizing Palestinian institutions and threatening the viability of the Palestinian Authority. I urge Israel to immediately cease all such unilateral steps.

I reiterate my call to the parties to respect and uphold the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem, taking into account the special and historic role of Jordan.

The announcement of Palestinian National Council elections within a year after the conflict in Gaza comes to an end is welcome, along with the steps taken in preparation.

I commend France and Saudi Arabia for co-chairing the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and call on the international community to seize this momentum and mobilize political will and resources for the tangible, irreversible steps for the achievement of the two-State solution. The United Nations stands ready to support all efforts to advance a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. The continued devastation and misery on the ground, in particular over the past two years, have reinforced the absolute need for Israelis, Palestinians, regional States and the broader international community to take urgent steps that will end the unlawful occupation and enable the parties to re-engage on the long delayed political path to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in line with international law and United Nations resolutions and thereby realize the two-State solution, consisting of Israel and Palestine, of which Gaza is an integral part, living side by side in peace and security within their secure and recognized borders on the basis of pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

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

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*speak in Russian*): We thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory in the context of the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016).

Unfortunately, as the briefing made clear, we still have no grounds for optimism. We are witnessing not merely a failure to implement the resolution, but its flagrant violation. The plans announced by the Israeli authorities in mid-August to revive the settlement construction plan in the E1 area of the West Bank jeopardize the viability of the two-State solution. If this billion-dollar project, which implies the construction of 3,412 housing units, new roads and infrastructure, moves forward, the West Bank will be divided in two, severing East Jerusalem from the rest of the Palestinian territory. The intentions of the plan's proponents were most accurately described by Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who stated, with a glow of pride, that "this buries the very concept of a Palestinian State."

Furthermore, those who now assert that the illegal settlement activity is in response to the 7 October 2023 terrorist attacks are being disingenuous. This is all part of a long-term strategy that religious ultranationalists have consistently advanced for many years, justifying their violations of international law with references to the Old Testament. In their world view, Israel has a sacred right to these lands, while the Palestinians are merely an inconvenience, who have no place in what the ultranationalists call Judea and Samaria.

Therefore, it is not surprising that, since 2009, 900 Palestinians from the E1 area alone have been forcibly displaced, and more than 500 homes have been demolished,

including 200 built with donor funds. Justifying the threats of annexation by citing the recent wave of recognitions of Palestine by several Western States is equally absurd. These recognitions were a direct response to West Jerusalem's deliberate policy of undermining the two-State solution, and not vice versa.

The planned construction of new settlements would be impossible were it not for rabid settlers, eager to commit all forms of violence against the Palestinian population. We should not delude ourselves into thinking that they act independently. These settlers receive unconditional support from the authorities, with Israeli law enforcement officers either turning a blind eye to their crimes or actively partaking in them. Moreover, the Israeli Government allocates millions of dollars to equip and arm settlers, enabling them to exile Palestinians from their land.

Russia strongly condemns the illegal construction of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, violence by extremist settlers and hate speech. We demand that Israel return to strict compliance with resolution 2334 (2016) and abandon further plans to annex the West Bank.

Last week, the international community clearly demonstrated its unwavering commitment to the two-State solution, as was clearly seen both at the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and in statements delivered during the general debate of the General Assembly. Furthermore, during his meeting with high-ranking delegates from a number of Arab-Muslim States to discuss the Middle East settlement, on the margins of the high-level week of the General Assembly, United States President Donald Trump stressed that he would not allow Israel to annex the West Bank. We do hope that these words will be followed by concrete action.

To reverse the tragedy unfolding before our very eyes, it is vital that Washington remain engaged in international efforts to resolve the long-standing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the internationally acknowledged legal framework. After all, it is precisely the unconditional support of the United States that has, until now, allowed Israel to do whatever it wants and get off scot-free. As history shows, Israel has only agreed to peace agreements when there was a strong and principled leader in the White House, one ready to take bold decisions in the interests of achieving peace. We hope that the current United States Administration will indeed make the necessary efforts to put an end to Israel's unlawful actions.

Russia's position on the Palestinian-Israeli settlement is principled in nature and immune to opportunistic political fluctuations. We consistently advocate for an immediate, unconditional and comprehensive ceasefire; the release of hostages and forcibly detained persons; safe and unimpeded humanitarian access, in accordance with established guiding principles; and the resumption of the peace process on a universally recognized international legal basis, rooted in the two-State solution, which protects the fundamental rights of Palestinians to self-determination and return and addresses their just aspirations to have their own independent and viable State, within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, coexisting in peace and security with Israel.

The Palestinians deserve to have a State of their own, just as much as the Israelis do. Respecting the rights of Palestinians is the only possible option for any conscientious member of the international community. Ignoring this would be detrimental to Israel itself and to its attempts to ensure its own security. This is a task that cannot be accomplished at the expense of the interests of the Palestinians and Israel's Arab neighbours, and the sooner West Jerusalem recognizes this, the better.

Mr. George (Sierra Leone): I also thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his informative briefing.

I welcome the participation of the representatives of Israel and Palestine in this meeting.

This briefing on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) reminds us of our shared responsibility to ensure that Security Council resolutions are not mere words on paper, but instruments of peace, security and, above all, the protection of civilians. As international momentum behind the two-State solution gathers strength, Sierra Leone recalls the binding provisions of resolution 2334 (2016) and urgently calls for its full and immediate implementation.

Across the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, civilian casualties continue to rise daily, and international humanitarian law continues to be violated. Of particular concern are the forcible displacement of Palestinians from their homes, escalating settler violence and the worsening humanitarian catastrophe. These violations have become the status quo, a deeply unacceptable reality that perpetuates immense suffering and undermines prospects for peace.

The message from world leaders at the high-level general debate of the eightieth session of the General Assembly has been clear: lasting peace in the Middle East will remain elusive unless the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians are addressed; the security concerns of Israel are also addressed, within lawful means; accountability is ensured for violations of international law; and a credible political horizon is restored. Sierra Leone welcomes the recent recognition of the State of Palestine by several Member States and the adoption of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, as important steps towards that horizon.

We recall the powerful words of the President of the State of Palestine, who reminded the Assembly that peace cannot be achieved if justice is not achieved, and there can be no justice if Palestine is not freed. Sierra Leone reaffirms that peace must be anchored in justice, dignity and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and their right to live in freedom and security in an independent and sovereign State.

Actualizing a just and lasting peace requires a comprehensive approach grounded in international law and the full implementation of all relevant provisions and resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016). In this regard, we highlight key provisions that remain central to improving the situation on the ground.

First, Israel must fulfil its obligation to protect civilians in times of conflict. Civilians in Gaza must be shielded from indiscriminate bombardment, and Palestinians in the West Bank must be protected from settler violence, intimidation and forced displacement. We are gravely concerned by the recent attack in the Nuseirat refugee camp and call on Israel to exercise maximum precautions to avoid civilian harm. Perpetrators of settler violence must be held accountable. Likewise, all hostages held by Hamas must be released immediately, unconditionally and in safety and dignity.

Secondly, Israel must immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory. The continued expansion of settlements, including the approval of new projects at unprecedented rates, undermines the viability of the two-State solution. As resolution 2334 (2016) makes clear, settlements have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation of international law. Sierra Leone echoes the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice in affirming that such policies must cease without delay.

Thirdly, all parties must act in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, and take urgent steps to de-escalate tensions. We call on them to refrain from incitement, provocative actions and inflammatory

rhetoric. Above all, they must ensure unimpeded and safe delivery of humanitarian aid. We support the call in the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution for the immediate, unconditional and sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale, the opening of crossings and the protection of relief workers. No civilian, especially no child, should die from starvation, malnutrition or preventable disease. Israel must fulfil its obligations as the occupying Power, and Hamas must not divert aid meant for civilians.

Fourthly, we reiterate the resolution's call for intensified and accelerated international and regional diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving without delay a comprehensive just and lasting peace. The New York Declaration's vision of concrete, time-bound and irreversible steps towards an independent, sovereign and democratic State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security, must guide renewed political engagement. The international community must work towards an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the release of all hostages and detainees, and the launch of a credible political process that resolves all final status issues and ends the occupation.

Sierra Leone condemns all violence against civilians, whether committed by State or non-State actors. We share the conviction expressed in the New York Declaration that war, occupation, terrorism and forced displacement will not bring peace or security. Only a negotiated political solution that respects the sovereignty, security and dignity of both peoples can deliver lasting peace.

In closing, we reiterate that peace is not beyond reach. It requires courage, justice and commitment from all parties to end the occupation, end the violence and recommit to the principles of coexistence and mutual recognition. Full adherence to resolution 2334 (2016) and the spirit of the New York Declaration would be an essential first step towards that future.

Mr. Waltz (United States of America): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his briefing.

Unfortunately, today's meeting is yet another example of the Council's obsessive focus on Israel. This is the second time in less than a week that the Council has met on this subject. As I noted at the previous meeting, there have been more than 80 meetings on Israel since 7 October 2023 (see S/PV.10003). This constant drumbeat of meetings only distracts from and unfortunately undermines the serious work needed to address issues of international peace and security, including United States efforts to free all 48 hostages who remain in Hamas captivity right now as we speak, and our work to bring this war to an end and to give Gaza and the Palestinian people a future free from Hamas.

Resolution 2334 (2016), the ostensible focus of today's briefing, is a fundamentally flawed resolution. It wrongly delegitimizes Israel, including by denying the reality that Jerusalem is its lawful capital. Resolution 2334 (2016) exemplifies the outmoded thinking that has led to failure after failure in Middle East diplomacy. Every three months the Council considers the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) by rote. This is in addition to the regular monthly briefing and the quarterly general debates on the Middle East, which focus almost entirely on Israel. This constant drumbeat of meetings continues to distract from doing the actual work that the many pressing threats to international peace elsewhere around the world so sorely need. Perfunctory briefings like this one today do nothing to end the conflict or bring the war to a close.

The United States continues to work tirelessly to free all 48 hostages and end the war. President Trump just last week told the General Assembly that empty words do not solve wars. Action does. President Trump just this past week hosted a key meeting with the leaders of Arab and Muslim-majority States to coordinate day-after

planning for Gaza. Not only is he putting real plans on the table to end the war, free the hostages and stop the suffering, but he is also already putting plans forward for the day after to make sure this never happens again. We cannot repeat ourselves. The definition of insanity is to continue to repeat this year after year.

If we want to end the war, we need to place accountability where it belongs: with the terrorist organization known as Hamas. The United Nations has yet to designate Hamas as a terrorist organization, even as it holds 48 hostages in horrific conditions, which includes, by the way, the remains of two American citizens, Itay Chen and Omer Neutra. Hamas has made these hostages dig their own graves on camera.

All of us desire peace. But we should be united by one message for Hamas: release the hostages now and end this war. Hamas bears absolute responsibility for the ongoing war in Gaza. Hamas began a war on 7 October 2023 with a massacre of innocent people, including women, children and the elderly. Unfortunately, while Israel has accepted the negotiators' proposals, Hamas has repeatedly rejected these reasonable offers to make peace. Now, as if to encourage continued conflict, members of this body rewarded Hamas for its horrible atrocities, including 7 October, by unilaterally recognizing a Palestinian State. Hamas sees actions like that as winning, as a win for it and as a reward for its horrific actions. So, rather than reward Hamas, the Council and all Member States should pressure it to end the bloodshed, disarm and give the people of Gaza a chance for a peaceful life.

It is time to stop repeating this failed approach. President Trump's approach of peace through strength has yielded historic accomplishments in a very short amount of time. In his first term, he brought peace, prosperity and regional integration through the historic Abraham Accords Peace Agreement. Earlier this year, this Administration negotiated a ceasefire that freed many hostages. By holding Hamas accountable, we can free the hostages and end this war.

The United States will continue to work on improving the humanitarian situation on the ground, supporting the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) as it delivers life-saving aid to those in need without empowering the terrorists. The GHF continues to provide vital food aid to Palestinian civilians in Gaza, distributing now 175 million meals as of 28 September. We also call on the Palestinian Authority to live up to its commitments at Oslo and to condemn Hamas's terrorism consistently and unequivocally, to stop the incitement of terrorism and to fully implement its commitment to end the programme of cash payments to terrorists and their families.

A stable West Bank keeps Israel secure and is in line with this Administration's goal to achieve peace in the region. The United States will continue to work tirelessly with Israel and our Arab partners to negotiate peace, get the hostages back and create a brighter and more prosperous future for the region's people.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (spoke in Chinese): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov for his briefing.

Last week, at the general debate of the eightieth session of the General Assembly, the high-level meeting on the implementation of the two-State solution and other major events, the international community once again issued a powerful united call for an immediate end to the killings, for saving lives and for achieving peace. This is not merely the most fundamental requirement for upholding fairness and justice. More importantly, it is the bare minimum required by human morality and conscience. Given the urgency at hand, the international community must unite as one, forge consensus and uphold objectivity and impartiality to make greater efforts towards resolving the question of Palestine.

We must act with the utmost urgency to end the conflict in Gaza. After nearly two years of violence, siege and blockade, more than 66,000 Gazans have lost their lives,

and more than 2 million are struggling in an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe. At present, as Israel presses ahead with its plan to take over Gaza City, countless innocent civilians are dying every single day. China reiterates that attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure is unacceptable, weaponizing humanitarian supplies is unacceptable and violating international law and international humanitarian law is equally unacceptable. We urge Israel to immediately halt all military operations in Gaza, effectively fulfil its obligations as an occupying Power, ensure the scaled-up, rapid and safe entry of humanitarian aid and support the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies in their aid delivery. Moreover, the country with special influence on Israel must assume its corresponding responsibilities in earnest.

We must take robust action to de-escalate tensions in the West Bank. Israel continues to expand its settlement policy, condone settler violence and squeeze the living space of the Palestinian people, thereby eroding the very foundation of the two-State solution. The dangerous attempt to annex the West Bank will completely bury the prospect of the two-State solution, directly threatening stability across the Middle East and must therefore be met with unequivocal resistance and stern rejection from the international community. We urge Israel to immediately stop its settlement activities, contain settler violence, cease encroachment on West Bank territories and stop undermining the governance foundation of the Palestinian Authority.

We must revitalize the two-State solution with firm resolve. Implementing the two-State solution is the only viable path to resolving the Palestinian question. While Israel has enjoyed statehood for nearly 80 years, the Palestinian people still have nowhere to call home. This situation is simply unacceptable. Independent statehood is the inalienable national right of the Palestinian people, not some optional charity or reward. Gaza and the West Bank are the homeland of the Palestinian people, an integral part of the Palestinian territory and must not become a sacrifice of international politics. Any post-war governance and reconstruction arrangement must respect the will of the Palestinian people and safeguard the legitimate rights of the Palestinian nation. A succession of Western countries have recently announced their recognition of the State of Palestine. The international community should maintain this positive momentum, jointly oppose any unilateral moves that sabotage the foundation of the two-State solution, strive for a practical, feasible path towards the two-State solution and support Palestine in becoming a full Member of the United Nations.

Together with the international community, China stands ready to push for an immediate end to the fighting in Gaza, alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe, implement the two-State solution and advance a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine to make renewed contributions to achieving peace and stability in the Middle East.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I start by thanking Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his briefing.

I will make three points.

First, the United Kingdom reaffirms that a two-State solution remains the only viable path to peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians. That is why, last week, the United Kingdom formally recognized the State of Palestine. As my Foreign Secretary said, this decision reflects a grave urgency. The two-State solution is under threat from relentless violence, deepening humanitarian catastrophe and political obstruction. In the West Bank, the Israeli Government continues its stranglehold on the Palestinian economy, further destabilizing the Palestinian Authority. So, we urge Israel to release the withheld clearance revenues, restore correspondent banking relationships and facilitate Shekel transfers from Palestinian banks. We also repeat our calls on Israel to halt the expansion of illegal settlements, including the E1 plans,

and to act decisively against extremist settler violence. Like others in the Security Council, we reiterate that Israeli annexation of the West Bank cannot be allowed to happen.

Secondly, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza is intolerable. Civilians continue to face famine, destruction and displacement on a scale that defies description. Since 1 September, four hospitals in northern Gaza have been forced to close, and clinics, including those of the Palestinian Medical Relief Society, continue to be struck by Israel. Israel must protect the healthcare sector in line with its obligations under international law. Last week, doctors who had worked in Gaza described to me the awful challenge of trying to save lives in conditions of destruction and with medical equipment and food withheld. We therefore continue to call on Israel to let in aid without restriction, including by fully reopening the King Hussein/Allenby Bridge. We also urge Israel to allow international media access to Gaza, in line with the principles of press freedom.

Thirdly, as my Foreign Secretary said, recognition must be a spur to, not a substitute for, urgent action. We desperately need a ceasefire, the release of all hostages and a huge surge in humanitarian aid. The hostages and Palestinians in Gaza have known only death and misery for the past two years.

We commend the tireless efforts of the United States, Qatar and Egypt to try to end this cycle of violence. The United Kingdom is ready to build on the positive momentum from last week's High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and to play our part in securing a deal to provide a better future for Israel, Palestine and the region.

Mr. Osman (Somalia): Allow me to begin by extending our gratitude to Mr. Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator and Resident Coordinator of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his comprehensive and deeply troubling briefing on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016).

Nearly 10 years after its adoption, the Council's requirements remain unmet and, in several critical respects, are being actively disregarded. The ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements constitutes a clear breach of international law and remains a central impediment to the peace process. Over the past year, Israeli planning authorities have advanced or approved almost 10,000 new housing units in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and have proposed recognizing 22 additional settlements and outposts — actions that deeply undermine the prospect of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State. The resumption of formal land registration in Area C, which had been suspended since 1968, further entrenches settlement growth and increases the risk of unlawful claims of sovereignty over occupied territory. Israel must stop the expansion of its illegal settlements in the E1 zone. Furthermore, the demolition of over 450 Palestinian-owned structures and the displacement of nearly 600 people sharply highlight trends that urgently need to be reversed.

The recent report from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/60/19) has identified more than 150 business enterprises — both Israeli and international — that are supporting the sustainment of these illegal settlements. Such involvement complicates the occupation and presents significant ethical and legal concerns. The recent findings in the Office's report should inform the actions of Governments and businesses alike, with a view to ensuring that they do not contribute to ongoing violations and breaches of international law.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is catastrophic. Since the collapse of the ceasefire on 18 March, more than 2 million people have been facing a man-made

famine, as confirmed by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification — a direct consequence of the ongoing blockade on aid. The hostilities have become intolerably severe and have resulted in the deaths of at least 5,400 Palestinians and injuries to more than 70,300 others during this period. We pay solemn tribute to United Nations personnel in Gaza, 323 of whom have lost their lives since 7 October 2023, including 43 in the past quarter alone — the highest toll on humanitarian workers in United Nations history. Their dedication and sacrifices in pursuit of humanity and dignity will not be forgotten.

The path forward is clear. First, an immediate permanent ceasefire is essential to halting the bloodshed and averting further famine. Somalia recognizes and appreciates the mediation efforts led by Qatar, the United States and Egypt and urges all parties and the broader international community to intensify efforts to achieve a sustained cessation of hostilities.

Secondly, Israel must fulfil its obligations under international law and ensure the rapid and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian and commercial goods into Gaza. The starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is strictly prohibited and represents a grave violation of international law. We also call for an immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages and those arbitrarily detained.

Thirdly, Somalia underscores the necessity of reviving a credible, inclusive political process aimed at addressing the root cause and achieving a just and lasting peace. In that regard, our commitment to a sovereign and independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, must be reaffirmed. We welcome the recent declarations by an increasing number of States recognizing Palestine as a State, and we emphasize the importance of Palestine attaining full membership in the United Nations.

The international community must act decisively to end the occupation and support Palestinian unity and governance, both of which are essential for a just and lasting peace.

Ms. Landi (Denmark): Let me thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his briefing.

One week ago, world leaders convened for the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. The vast majority reaffirmed their unwavering support for lasting peace and the two-State solution. In the midst of this dark chapter in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we saw a glimpse of hope and momentum, upon which we must dare to build. This is why the Foreign Minister of Denmark announced last week that the keys to recognition of a Palestinian State will no longer lie in the hands of the Israeli Government. The Palestinians themselves must become masters of their own destiny. Denmark welcomes the commitments made by President Abbas regarding democratic reform and condemnation of Hamas, confirming that it can have no role in Gaza. It is crucial that we seize this momentum in order to move forward on these commitments towards a viable and democratic Palestinian State.

However, the two-State solution is at a critical juncture. It is being challenged by Israel's direct opposition to its realization, by the expansion of illegal settlements and by threats to annex the West Bank and Gaza. Since our most recent briefing devoted to the Secretary-General's quarterly report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), in June (see S/PV.9950), Israel has approved the E1 settlement plan — one that, if implemented, will gravely undermine the two-State solution. Denmark strongly condemns this decision and urges Israel to halt any such attempt. We continue to see new expansions of settlements, widespread settler violence, forced displacement of local communities and orders for the demolition of Palestinian-owned structures, including in East Jerusalem. Denmark's position is clear: we firmly condemn all of

these actions and policies. Israeli settlements are a clear violation of international law, and they make it virtually impossible to form a contiguous and viable land for a future Palestinian State.

There must also be concerted efforts to support the Palestinian Authority (PA) and its commitment to reform. Denmark remains greatly concerned about the PA's deteriorating financial situation. We have recently joined the Emergency Coalition for the Financial Sustainability of the Palestinian Authority and have allocated approximately \$8 million in additional support. We have also been at the forefront of European Union support for capacity-building and reform of the Palestinian Authority. We call on Israel to urgently release the withheld tax revenues, which it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, and to renew the banking agreement.

Next week, we will be marking a devastating anniversary; we will never forget the brutal terror attack by Hamas on 7 October 2023. Just a little over a week ago, there was another attack at the Allenby crossing, which we strongly condemn. There can be no justification for terrorism, nor for the despicable maltreatment of the hostages.

We have consistently stressed that Israel's response must be exercised in compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law. We are now seeing that Israel's actions go far beyond self-defence. A man-made famine is unfolding. Denmark is deeply concerned by the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza. It is deeply troubling that we now see reports of reduced, not improved, humanitarian access. We urge the Government of Israel to provide authorization for the operations of international non-governmental organizations in the occupied Palestinian territory. They should not be forced to leave at a time when their services are needed more than ever.

In closing, despite opposition and cynicism, last week provided new hope for a peaceful future for Israelis and Palestinians. For years, weapons and violence have spoken. Now is the time to implement resolution 2334 (2016) and for international law to prevail. Denmark remains committed to playing our part.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov for presenting the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). It is deeply alarming that Israel not only fails to comply with the provisions of the resolution but also continues to take active steps that directly violate its provisions.

Israel continues to carry out its colonial settler policy unconstrained by the prescriptions of international law. This approach is particularly unsettling because of the implications for the achievement of an independent Palestinian State and the prospects for the termination of the Israeli occupation. This policy is evidenced by Israel's continued and systematic approval of new settlements in the occupied West Bank, increasingly shrinking the space pertaining to the Palestinian territory.

The approval of the E1 area settlement plan and Israel's determination to go forward with construction in the area is an extremely significant development that should not be met with silence from the Council. Advancing this plan would further fragment Palestinian communities and seriously undermine the aspiration of a contiguous Palestinian State. Israel itself has declared that the Palestinian State is being "erased not by slogans but by deeds". The response to this daring declaration by the occupying Power, and all other illegalities in the occupied Palestinian territory, must be met with strong, decisive and strategic action. Guyana therefore calls on fellow Council members to uphold their collective obligation to ensure that Israel complies fully with resolution 2334 (2016).

Israel's colonial settler policy is further evidenced by the settler attacks on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Settlers also vandalize public infrastructure, including water networks and healthcare facilities. These acts are carried out under the watchful eyes of the Israeli security forces, which do nothing to stop them but are quick to react by assaulting Palestinians who resist the unjust and illegal actions of settlers.

A year has elapsed since the General Assembly issued its demand to Israel to end its occupation of the Palestinian territory, pursuant to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (see A/78/968). Guyana calls on Israel to relinquish the path of obstinacy and defiance in response to the loud calls of the international community, including the United Nations, for compliance with international law. We further call on Israel to cease all settlement activities and annexation plans, both for the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and for the Gaza Strip.

Guyana is deeply disturbed by Israel's intransigence in persisting with its genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. As my President said to the General Assembly last week, what we are witnessing is not warfare but mass extermination, carried out systematically and amounting to a war crime. The paralysis of the Security Council cannot persist, as this will be to the further detriment of the Palestinian nation. We therefore call for a consensus approach that involves action by all Member States, pursuant to resolution 2334 (2016), to ensure that they do not, in any way, contribute to the implementation and perpetuation of Israel's settler colonial policies and practices. This approach must also involve urgent action by all Member States to halt the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people.

It is baffling that the Government of a people who have been the subject of discrimination and exclusion, of the worst kind, less than 100 years ago, can now be the perpetrators of the same crimes against another people, this time in full view of the world. Instead of changing the course of history, sadly, the occupying Power has chosen to repeat it. But we, the international community, must ensure that the rule of international law prevails, not because enough of us hope that it will prevail, but because enough of us exercise the political will for it to prevail. As always, Guyana is prepared to support Council action to this end.

I conclude by reiterating the following appeals.

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

Secondly, Guyana urgently calls for steps to be taken to rapidly improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza. We call on the Israeli authorities to allow humanitarian access to all parts of the Strip, to lift restrictions on the types of supplies allowed in and to allow the United Nations and humanitarian partners to fully resume their operations. The situation of famine in Gaza can and must be reversed.

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

Guyana remains unwavering in its support for the Palestinian cause and the implementation of the two-State solution. We remain ready to work with the Council and the wider United Nations towards this end and are particularly encouraged by the many demonstrations of solidarity with the Palestinian people during the high-level week. We believe that there is great international momentum and commitment

to resolving the question of Palestine with urgency, and we, the members of the Security Council, must collectively take full advantage of this momentum.

Mr. Bonnafont (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, for his briefing.

The Israeli-Palestinian question has been at the heart of tensions in the region for decades, and it is the duty of the Council to deal with it relentlessly.

In a week's time, we commemorate the grim two-year anniversary of the terrorist attacks committed by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and the hostage-taking that followed, barbaric acts on an unprecedented scale whose savagery shook Israel and the conscience of the world. France reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of the appalling crimes committed by Hamas. Our absolute priority remains the conclusion of an immediate and permanent ceasefire and the unconditional release of all hostages.

But it has also been two years since our Council met in vain to call for a ceasefire and unrestricted humanitarian access for all the inhabitants of Gaza. The current Israeli offensives in Gaza no longer have any military logic. France reiterates its condemnation of their prolongation and intensification. The tragedy of the Palestinians in Gaza has lasted too long. This destructive war must not make us forget the dangerous dynamics at work in the West Bank. In this respect, I would like to recall three major points of concern for France.

First, Israel's approval of the E1 settlement project east of Jerusalem would cut the West Bank in two and deal a major blow to the two-State solution. France urgently calls on Israel to renounce that project.

Secondly, Israeli settler attacks on Palestinians have increased in a climate of complete impunity. We call upon Israel to put an immediate end to this violence and to protect Palestinian civilians.

Thirdly, the increase in Israeli demolitions of essential public infrastructure has also contributed to the destructive dynamic. That includes the demolition in August of a school in the north of the West Bank that was financed by the French Development Agency with support from the European Union. France demands an explanation from Israel for that demolition.

These dynamics, fuelled by Knesset votes and unacceptable proposals by Israeli ministers for the annexation of the West Bank, are doubly dangerous. They not only constitute a flagrant violation of international law but also run counter to the interest of Israel by compromising its long-term security. That makes even more remote any prospect of peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as any prospect of regional peace, as it imperils existing and future peace agreements between Israel and its neighbours.

France will remain firmly opposed to the annexation of Palestinian territory; that is a red line for the international community. France is fully mobilized alongside European partners to step up pressure on Israel to put an end to settlement activity and the violence it produces. That includes through the imposition of new sanctions against the individuals and entities responsible.

Against this grim backdrop, a glimmer of hope does exist. A week ago, here in New York, the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, co-chaired by Saudi Arabia and France, was held. That Conference allowed the international community to reaffirm its robust ongoing support for the two-State solution. This has generated unprecedented political momentum by charting a clear path to peace

and security for all parties in the region. It was an opportunity for France and nine other States to announce recognition of the State of Palestine.

The New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, endorsed by 142 United Nations Member States (see General Assembly decision 80/506), sets forth a unique road map to achieve this. Approved by the Palestinian Authority, it calls, *inter alia*, for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all hostages, and the effective disarming of Hamas and its exclusion from the governance of Gaza, where a transitional administration that includes the Palestinian Authority will be established. We note in passing that the Conference can hardly be portrayed as supporting Hamas when it excluded Hamas from the future of Palestine and set as its goal the very two-State solution that Hamas has always rejected. The Conference also called for the deployment of an international stabilization mission in Gaza, reconstruction of the Strip, and ultimately, the establishment of a Palestinian State with reformed governance and institutions.

It is also our understanding that last week's contacts between the President of the United States and several States in the region also resulted in progress towards a commitment to lasting peace.

Peace is possible, but its prerequisites include that Hamas immediately release all the hostages still held in Gaza and that Israel grasp the hand outstretched by the international community and commit in good faith to the path towards two States.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his briefing. Unsurprisingly, the briefing painted a grim picture of a dangerous trajectory of the conflict.

During the past week, world leaders gathered here at the United Nations. Palestine and the horrors of Gaza dominated all discussions. It started with the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, which created a positive momentum that was further strengthened by the meeting of the United States President with Arab leaders. All this happened in parallel with almost consensual messages coming from the General Assembly that the suffering in Gaza must end.

As the general debate wraps up, we have an opportunity for reflection and for charting the course of action. Today, I would like to offer our reflection on partnership for peace.

First, for Slovenia, the Palestinian Authority (PA) is a crucial partner for peace. While supporting its reform process, we underline that the PA must remain stable and able to govern, provide basic services and maintain security. We are deeply alarmed about its financial crisis, and we urge the Israeli Government to release the Palestinian revenues that Israel is withholding unlawfully. Slovenia has joined the Emergency Coalition for the Financial Sustainability of the Palestinian Authority and allocated funds towards this end. However, this is only an emergency measure. Ensuring the sustainability and functionality of the Palestinian Authority remains a priority.

Secondly, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East is another partner for peace in the region. It is a lifeline for Palestinians struggling with the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. It is a pillar for human development in the West Bank and more broadly. We remain steadfast in our support for the Agency and the shared commitments we pledged. The Agency is an indispensable part of the fibre of Palestinian society and enjoys the trust of the community. It is accumulating knowledge, offering opportunities and carrying political heritage. As such, it must be protected and its mandate renewed.

Thirdly, what is becoming clear is that partnerships for peace in the region of the Middle East and in the international community are growing. The leaders of the region have clearly demonstrated their commitment to peace — peace in the region and peace with Israel. As part of the commitment of the international community to peace, we welcome the new and irreversible wave of recognitions of Palestinian statehood. Each one strengthens the legitimacy of Palestine and moves us closer to a just settlement. The international community is making its voice clear, and we resolutely stand behind the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution outlining steps to peace.

I want to underline that we also hear voices for peace in Israel. We hear the families of hostages calling for a ceasefire. We hear the voices of so many Israelis understanding that their safety and future is intertwined with the safety and future of Palestinians. We hear Jewish voices around the globe emphasizing that peace cannot be achieved through war. To these voices and to others, I want to once again repeat our condemnation of the 7 October 2023 terror attack. Hamas is not a partner for peace. Hamas and its terror ideology have no place in the future of Gaza.

Slovenia is deeply alarmed by the surge of violence in the West Bank. We oppose the further expansion of settlement projects, which were announced, including the E1 project. We are alarmed by the attempts to fragment Palestinian communities and movement restrictions. We call for compliance with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. We call for an end to the occupation.

Slovenia has taken concrete measures against settlements, as well as against the war in Gaza. Our position on it has been clear. I repeat our call for an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire; the unconditional and dignified release of all hostages; and unhindered humanitarian assistance in Gaza in line with humanitarian principles.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am delighted, at the outset, to warmly welcome the new Permanent Representatives of the Republic of Korea and of the United States. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay much-deserved tribute to and congratulate the entire team of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea for its outstanding steering of the Council's work during the Korean presidency in September. Panama thanks Mr. Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing, the dark, grim content of which comes as no surprise. We also welcome the delegations of Israel and the Observer State of Palestine, which do us a great honour by being here.

Resolution 2334 (2016) reaffirms fundamental principles for achieving the desired peace in the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, the illegality of settlements and the urgency of reaching a political solution. Nine years after its adoption, we are seeing the exact opposite: the consolidation of faits accomplis on the ground and the expansion and aggravation of violence. The result is a conflict mired in the logic and option of war, which has only sown resentment that has reaped increasingly tragic extremism and violence. Gaza is today the starker proof of what happens when a political solution is postponed, and violence and extremism are normalized. The humanitarian catastrophe there is reaching unjustifiable proportions. That not only justifies but demands the permanent and unwavering attention of the Security Council.

In the past week, more than 350 Palestinians have lost their lives, and almost 1,500 have been injured. In total, more than 65,000 Palestinians have been killed in this Hamas-initiated war since the heinous attacks of 7 October 2023, which we once again strongly condemn. The famine that had been proven by United Nations agencies, prominent international media and social media networks has now been

confirmed by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification and has claimed 440 lives, including 147 children. The closure of the Zikim crossing, in the north of the Strip, on 12 September has reduced assistance by 50,000 meals a day — a tiny fraction in the face of overwhelming hunger. Meanwhile, UNICEF has warned that children are literally collapsing before our eyes. No military objective justifies turning food into a method of oppression and control.

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the situation also contradicts the spirit and mandate of resolution 2334 (2016). Since October 2023, almost 1,000 Palestinians have died, more than 3,500 structures have been destroyed, and more than 3,000 people have been displaced. New access restrictions isolate entire communities, while violence and vandalism, including the sabotage of water networks, seek to make the daily lives of thousands of people impossible. This reality does not build security — on the contrary, it undermines any possibility of peace. Panama reiterates that there is no military solution to this conflict. Decades of war and death have not produced, and neither will they produce, security let alone peace. To insist on the military path is to insist on failure.

The only way forward is a serious, comprehensive and sustained political process, based on international law and the resolutions of the Council, with verifiable guarantees for both sides, and one that, as a result of diplomatic negotiations, ensures that Israelis and Palestinians live in security and dignity, in two States, with mutually recognized and internationally agreed borders. In the immediate term, as urgent measures, we call for a permanent ceasefire, the dignified and unconditional release of all hostages and safe and unrestricted access for vital humanitarian aid throughout Gaza. In that regard, we reaffirm our full support for the participation of United Nations agencies, which have proven experience, legitimacy and capacity to deliver safe, impartial and effective assistance to the civilian population. Panama calls for an end to the violence and actions that do not provide a solution in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, that openly contradict international law and the resolutions of the Council and that only distance the possibility of a sustainable political solution.

To insist on the path of violence, force and extremes is to insist on pain. Every day without peace is one more day that weighs on our collective conscience. To choose the political path is to insist on the life, dignity and security of two peoples who deserve to live in peace and security. To renounce peace would be to renounce the dignity that unites us as humankind.

Mrs. Balta (Greece): This past week gave new impetus to our engagement on the situation in the Middle East, giving us reason to hope even as challenges persist. Co-chaired by the President of France and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution made global headlines, reaffirming the collective resolve of the international community for two States living side by side in peace and security. We welcomed the clear and unequivocal statement of the President of the Palestinian Authority condemning the terrorism of Hamas, and we were encouraged by the expressed Palestinian resolve to assure that Hamas will have no role in the governance of Gaza in the day after (see A/80/PV.8).

Against this backdrop, we believe the path charted by the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution must be explored and implemented thoroughly. Of course, challenges remain grave. Recent settlement expansion and settler violence in the West Bank, including against Christian communities, are cause for equally grave alarm and further impair the prospects for peace. They need to stop now. In particular, announcements on the construction of additional settlements in the E1 area are of

profound concern. Such plans, were they to be realized, would further undermine the prospect of a two-State solution.

The humanitarian situation remains grave in Gaza. Many world leaders have taken the floor to decry the profound humanitarian suffering, reminding us all that the world is watching. The civilian population in the Gaza Strip has endured unsustainable and deeply concerning conditions. Meanwhile, the expansion of military operations in Gaza City has led to further displacement, risking worsening an already dire humanitarian crisis. In particular, the plight of children underscores the urgent need to guarantee safe, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access at scale. As my Prime Minister has underlined, the most urgent priority now is to stop the unnecessary killing and ensure large-scale and sustainable delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza. Safe access to food, water, shelter, clothing and medicines must be guaranteed, while international humanitarian law must be respected. Initiatives such as the Jordanian air corridor and the Cyprus-led Amalthea maritime initiative should be further strengthened in this regard.

At the same time, hostages remain in the hands of Hamas. We have not forgotten them. We have not forgotten the atrocious 7 October 2023. We reiterate our call for their unconditional release. They must be freed without delay.

Despite this bleak reality, we are encouraged by recent and ongoing efforts to chart a path forward — one that would allow for the release of all hostages and the cessation of hostilities and ensure the long-term security, dignity and prosperity of the people of Gaza, who must stay in their land. We welcome the leadership and the initiative demonstrated by the President of the United States in the past week and look forward to the next steps. As a member of the Council and a long-standing partner of both Israelis and Palestinians, Greece stands ready to contribute actively to the collective work that lies ahead.

The members of the international community, despite all the nuances and all their differences, stood united last week, especially in calling for the hostages to be released and for the war to end. A new dawn for Israelis and Palestinians could be on the horizon, should there be the courage to reach for it. The two-State solution of both peoples living side-by-side in peace and security remains the only viable path forward. In the past week, the international community threw its full weight behind it; now is the time for it to be realized.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I would like to welcome you, Mr. President, to our United Nations family.

We thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov for his briefing. His account is a vivid description of how such a primordial resolution as resolution 2334 (2016) remains far from implemented and continues to be violated with impunity. It is therefore right for the Council to hold this periodic review in accordance with resolution 2334 (2016).

The Council meets at the close of the high-level week of the eightieth session of the General Assembly, during which an overwhelming number of world leaders stressed one overriding imperative: to end the war in Gaza and achieve a just and lasting peace in Palestine and the region. The message from the General Assembly was clear; it must also be heard clearly in the Chamber.

For over two years, the Council has been seized with the unbearable tragedy unfolding in Gaza and the rest of the Palestinian territory. Yet, with every passing day, the suffering deepens. As our Prime Minister said last week, “the plight of the Palestinian people is one of the most heart-wrenching tragedies of our times.” More than 66,000 Palestinians have been killed, the vast majority of them women and children. Gaza is being bombed from the sky, and its people are being starved on the

ground. Homes, schools and hospitals have been reduced to rubble. The expansion of military operations in Gaza City is a catastrophe unfolding before our eyes, which risks forcibly displacing nearly a million people who have no safe refuge left.

In the West Bank the picture is equally alarming. Systematic military operations, illegal settlements and forced displacement are extinguishing the very prospect of a two-State solution. The E1 settlement plan is a direct assault on the two-State framework, threatening to sever East Jerusalem from Palestinian areas and dismantle the contiguity of the West Bank. Such policies are not only unjust; they are also unlawful. They are violating international law and Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), which declared settlements illegal and demanded an immediate halt to them. Yet, instead of compliance, we see defiance and an acceleration of settlement activity, as we also heard in the briefing this morning. If the Council cannot enforce its own decisions, its credibility will be in jeopardy.

There are, nonetheless, glimmers of hope. Pakistan welcomes 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, and the recent recognition of the State of Palestine by several Member States. These are principled steps, representing positive momentum, which must be matched by substance. We value the initiative of President Donald Trump, who is working with eight Arab and Organization of Islamic Cooperation countries to advance peace through concrete measures. As a participant in this consultation process, Pakistan will engage closely and play a constructive role in promoting consensus. Our aim is to ensure that these efforts contribute meaningfully to alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian people and to achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace consistent with United Nations resolutions and international legitimacy, leading to Palestinian statehood. Ensuring full ownership for the Palestinians and the Palestinian Authority will be vital for any process.

We therefore call for the following measures: first, an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire to halt the carnage in Gaza; secondly, the lifting of the blockade and unimpeded humanitarian access, alongside the release of the hostages and Palestinian prisoners; thirdly, a categorical end to forced displacement and settlement activity, the upholding of the right of return of refugees under international law and a firm “no” to any designs for the annexation of either Gaza or the West Bank; fourthly, practical time-bound measures to ensure the full implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) and the preservation of the viability of the two-State solution; and fifthly, the urgent launch of a credible, irreversible political process leading to a sovereign, contiguous and viable State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The people of Palestine cannot wait. The cause of peace and the credibility of the Council depend on what we do in this moment. Pakistan will continue to stand with the people of Palestine and to work with Council members and other partners towards a just and lasting peace for all in the region.

Mr. Sahraoui (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing, which clearly and unequivocally depicted the tragic reality in the occupied Palestinian territory and revealed the Council’s inability to enforce resolution 2334 (2016), exposing the paralysis that grips the Council whenever it comes to enforcing its resolutions on the question of Palestine — to the extent that it is on the verge of losing the little that remains of its credibility.

In Gaza, the Palestinian wound is deepening, and with it, the pain and the tragedy under a barbaric occupation, in which the Palestinian people are not spared from any

method in the tyrant playbook — to the point that death is desired, instead of feared. People are dying inside as they witness the deaths of their children, parents, loved ones and everything that once symbolized life.

Death has become the companion of the living. Palestinians are living an endless death, but it is a death without dying. The horrific numbers on the suffering of the people of Gaza fill our reports, and those who deny them or question them are only complicit in this crime.

Suffice it to say that the occupation has turned Gaza into the worst place a person can live; the worst place in which children, women, elderly persons and the young can live; the worst place in which journalists, doctors and humanitarian workers can work. Gaza today, as a result of the Israeli machine of death and destruction, is the worst place to be born on this Earth.

Despite this, the people of Gaza remain loyal to their land. They remain attached to their soil. They confront oppression with determination because this is Gaza, a city that is unlike others. It is a land that speaks a language that will never be grasped or understood by the occupier.

As for the Council, which has been tasked with the maintenance of international peace and security, it meets over and over again to discuss the situation in occupied Palestine without ever being able to take a firm decision and leave behind a shame that has been multiplied, the shame of its inability to put an end to the genocide, the shame of its inability to impose a ceasefire, the shame of its inability to ensure the entry of humanitarian aid and the shame of its inability to enforce respect for international law.

When will the Council shoulder its responsibilities and rise to the level of the trust that has been placed in it? When will the Council respond to the voices of the millions of people that fill the streets, calling for an end to the tragedy of Gaza?

Because the West Bank and Gaza are both in the same Palestinian body, the West Bank is being punished, because it reminds people of those who own the rights and of those who own the land. They are forced to drink from the same bitter chalice of the occupation as it seeks to achieve its greater scheme, which is to bury the Palestinian national project. The rate of annexation in the West Bank has reached unprecedented levels and settlement activity is ravaging the West Bank. It is dismembering it and isolating Jerusalem from its natural Palestinian surroundings. The terrorism of the settlers, who enjoy the protection and cover of the occupation authorities, has reached dangerous levels. The holy Al-Aqsa Mosque is being periodically desecrated by the settlers and the occupation officials boast every day that there will never be a Palestinian State. They breathlessly chase the mirage and illusion of a greater Israel in a blatant violation of international law and the resolutions adopted by the Council.

How much longer? How much longer will the actions of the occupation on the ground be met with statements? How much longer will its violations be ignored? How much longer will international law remain empty words when we speak of the Israeli occupier, or have some people grown used to this miserable reality and learned to co-exist with it?

We have a duty, not a labour of charity, especially here at the Council, to move to enable Palestinians to exercise their natural and legal right in their land to establish their State. We must do this before we have no people left to establish the State of Palestine, because of extermination and forced displacement. We must do this before no land remains upon which to establish Palestine, because of annexation and settlement.

The dynamic that the question of Palestine has witnessed recently, with the successive recognitions of the State and the initiatives calling for a just and lasting

peace, will always remain incomplete as long as things do not move from words to action and as long as they do not move from asking to enforcing, and from persuasion to punishment.

Algeria looks upon the ongoing negotiations with cautious optimism, and we hope that they will lead to a positive result that will put an end to the suffering in Gaza, the suffering in Palestine, and will put an end to the aggression. We stress that the international community must guarantee the implementation of any outcome so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past and so that we do not find ourselves, once again, facing obligations that are not fulfilled and agreements that are violated by the Israeli occupier.

Algeria stresses that any agreement, for it to be feasible, must have as its starting point and its objective an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. The truth is clear. We cannot coexist with occupation. Peoples do not forget their rights no matter how much time passes.

The solution is clear and can withstand no further delay: the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. This was the solution that was agreed upon by the international community decades ago, and the time has come to implement it. This is the only path to peace in Palestine, and this is the key to stability in the Middle East.

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

I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his briefing.

We still remember the horror that shocked the whole world on 7 October 2023. A peaceful Saturday morning in southern Israel was marked by one of the most horrendous terrorist attacks in modern history. The Republic of Korea reiterates its condemnation of the attacks by Hamas against Israel.

Israel has the right to protect itself and its citizens. However, this right must be exercised in accordance with international humanitarian law, including principles of proportionality, distinction and precaution. Civilians, notably including children, aid workers, journalists and medical personnel, must all be protected. The Republic of Korea remains deeply concerned that, for the last two years, these fundamental principles have not been adequately observed in this war and urges parties to this conflict to strictly abide by their obligations under international law.

We are dismayed by the ongoing expansion of Israel's ground operations in Gaza City and repeated evacuation orders. We are particularly concerned by the repetitive strikes against hospitals in Gaza.

Earlier this month, by participating as co-penholders and voting in favour of the draft resolution (S/2025/583) of the 10 elected members of the Council on the humanitarian situation in Gaza (see S/PV.10000), the Republic of Korea called, together with the vast majority of the international community, for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages and an urgent surge of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Despite this initiative failing, we still remain hopeful that the negotiations can come closer to securing a ceasefire and the release of hostages, through the selfless mediation efforts by the United States, Qatar and Egypt. We call on all parties to prioritize the immense suffering of both Palestinian civilians and Israeli hostages in Gaza and to faithfully engage with the mediators.

Turning to the worsening situation in the West Bank, the Republic of Korea reiterates its position, as affirmed in resolution 2334 (2016), that the establishment of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law.

We are also alarmed by the repetitive rhetoric of Israel's senior officials, clearly rejecting the guiding vision of the two-State Solution, the common aspiration shared by both the countries of the region and the wider international community. The Republic of Korea reiterates its firm support for the two-State Solution as the only viable path for a genuine peace and security in the region.

We note the remarks on behalf of the Palestinian Authority (PA), delivered last week at the General Assembly, reaffirming its commitment to the two-State solution and to living side by side in peace with its neighbour.

We call on Israel to do the same. We therefore urge Israel, as provided in resolution 2334 (2016), to cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory and to turn instead to peace and coexistence. We support a revitalized and reformed Palestinian Authority as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, both in the West Bank and Gaza. We call for lifting all measures hampering the economic viability of the PA, including the withholding of clearance revenues.

Resolution 2334 (2016), adopted nine years ago, remains a true cornerstone document encompassing all the key principles of dignified coexistence based on the two-State solution. We hope that neighbours in the Middle East will recommit to peace, stability and coexistence. Ending the war in Gaza will certainly serve as a meaningful step towards achieving that goal.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Ms. Wu (United States of America): Several colleagues made reference to a purported genocide. The United States notes that these allegations are categorically false and baseless, and fuel antisemitic hate and violence around the world. Even more disturbingly, one Member State today made an allusion to the Holocaust.

The United States underscores the offensive nature of these comments, which distort history and are a disgrace to all those who perished in the Holocaust and to all the victims of Hamas's 7 October 2023 attack, which was the worst massacre of Jews since the horrors of the Holocaust.

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

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I want to welcome you, Mr. President, to the United Nations, and I extend to you and your delegation my commitment and that of my delegation to continue the close cooperation between our two sides — as we say in Arabic, *ahlan wasahlan* — welcome.

I also want to express our gratitude for the briefing of Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator, for reporting on the most recent quarterly report of the Secretary-General, pursuant to resolution 2334 (2016). Of course, that resolution is related to the illegality of settlement activities by the occupying Power in the occupied land of the State of Palestine, and we are grateful to the Secretary-General for continuing his reporting on a quarterly basis, as required pursuant to the resolution.

Palestine will not disappear. But every day, children, women, men and entire families disappear. Communities are uprooted; neighbourhoods are turned to dust; lives are shattered; land is grabbed; homes are demolished. This is the dark reality of life in Palestine under Israel's illegal occupation. We have a collective duty to bring this suffering to an end and to do so in a way that leads to an end of the occupation and conflict once and for all so that our people never experience such pain and loss again and all peoples can live in peace and security.

We have been confronted as a nation with the denial of our rights, with an attempt that continues to this day to push us out of geography and history — to deny our existence, our belonging to the land, our rights as human beings and as a people.

All peoples are endowed with certain rights, known as inalienable rights, and our people are not less worthy or less entitled to them. The Palestinian people have a right to life, liberty, security and dignity. The reality our people continue to endure is one of death and devastation, dispossession and colonization, despair and displacement. But this reality is man-made, occupation-made. It is neither their fate nor a fatality; it can be unmade. We hope, pray and work relentlessly for an end of the genocide today. That is the most sacred goal given the horrors every day brings upon 2 million people. But tomorrow matters as well. And what we need is not a pause in the violence and injustice but an end to it.

Violence is an impasse. It must not be fuelled or tolerated. It must be stopped. And we will not relent in our rejection of violence against Palestinian and Israeli civilians. This is a legal, political and moral principle that we will not abandon. Likewise, injustice must never be justified or shielded by anyone under any circumstances. It must be brought to an end.

Palestine is committed to peace. We are the ones who need it most amid these unimaginable horrors. And peace needs to be a shared objective if it is to become a shared reality. We are translating that commitment to peace in our actions every day. In the face of unhinged Israeli militarism, Palestine has chosen pacifism. Our part of the world does not need more death and destruction; it needs peace. Freedom will lead to peace, and peace will lead to shared security and prosperity. This is the path we must embark on.

Had resolution 2334 (2016) been implemented, had the International Court of Justice advisory opinion on the illegality of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip been upheld, peace would be a reality today.

Over the course of the past week, the entire world rallied around clear objectives. It was a high-level week focused mainly on Palestine. We thank the great majority of the United Nations membership for making it so. We thank them all. They made history last week. From countries that recognized the State of Palestine to those that adopted measures to end the war and occupation to those that pledged their political and financial and humanitarian support to those that pledged protection to end the famine and stop the massacres to the countries that gathered at the international peace conference co-chaired by Saudi Arabia and France and endorsed the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and took part in the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, the world mobilized for an end to the war on the Palestinian people, for an independent and sovereign Palestinian State and for the two-State solution. This initial part has been accomplished, and I thank all of them.

Now, we roll up our sleeves and get ready for what needs to be done. We have a historic document, the New York Declaration, and we have a leadership structure, led by Saudi Arabia and France and 17 other important countries from all of the continents, from the Arab nations, from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, from Africa, from Asia, from Europe and from North and South America. We have the structure. We have the road map. We need the full implementation. And we have the 142 countries that endorsed it. We need to make all of it in its entirety a reality, because it addresses all the sensitive issues that are important to all of us and to the two parties. Therefore, the time for and the new journey of implementation is just beginning.

The world mobilized for peace. President Trump assembled leaders from the region to push for an end to the war and to advance peace, to stop the bloodshed, to release the hostages and prisoners, to end the famine and to bring peace. President Trump also expressed a clear rejection of annexation, which we welcome.

We reiterate Palestine's readiness to work with President Trump and the United States Administration, with Saudi Arabia and regional actors, with the European partners and the members of the Security Council, and with the entire international community. We do not want to leave anyone behind who can contribute in a positive way to the accomplishment of the two-State solution, in the pursuit of these objectives — the independence of the State of Palestine, the realization of the rights of our people and just and lasting peace in our region, working together for shared peace, shared security and shared prosperity.

The decisions we make today will determine the fate of the peoples of the region for generations to come and the face of the Middle East for decades. Let us not delay a single minute more in doing what is necessary for this just peace to replace the unbearable reality of today.

We owe peace to those who have endured in their flesh the scourge of war. Let us not fail those whom we can still save.

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

Mr. Danon (Israel): First, I wish to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. President, and Ambassador Waltz and to convey my best wishes for your success. I would like to thank Deputy Special Coordinator Mr. Alakbarov for his briefing.

We have just come through a week of speeches, theatre and spectacle. Now it is time to step away from the stage and face reality.

Prime Minister Netanyahu is meeting with President Trump as we speak in order to discuss regional issues with a clear mission to bring our hostages home and make sure that Hamas can never again threaten Israel or exploit the people of Gaza.

Despite threats from Hamas, more than 80 per cent of Gaza City's population has moved south while our forces continue to dismantle terrorist strongholds. Humanitarian aid efforts continue with the support of different agencies and non-governmental organizations. The Al-Mawasi area can accommodate those coming from the north, and on average 250 to 300 aid trucks are unloaded in Gaza each day.

I ask Council members to picture this: men sit in the dark, machinery hums, sparks fly, steel pipes are cut, and pieces are fitted together. They are not making furniture. They are not building machines. They are not shaping tools. They are building rockets — weapons aimed at families, schools and cities; dozens of parts, two already assembled, pointing towards an Israeli town, explosives ready to be packed. Imagine that our forces move in just in time, seizing the site and dismantling the rockets just minutes before they could be fired. Do Council members know where this happened? Do they know when? Was it in Gaza, in Yemen or in Lebanon? No, it was not in Gaza, Yemen or Lebanon. It happened in Judea and Samaria, just last week, in a village near Ramallah. Only days later, another rocket was found near Tulkarm, another city in Judea and Samaria. It was so unstable that bomb disposal teams had to neutralize it.

Let me paint a clearer picture. That first workshop was only 12 and a half miles from Jerusalem. That is approximately the same distance as from the Eiffel Tower to the Palace of Versailles. The rocket near Tulkarm was only approximately 15 miles from the city of Netanya on Israel's coast, a similar distance to that between central London and Heathrow Airport. These are not far-off threats. They are weapons

built within minutes of Israeli towns and cities, hidden workshops of death right on our doorstep.

The same methods began in Gaza 20 years ago. It started exactly like that: small workshops turned out rockets, and many chose to look away. But we know what happened: those rockets multiplied into thousands, raining down on Israeli towns for years. We have learned the cost of failing to eradicate terror immediately at its source. That same danger now grows in Judea and Samaria, with workshops preparing rockets and weapons just miles from our cities.

Council members can bury their heads in the sand, or they can confront it. Israel does not have the luxury of ignoring it. We will confront terror.

Those who turned a blind eye to Gaza two decades ago now see the results. We will not repeat that mistake in Judea and Samaria, neither should the Council.

The terror threat in Judea and Samaria is real and imminent. These terror networks put Israeli lives directly at risk. Yet just last week, President Macron, in an interview on CBS, claimed: “There is no Hamas in the West Bank.” He had better check again. Earlier this month Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack at a crowded bus stop in Jerusalem where two Hamas terrorists murdered six innocent Israelis. In June, our forces uncovered two major Hamas infrastructure in Hebron and Bethlehem. Under Operation Iron Wall, we seized 600 weapons. We destroyed 15 observation posts and 20 weapon workshops. And we arrested 70 Hamas terrorists in the Hebron region alone. In November 2024, Israeli forces stopped an Iranian shipment of rockets, bombs, rifles and launchers headed for terrorists in Janin. Yes, Iran is there too in Judea and Samaria — arming, funding and coordinating terror. These are the facts. To those who question whether there is Hamas terrorist activity in the West Bank that threatens our security, the answer is yes.

Last week, during the General Assembly week, there was no shortage of speeches and declarations. Some actors in the Middle East posed as peace brokers, while at the same time arming, training and funding terrorists. Their hands are not clean. They fuel instability, not peace.

In our tradition, the rabbis in the Midrash and in Tehillim, psalm 11, they tell a story about a man, thousands of years ago, who sets fire to a field, then rushes forward with water, pretending to be a saviour. That is what we see today — those who light a match then step onto the stage to present themselves as peacemakers. It is exactly the same — hypocrisy, dressed as virtue. And what feeds that fire? It is the absence of leadership.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) has not governed; it has not led. The Palestinian Authority has filled textbooks with hatred, glorified violence in public squares and incentivized terror through its pay-to-slay policy. Let me be clear about what this policy means. The Council has heard the phrase “pay to slay” a lot. What does it mean exactly? For more than a decade, the Palestinian Authority has paid monthly stipends, not only to terrorists in prison, but also to their families and to the families of suicide bombers. The rule is simple: the more deadly the attack, the higher the payment. And yes, even the terrorists who carried out the 7 October 2023 massacre are eligible for payments. This is not social welfare; it is blood money. It rewards murder; it sustains terror. And it is not small. It is not one case or one incident; it is a policy. This policy consumes about 8 per cent of the Palestinian Authority’s entire budget. It amounts to more than \$300 million every year.

To put that into perspective, the same proportion in Russia would amount to over \$30 billion a year. In South Korea, it would amount to \$40 billion, and to more than half a trillion dollars in the United States. This is inconceivable. It is indefensible. One cannot imagine or comprehend spending hundreds of millions of dollars on this

policy. This money should have gone to schools and hospitals. Instead, it goes to salaries for killers.

Last week, in his message to the General Assembly, President Abbas claimed that this policy has been “reformed”. But this is the PA’s pattern — promise after promise after promise never delivered. In practice, nothing has changed. What is worse, speaking in Arabic to his own people, President Abbas promised exactly the opposite. He promised them nothing will change. In his own words, spoken recently in Arabic at a meeting of the Fatah Revolutionary Council, he said,

“Even if we have only one penny left, it is for the prisoners and martyrs. They must receive everything as it was in the past, and they are more precious than all of us.”

I therefore ask, who is the real Abbas? Is he the one who speaks to the Council and the General Assembly about reforms, or the one who tells his people in Arabic that every last penny will go to terrorists and their families? Enough with the lies. Stop the payments, not with words, but with actions. What is needed is real leadership — one that does not avoid elections for almost two decades; one that serves its people, not itself; one brave enough to confront extremists; one with moral clarity to end corruption and incitement; one responsible enough to stop paying salaries to killers.

While we take decisive action in Judea and Samaria to remove these threats, our operations in Gaza continue with the same determination to bring our hostages home. Israel fights on multiple fronts but with a clear purpose. Our objectives are not complicated — to bring the hostages home and to eradicate Hamas. But peace will not come through speeches or declarations. It will come only through courage, accountability and the will to end terror at its core. The Council faces a choice: it can look away or it can confront reality. Israel had already chosen. We will face reality; we will confront terror; we will secure our future.

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

I now give him the floor.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I think it is becoming crystal clear that almost the entire international community is moving in the direction of peace and putting an end to this tragedy in Gaza. The Israeli leadership — not the representative in the Chamber but his boss — stated it clearly, setting the stage for moving the war to the West Bank, as if what we needed was more wars. They are not satisfied with all of the killings and the destruction in Gaza. Under all the claims that they made, now they are making crystal clear plans for phase two, or chapter two, of the same thing — of erasing the Palestinian people, the nation. They say it very clearly under the banner, “no to the two-State solution that enjoys global consensus and no to the Palestinian State”. This statement here and the one in the General Assembly on Friday is the beginning of having more wars. They are setting the stage to go to chapter two if the ceasefire is forced on them by all of us, which might be the case in a few days. All of us need to prevail by giving peace a chance. We do not need to see the repetition in the West Bank of what happened against our people in the Gaza Strip. When will the Israeli leaders show leadership and move in the direction for peace? And does the Council know the reason why his boss does not want peace? It is because the moment there is a ceasefire and a beginning of peace in Israel, we know what will happen to the Prime Minister, who is an international criminal, wanted by the International Criminal Court. The question for us, therefore, is — should we give peace a chance, start the healing of all of these wounds and provide political hope and a political horizon for the Palestinian people, the Israeli people and all the peoples in the Middle East? Or should we continue in this perpetual war forever?

We have chosen peace. The international community has chosen peace. There is a party that is beating the drums to move in the direction of the West Bank, and we should succeed in not allowing them to do so.

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

Mr. Danon (Israel): As I said at the beginning of my speech, Prime Minister Netanyahu is meeting as we speak with President Trump to discuss a ceasefire, and the negotiators are involved in those negotiations. But I have not gotten an answer from Mr. Mansour. Will he stop the payments to terrorists who committed horrible crimes? Will he put an end to that policy? He can say no, or he can say yes.

He referred to our activities in Judea and Samaria, and he is absolutely right. If the Palestinian Authority will not face the extremist forces in Judea and Samaria, we will have to go in and deal with the terrorists. Look at what happened in Gaza. We left Gaza completely in 2005, 20 years ago. We gave the Palestinian Authority the keys. We told the Palestinian Authority it would rule Gaza. The Palestinian Authority got the opportunity, but it was not able to confront the extremists. Hamas took over, and then we had no choice, after 7 October 2023, but to go in. And if the same thing were to happen in Judea and Samaria and the Palestinian Authority was not able to confront the radicals in Janin and Tulkarm, and it allowed them to take over, does Mr. Mansour think we would sit idly by and wait for rockets to fly into Israel or for Hamas to invade Israel from Judea and Samaria? No, we would not.

The Palestinian Authority has to face the radical forces. And the fact that Mr. Mansour is not able to provide an answer about the payment, about the 8 per cent, a number which I introduced to the Council, is worrying all of us. The Palestinian Authority should confront the radicals and take responsibility.

We have no desire to be in Gaza. I have said that many times. We have no desire to go into Janin and fight Hamas in the camps in Janin. But it is the Palestinian Authority's responsibility. When any nation has terror activity, that nation deals with it and confronts it. But if the Palestinian Authority is not capable of doing so, then the responsibility will be on our shoulders.

The President: The Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor. This will be the last statement.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I have only one question. The whole world is saying we want a two-State solution, which requires the end of the occupation and the independence of the State of Palestine. Is the representative of the State of Israel ready to accept this global consensus or not? Let him share with us the position of his Government instead of focusing on so many small details here and there and avoiding the biggest question.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.