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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Mohamed Yusuf	(Somalia)
<i>Members:</i>	Bahrain	Mr. Alkhalifa
	China	Mr. Zheng Minghao
	Colombia	Mrs. Ríos Serna
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mr. Mupepe Matomene
	Denmark	Ms. Ibrahim
	France	Mrs. Messant
	Greece.....	Mr. Zves
	Latvia.....	Ms. Berzina
	Liberia	Ms. Wisner
	Pakistan.....	Mr. Malik
	Panama	Mr. Salerno Vega
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dergachev
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.....	Mr. Clark
	United States of America.....	Ms. Postel

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. The flashing lights on the microphone will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Kössler (Austria): Recent developments, such as the ceasefire, the release of all hostages, the return of the remains of the final deceased hostage this week, renewed dignity through the delivery of desperately needed humanitarian assistance and the establishment of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, were important first steps to halt the immense suffering of the Palestinian population and to embark on the long and arduous road of recovery and reconstruction for all sides. However, obstacles on this path still remain. We call upon Israel to allow international non-governmental organizations to operate and deliver life-saving aid to civilians in need in Palestine.

The Council's resolution 2803 (2025) is a critical pillar of the efforts to stabilize Gaza. We commend the United States and all partners from the region, particularly the group of eight Arab and Islamic countries, for their leadership. Going forward, all measures aimed at the stabilization and reconstruction of Gaza must be taken in full compliance with this resolution, the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Gaza is and remains Palestinian and must be reunited with the West Bank and East Jerusalem under a single, legitimate Palestinian administration.

In this context, Austria welcomes the initiation of phase two of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and the nomination of members of the Palestinian technocratic Government and the Executive Board under resolution 2803 (2025). Palestinians must be in the lead in building a functioning administration in Gaza. At the same time, it is very clear that after the horrific attacks of 7 October 2023, Hamas must not have any place in Gaza's future governance. It must disarm and relinquish control once and for all.

The reconstruction of Gaza will require massive and concerted efforts from many partners. Austria, like many others, stands ready to contribute. Just last week, our Foreign Minister, Beate Meisl-Reisinger, hosted a round-table discussion with Austrian enterprises to explore avenues for reconstruction efforts in Gaza and Syria. These efforts are in addition to our humanitarian support of more than €83 million since 7 October 2023.

But let me be clear: humanitarian aid and reconstruction alone cannot substitute for a political horizon. In the long run, the only sustainable objective is a negotiated two-State solution in which two independent States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace and security. The New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution — drafted by France and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and endorsed by the General Assembly with more than 140 votes, including ours — provides an important framework for advancing this vision.

Unilateral actions that undermine this perspective, including the continued expansion of settlements in the West Bank and the withholding of tax revenues, are violations of international law, and such actions must stop immediately. We therefore condemn the recent legislation on annexation and support further European Union sanctions against radical settlers.

Finally, allow me to reiterate Austria's continued support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as a

stabilizing factor in the region, not least through the delivery of education and health services. Austria will continue to support UNRWA and calls on the Agency to continue its path for reforms in line with the recommendations of the Independent Review of Mechanisms and Procedures to Ensure Adherence by UNRWA to the Humanitarian Principle of Neutrality. It is on this basis that Austria supported the mandate renewal of UNRWA by the General Assembly last December (see General Assembly resolution 80/77). Austria also welcomes the 22 October 2025 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which reconfirmed Israel's obligations vis-à-vis UNRWA and the United Nations more broadly. In this context, the recent demolition of UNRWA's headquarters in East Jerusalem constitutes a stark violation of these obligations.

Austria's commitment to international law, human dignity and the United Nations as the unique legitimate universal forum to advance peace and security is unwavering — in Gaza, the Middle East and beyond.

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

Mr. Beutin (Germany): First of all, the return of the body of Ran Gvili, the last remaining deceased hostage, to Israel is a huge relief, and we hope that his family can now find some closure.

We must now continue to work towards a durable peace in Gaza and the region, and I would like to make four points on the way ahead.

First, Germany welcomes the start of the second phase of the Gaza peace plan and the establishment of the transitional authorities for Gaza. We look forward to continuing our close cooperation with the United States and all other partners to implement the 20-point plan, in accordance with resolution 2803 (2025) and in line with humanitarian principles and international law.

Secondly, despite improvements over the past months, the humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire. A further substantial increase in humanitarian assistance is urgently needed. Humanitarian access into Gaza must be unhindered, with the United Nations and its agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), playing a central role, in accordance with their mandate. In this regard, we stress the continued and paramount importance of urgent UNRWA reforms. The demolition of the UNRWA headquarters in East Jerusalem constitutes an unacceptable violation of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. At the same time, phase two must go beyond humanitarian relief. The easing of restrictions on dual-use items, which are urgently needed for early recovery, is paramount, and the rehabilitation of infrastructure must start now without delay. We welcome the announced opening of the Rafah crossing point in both directions, and further steps must follow to increase movement and access from and into Gaza.

With more than \$400 million in humanitarian assistance since October 2023, Germany is one of the largest humanitarian donors to the Palestinian people. We are also willing to make a significant contribution towards the stabilization and reconstruction of Gaza, as soon as circumstances permit.

Thirdly, Hamas must disarm now and allow for a peaceful transition, with the Palestinian Authority ultimately assuming control over Gaza. Germany is ready to cooperate with the transitional authorities and will actively support efforts to establish security and political stability. We have deployed personnel to the Civil-Military Coordination Centre, and we will continue to contribute to the training of Palestinian security forces through bilateral initiatives and through the European Union.

Fourthly, lasting peace in Gaza and beyond requires a long-term political horizon and vision. This can only be achieved through a negotiated two-State solution that ensures security for Israel and realizes Palestinian self-determination. A strong and reformed Palestinian Authority (PA) is essential, and Germany is the largest bilateral donor to the PA, with commitments exceeding \$1 billion. Germany will continue to support the PA, including its reform process. Germany stands ready to work with the international community so that we, together, to seize the current momentum to improve the lives of the people in Gaza and to create the conditions for lasting peace, security and stability for Israelis and for Palestinians.

Finally, I would like to underline that the Security Council and the United Nations remain the central platform for peace and that international law provides the indispensable framework for achieving peace and security.

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

Mr. Arafat (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I congratulate you, Mr. President, on presiding over the Council this month, and I thank you for organizing this timely discussion. I take this opportunity to welcome Their Excellencies the Ministers from Liberia and Greece and to thank the five non-permanent members whose terms have ended. I welcome the five new members, wishing them every success, and I look forward to working with them in a spirit of constructive cooperation.

Lebanon continues to make every effort to implement the Government's firm decision to extend State authority over all its territory and ensure that it has exclusive control over weapons, including in Palestinian camps, in accordance with the Taif Agreement, resolution 1701 (2006) and the cessation of hostilities declaration. It continues to fulfil its national and international commitments, affirms its determination to continue with the desired reforms and seeks to strengthen the deployment of the Lebanese Army throughout the country. As is well known, the Army's plan to confiscate weapons has entered an advanced stage, after the objectives of the first phase were effectively and tangibly achieved on the ground. The Lebanese Army now controls the south of the Litani River operationally, expanding its presence and securing vital areas, with the exception of the territories and sites still occupied by Israel.

In this context, we look forward to the conference in support of the Lebanese Army and security forces in Paris on 5 March, as it represents a key milestone in strengthening the capabilities of the Army and military institutions. We once again thank France for hosting the conference and the members of the Quintet — namely the United States of America, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and, of course, France — for their continued support.

Lebanon has chosen the path of negotiation and continues to engage in the coordination mechanism. In contrast, Israel continues its policy of systematic aggression by launching air strikes on populated Lebanese villages, directly targeting civilians. This behaviour by Israel clearly demonstrates its refusal to abide by all its legal obligations. Its continued occupation and ongoing attacks and violations have not served and will not serve its own security or establish regional peace and security. The Lebanese State reaffirms its full commitment to its sovereignty and territorial integrity and holds Israel fully responsible for the consequences of these attacks. Lebanon calls on the international community, particularly the sponsors of the ceasefire agreement, to shoulder their responsibilities and take effective measures to stop these violations, ensure Israel's immediate and complete withdrawal from all occupied Lebanese territory and release all Lebanese prisoners in its custody.

During his visit to Lebanon earlier this month, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix affirmed that cooperation between the

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the Lebanese Army is close and excellent. In this regard, Lebanon looks forward to hearing the options that the Secretary-General will present for the post-UNIFIL phase, while stressing the importance of maintaining an international force under United Nations auspices, which will contribute to filling any potential vacuum and enhancing stability in the south and the region.

Lebanon continues to engage with Syria in a constructive and positive manner, based on mutual respect for sovereignty and independence and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. Lebanon renews its commitment to establishing the best possible relations with Syria.

The Lebanese Government's decisions regarding political, economic and social reforms, the exclusivity of arms, and the provision of a decent and secure life for all its citizens are firm and irreversible. Today Lebanon is more determined than ever to move forward on this path of sovereignty and reform. It will not accept any provocation or any slide into conflict, either on its own soil or from its soil against others.

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

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, and we thank the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process for his briefing.

We align ourselves with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the Islamic Group and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Today we are meeting against the backdrop of the ongoing efforts to implement the ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip. The agreement was reached on the basis of United States President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, as a continuation of joint mediation efforts that continued for two years despite the difficulties, and was approved following the efforts of the State of Qatar, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the United States of America and the Republic of Türkiye.

The start of phase two of the agreement was recently announced. The State of Qatar hopes that it will contribute to stabilizing the truce and addressing the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Strip.

Along with the other eight Arab and Islamic countries that participated in the multi-party summit with the United States President, the State of Qatar announced that it was joining the Board of Peace, affirming its support for the implementation of the Board's mission as a transitional body, as set out in the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and approved by resolution 2803 (2025). The aim is to establish a permanent ceasefire, rebuild and push for a just and lasting peace based on upholding the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and establishing their State in accordance with international law.

The State of Qatar also welcomed, together with the mediators — the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Republic of Türkiye — the formation of the Palestinian technocratic committee to govern in the Gaza Strip and hopes that this will pave the way for the implementation of the second phase, in accordance with President Trump's Plan. The State of Qatar is, through its representative on the Gaza executive council, continuing to contribute to establishing good governance and reconstruction in the Gaza Strip. The State of Qatar has also continued its humanitarian efforts, including sending shipments of food, medicine and shelter materials and supporting the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip through the work of the Qatari committee for the reconstruction of Gaza.

The State of Qatar stresses that the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) must ensure a comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire, the unfettered delivery of adequate humanitarian assistance, the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, Israel's full withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the non-displacement of the brotherly Palestinian people. There is also an urgent need to accelerate early recovery efforts and to lift all restrictions on the distribution of basic necessities and materials and the opening of the Rafah crossing, as per the Comprehensive Plan. While there is no alternative to the effective implementation of the agreement, the State of Qatar strongly condemns the Israeli occupation's aggression against the Gaza Strip, considers it a dangerous escalation and stresses the need for concerted regional and international efforts to preserve and adhere to the agreement.

Regarding the Syrian Arab Republic, the State of Qatar welcomes the ceasefire agreement and the full integration between the Syrian Government and the Syrian Democratic Forces as an important step towards consolidating civil peace, strengthening security and stability and building a State of institutions and law. The State of Qatar commends the efforts of the United States in this regard, welcomes the lifting of sanctions under the Caesar Act and condemns the Israeli attacks that violate Syrian sovereignty. The State of Qatar also renews its position in support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the brotherly Lebanese Republic and condemns the Israeli raid on the Ein El Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp, which represents an attack on the defenceless Palestinian people and a violation of Lebanese sovereignty and international law.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar will continue its efforts with international partners to consolidate security and stability in the region and will continue its commitment to support the brotherly Palestinian people so that they can achieve all their legitimate rights, foremost among which is their right to self-determination, an end to the occupation, the cessation of settlement activities and the establishment of their independent, fully sovereign and viable State on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the principle of the two-State solution.

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

Mr. Moustafa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Arab Republic of Egypt congratulates the sisterly Federal Republic of Somalia on the efforts of its delegation in presiding over the Security Council for this month.

Egypt stresses that the current stage in the Middle East requires the intensification of international and regional efforts to move from crisis management and containment approaches to comprehensive and sustainable settlement tracks, built on solid foundations that address the roots of conflicts in a fair and practical manner and put an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

In the light of the aforementioned, Egypt hosted the Sharm el-Sheikh peace summit in October 2025, which represented a decisive step towards turning the page on a painful war with no winners. The summit ushered in a new chapter embodying the collective will of the international community to achieve a just peace and sustainable stability in the Middle East, while rejecting any ideas that would displace Palestinians from their lands or divide or separate the Gaza Strip from the West Bank. Israel should withdraw from the Gaza Strip, in implementation of the second phase of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. In this context, we reiterate our sincere appreciation for the efforts of the United States of America, under President Trump's leadership, to end the war in Gaza, and we call for continued active American engagement in the implementation of the phases of

President Trump's peace plan in Gaza. We also appreciate the role of partners and all supporting parties in the implementation of the agreement to end the war.

Egypt stresses the imperative of a sincere commitment to implementing what was agreed at the Sharm el-Sheikh peace summit and in resolution 2803 (2025). We call on all parties to fulfil their commitments to the ceasefire arrangements, facilitate safe and full access to humanitarian assistance and intensify efforts to launch early recovery efforts and the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, not only for physical reconstruction but also the restoration of the elements necessary for normal life, including basic services, community infrastructure, support for decent livelihoods and enabling the people to remain in their lands to achieve stability for all efforts aimed at the realization of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, most notably their right to self-determination, an end to the occupation and the establishment of their independent State along the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

This is the guarantee of achieving a just and lasting peace for all countries and peoples of the region, in a way that provides a new reality conducive to coexistence, which is consistent with the positive outcomes of the New York High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. In this regard, we express Egypt's satisfaction with the growing international momentum in support of recognizing the State of Palestine, and we call for the expansion of this recognition and for Palestine to obtain full membership in the United Nations.

Egypt stresses the importance of considering resolution 2803 (2025) and other Council and General Assembly resolutions related to the question of Palestine, in particular resolution 2334 (2016), as a single integrated frame of reference to deal with the Palestinian question and the rights and legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to establish a sovereign State, along the lines of 4 June 1967.

The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories remains grave, owing to Israel's persistent violation of international law and humanitarian law and Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 2334 (2016). From this Chamber, Egypt condemns all Israeli practices related to the continuation of settlement expansion, the escalation of settler violence and military incursions, home demolitions, threats of or forced displacement of Palestinian civilians from their lands and the deliberate harassment of humanitarian organizations and civil society, in particular the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which is the lifeblood and hope of millions of Palestinians. We therefore call on Israel to immediately cease all these systematic attacks against the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Israel must fulfil its international obligations, facilitate safe and sustainable access to humanitarian assistance, cease politicizing relief work or using as a tool of pressure, respect the mandate, privileges and immunities of UNRWA and ensure the Agency's ability to carry out its tasks.

In conclusion, the achievement of comprehensive peace in the region requires the complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan and the implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions. Egypt condemns Israel's repeated attacks and violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and its ongoing violations of the cessation of hostilities in the sisterly Lebanese Republic, including the occupation of border positions and the establishment of buffer zones within Lebanese territories, in flagrant violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Egypt renews its full support for Syria and Lebanon in safeguarding their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Egypt reaffirms that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved by imposing a *fait accompli*. Instead, it requires the real roots of the conflict to be addressed. First and foremost, it is necessary to end the occupation, abide by international law and comply with United Nations resolutions. Egypt will, on the basis of its responsibilities and regional role, continue to support the cause of peace and bring its resources, expertise and political and demographic weight to bear in working with regional and international partners to build a more peaceful and stable future for all the peoples of the Middle East.

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

Mr. Hoehne (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): A just and lasting peace in the Middle East — that is our shared goal. Switzerland remains convinced that the realization of the two-State solution in accordance with international law is the only way to achieve that objective. We call for respect for international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025), the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and all the relevant resolutions of the Council. In support of the implementation of the Gaza peace plan in accordance with international law, Switzerland recently allotted 23 million Swiss francs for alleviating humanitarian needs, shoring up Palestinian institutions and fostering dialogue.

We welcome the progress accomplished, including the announcement of the transition to phase two of the Gaza peace plan. The return of the remains of the last hostage is an important step. That said, significant challenges remain. We deplore the violations of the ceasefire and urge scrupulous adherence to it. Duties under international humanitarian law continue to apply, irrespective of the ceasefire. Switzerland underscores the duty incumbent upon all parties — to authorize and facilitate safe, swift and unimpeded humanitarian access to all those in need. Such access is central to the peace plan. We call for its effective implementation, including through the unconditional and full opening of all crossing points, including Rafah.

We call on Israel to assume its obligations as an occupying Power, as set out in the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion of 22 October 2025. Israel must lift all restrictions imposed on humanitarian partners, including the United Nations, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations. This includes the re-registration of international NGOs. We underscore the duty to ensure that humanitarian and United Nations personnel, including local staff and their facilities are protected. We condemn the recent action taken by Israel against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The demolition of its headquarters in East Jerusalem constitutes a violation of international law, in particular the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. We are also deeply alarmed at the upsurge in violence in the West Bank at the hands of Israeli security forces and settlers and at the demolition of buildings and forced displacement. This violence and these destabilizing activities must cease immediately and be independently investigated. Switzerland reiterates that the occupation, including the settlements, is illegal and must end.

Turning to the broader region, Switzerland calls on the Iranian authorities to bring an immediate end to the violence against the protesters and to guarantee their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Moreover, Switzerland is also gravely concerned about the violence in Yemen, Syria and Lebanon. Only an approach grounded in dialogue and respect for law can lead to a lasting resolution of disputes. We must work together within established multilateral frameworks in order to foster peace, stability and security. Our good offices remain available.

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

Mr. Vinhas (Portugal): Portugal aligns itself with the statements to be delivered, respectively, on behalf of the European Union and the core group of the shared commitments in support of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). We would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

We welcome the launch of phase two of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, and we thank all those involved, especially the United States of America, Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye. We stress that the United Nations, all its agencies and international non-governmental organizations must continue to fulfil their roles in this new phase. We also welcome the announcement of the limited reopening of the Rafah crossing in both directions and reiterate our call for a full-fledged reopening to allow for humanitarian aid at scale. Besides reconstruction efforts, aid should allow for immediate relief in terms of decent housing and access to energy, as the humanitarian situation in Gaza remains grievous. Furthermore, the Palestinian Authority should be involved in the administration of the Strip in preparation for its return.

We remain concerned about developments in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and its holy sites. We are particularly concerned about settlement expansion, settler violence and attacks against UNRWA and, most recently, the demolition of its headquarters in East Jerusalem — all such actions being illegal under international law, as recalled in the latest advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. Phase two should create the conditions that will allow for the reconstruction of Gaza and the implementation of the two-State solution, thereby promoting a just and lasting peace in the Middle East in line with the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. For its part, Portugal formally recognized the State of Palestine in September.

In the wider region, Syrians, Lebanese, Yemenis and Libyans also deserve respect for their countries' sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, in particular by external actors. Regarding Syria, we welcome the new extension of the ceasefire between the new authorities and the Syrian Democratic Forces, while stressing the need for an inclusive political process in which every Syrian can live in security, equality and dignity. We also welcome the agreement between Syria and Israel on a joint fusion mechanism.

As to Lebanon, we welcome the announcement of the completion of the first phase of the national disarmament plan, and we commend the Government's efforts in that regard. We also reiterate our support for the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and for the country's territorial integrity.

In Yemen, we support an inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process under the auspices of the United Nations, with full respect for Yemen's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Portugal remains committed to the rule of law and an international system, with the United Nations at its centre. Our positions are coherent and consistent across every file. As such, we will continue to strive towards a just and peaceful solution to the Palestinian question that is anchored in the relevant United Nations resolutions.

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

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I would like to thank Somalia for holding this open debate. I want to thank Mr. Alakbarov for the update on the latest developments in the Middle East.

We align ourselves with the statements to be delivered by the Head of the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to the United Nations, on behalf of the EU member States, and by Ireland on behalf of the core group of the shared commitments in support of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Yesterday the world commemorated International Holocaust Remembrance Day — a day to remember the millions of Jews, Roma and others who perished in the death camps. It is a day to recommit to the protection of human rights, to the protection of civilians and to “never again” and a day on which to apply the lessons of the Holocaust to today’s world.

Since I last addressed the Council on this topic (see S/PV.10068), the Middle East has been shaken by new and deeply concerning developments. First, a United Nations compound was bulldozed in East Jerusalem. The same United Nations compound that has been targeted for nearly a year has been crushed to ruins. The United Nations has been not only denied the right to operate, but the right to exist. Let that sink in. A United Nations compound, enjoying full privileges and immunities under international law, has been bulldozed by a Member State of this Organization. Is this how we are going to deal with disagreements from now on, by destroying, by erasing, by burning? The Council’s silence on accountability for the attack could indeed encourage such thoughts. The right of Palestinian refugees to return to their land, however, cannot be erased or burned. It goes without saying that Slovenia condemns these actions in the strongest terms and calls for their immediate cessation and the restoration of United Nations premises. We recall the International Court of Justice’s advisory opinion on the obligations of Israel not to impede the operations of the United Nations and its entities.

Secondly, despite the fragile ceasefire, civilians in Gaza continue to be attacked, shelled and intimidated. Children have frozen to death during winter storms, left with little or no shelter amid the rubble. They were killed while collecting firewood. We call upon all parties to uphold the ceasefire and allow space for peace to take root and for reconstruction to begin. Slovenia supports the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict in its entirety and welcomes the launch of phase two. We anticipate the disarmament of Hamas, further withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from Gaza and the opening of the Rafah crossing. We welcome the release of the remains of the last hostage, Ran Gvili, and we welcome the appointment of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza. But make no mistake, we monitor with grave concern continued hostilities and the satellite imagery reports of Israel pushing the yellow line further into Gazan territory, in clear contravention of the ceasefire negotiated by the United States and the partners and endorsed by the Council. Palestinians cannot be forcibly isolated in reservations beyond the yellow line. Gaza is not a no-man’s-land. It is Palestinian land.

Thirdly, new Knesset legislation places the operations of international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) under severe threat, at a time at which civilians across the Occupied Palestinian Territory are struggling to feed their families, send their children to school or care for the sick and wounded. As confirmed by the highest judicial authority, the International Court of Justice, the occupying Power has a duty to guarantee full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and allow the continued functioning of humanitarian actors, including UNRWA, in the occupied territory. Nevertheless, no one has been able to adequately explain what will happen when the Israeli ultimatum to the international NGOs enters into force on 1 March. Médecins sans frontières, Save the Children and the Norwegian Refugee Council have all briefed the Council on the situation in Gaza. And yet, they and others may be soon forced to close their activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Their only crime

is helping Palestinian civilians, just as the crime of Dr. Hussam Abu Safija and so many other health workers was being a doctor and helping those in need.

In the words of Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov this morning, banning these international NGOs will have a significant impact on the humanitarian response across the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Who will feed and protect the children of Jenin, evicted from their refugee camp a year ago? Who will perform life-saving amputations for the victims of the Gaza war in Al-Rimal? Who will provide shelter to the people of Ras Ein Al-Auja when Israel's settlers bulldoze their olive trees again? Is the Council going to watch in silence as the tragedy of Gaza extends to the West Bank?

These three topics should not be just discussed in this Chamber. They are a call for action by the Council. The Council's primary responsibility for international peace and security is neither a right nor a privilege. It is an obligation and reflection of the trust that all United Nations members have placed in it. Members of the Council should have this in mind when coming to this Chamber. The world is watching and history will be judging.

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

Mr. Gómez Hernández (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and of the group on Shared Commitments on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Council to reaffirm Spain's firm commitment to international efforts to restore peace and stability in the Middle East and to underscore the centrality of the universal principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council on the question.

We therefore welcome the announcement of the launch of phase two of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, backed by resolution 2803 (2025) and the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution.

We trust that the appointment of a National Committee for the Administration of Gaza will contribute to stability and lay the foundations for the restoration of the unity of the Palestinian State under a single authority. Spain reaffirms its firm support for the Palestinian National Authority and reiterates its essential and indispensable role in this transitional phase. Spain also reiterates its call for the rapid and urgent entry of large-scale humanitarian aid, in accordance with international humanitarian law, to alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe ravaging the Strip.

Spain reiterates its firm support for the United Nations and UNRWA. We condemn the demolition of UNRWA facilities at its headquarters in East Jerusalem by Israeli security forces, in violation of the privileges and immunities of the Agency, which were reaffirmed in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 22 October.

Spain recognizes the essential work of Spanish and international humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the humanitarian response in Gaza. In this regard, we urge Israel to reverse the regulations on the registration of humanitarian NGOs operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

With regard to the West Bank, we are witnessing an uncontrolled increase in violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians, as well as forced

displacement, the expansion of settlements and announcements of annexation, including in East Jerusalem, which we strongly condemn.

With regard to Lebanon, Spain reiterates its call on the parties to comply fully with resolution 1701 (2006) and with the November 2024 cessation of hostilities agreement. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the ongoing and unacceptable Israeli attacks against United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon positions, the latest of which once again threatened the physical integrity of the Spanish contingent, in a series of actions that represent a serious escalation against the mission's personnel and infrastructure.

Spain will continue to support the Syrian people in advancing a peaceful and inclusive political transition and demands that Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity be respected, without destabilizing interference from third countries. We welcome the ceasefire agreement reached in Syria to end the fighting between the army and the Syrian Democratic Forces.

We continue to monitor the situation in Iran closely. We condemn the violence used against peaceful demonstrations and call on the country's authorities to respect and guarantee freedom of expression and peaceful demonstration. We urge the Iranian authorities to end the repression of peaceful demonstrations and to immediately lift all summary sentences and restrictions on communications.

Finally, we hope that the dialogue initiative in Yemen will lead to progress towards an inclusive political process for the country and alleviate the humanitarian situation. We also urgently call for the immediate release of United Nations personnel.

In this context, Spain will continue to advocate dialogue with regional partners and respect for the universal principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in order to join forces in favour of peace and stability in the Middle East.

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

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate. I thank the United Nations Deputy Special Coordinator for his valuable contribution.

In my intervention, I would like to address four developments shaping the current state of play in the Middle East which my country, Poland, continues to follow closely.

First, we stand by our commitment to a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Since recognizing the State of Palestine in 1988, we have consistently supported the two-State solution — Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in peace and security.

Recently, we have taken note of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025), and welcome the start of its next phase. At the same time, Poland stresses that the composition and mandate of any newly proposed peace-related mechanisms must be consistent with United Nations principles and values.

Yet the situation on the ground remains concerning. Hamas' disarmament is uncertain, Palestinian politics remain divided, and the growing opposition within Israel to a Palestinian State complicates prospects for progress.

Also, settlement expansion in the West Bank and actions targeting the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East risk undermining humanitarian work and violate Israel's obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. Poland calls for unhindered humanitarian access and will

continue to cooperate closely with humanitarian partners, including non-governmental organizations, as Palestine remains among our top priorities, having been provided with almost \$20 million in aid since 2023.

Our military contingent in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon will remain committed to its peacekeeping mission as long as it takes, with development projects as an integral element of its contribution.

Turning to Iran, Poland follows developments there with deep concern. Reports of widespread protests, arbitrary detentions and excessive use of force are alarming. We strongly condemn any calls for expedited trials or executions of protesters, as such actions violate fundamental international human rights. Sustained international pressure, combined with diplomatic engagement, remains essential. We urge Iranian authorities to engage in genuine dialogue with their society and to act transparently on issues related to their nuclear and missile programmes, within established global frameworks. Further destabilization of Iran, we stress, would serve no one's interest.

Poland reaffirms its support for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Yemen. We condemn all forms of separatism and interference by external actors and reiterate strong backing for the United Nations-led efforts towards a comprehensive and inclusive political settlement.

Finally, with regard to Syria, Poland acknowledges the significant challenges facing the new authorities in Damascus, while noting positive political developments. We welcome the recent lifting of sanctions by the European Union and the United States, which could foster transition and recovery. Poland stands ready to share its transformation experience to support stabilization, reconstruction and inclusive governance. We are, however, concerned by renewed clashes between the Government forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces, and we call for swift and peaceful implementation of the recent agreement.

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

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): The year 2026 started with a mixture of hope and unrest in the Middle East. The situation in the region remains fragile, and the international community must further strengthen its collective efforts to realize peace and stability.

We welcome the continued general maintenance of the ceasefire in Gaza. However, sporadic clashes and military attacks persist. All parties must adhere to the ceasefire agreement and make every effort to prevent further casualties.

Japan also welcomes the adoption of resolution 2803 (2025), which endorses and calls on all parties to implement the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict announced by the United States President in September last year.

Based on our commitment to actively contributing to the realization of peace and stability in the Middle East, Japan has consistently supported President Trump's initiatives towards peace in the Middle East, including those concerning Gaza.

In this regard, along with sorrow, we note that the return of the last Israeli hostage's body was finally achieved. Japan recognizes the earnest efforts of the relevant countries, including the United States, Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye. It is now necessary to steadily advance the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan. Japan is committed to playing a proactive role through concrete actions, including by sending our experts.

While some improvement in the humanitarian situation has been observed, the people of Gaza continue to face difficult conditions. We strongly urge Israel to take appropriate measures to ensure that humanitarian assistance activities by international organizations, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine

Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and non-governmental organizations can be carried out without hindrance.

Japan has supported a two-State solution, in which Israel and Palestine coexist side by side in peace and stability. Settlement activities are in violation of international law, and we have grave concerns that the expansion of settlements and the increased settler violence in the West Bank further destabilize the situation. Japan demands that Israel immediately cease any unilateral actions that run counter to the two-State solution.

Japan is closely monitoring the developments in Iran that have been taking place since the end of last year. Any attempt to address peaceful demonstrations through the use of violence is unacceptable. In this context, Japan strongly calls for the immediate cessation of violence and strongly hopes for an early settlement of the situation.

In Yemen, the security situation remains fragile, and humanitarian conditions are only worsening. We take note of the Security Council decision on the mandate of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement to cease its operation on 31 March. We call for a prudent transition to avoid a security vacuum that would further destabilize the country and the region. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of the United Nations staff and other people detained by the Houthis.

With regard to Syria, in December of last year, which marked one year since the collapse of the Al-Assad regime, a high-level Japanese delegation visited Damascus and announced the resumption of bilateral cooperation for the first time since 2011. We believe our coordinated efforts support an inclusive, peaceful and stable political transition led by the Syrian Government, which has undergone a historic change.

Our shared goal is to maintain momentum towards peace and take action to prevent the Middle East from being drawn back into the vortex of war and turmoil. Japan will leverage its strengths and actively contribute to that end.

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

Mr. Muhamad (Malaysia): Malaysia thanks Somalia for convening this meeting.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statements to be delivered on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Despite the ceasefire declared in September 2025, the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza continues. Approximately 500 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli attacks since the ceasefire. Many have also died owing to the persistent dire humanitarian situation. At least nine children reportedly died from hypothermia.

It is absolutely critical that the Gaza ceasefire be fully implemented. The killings must stop, and unhindered humanitarian access must be restored to ensure the delivery of life-saving assistance at scale.

The role of the United Nations in Palestine, particularly that of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which provides essential services to the Palestinians and is irreplaceable must be defended and protected.

Malaysia strongly condemns Israel's demolition of UNRWA's premises in Shaykh Jarrah on 20 January and the arson attack on those premises on 25 January. The International Court of Justice has unequivocally affirmed the mandate of the

United Nations and its entities to operate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel is under a clear obligation to respect the privileges, immunities and inviolability of United Nations premises, property and its personnel.

We are also deeply concerned by the decision of the Israeli Government to cancel the permits of a significant number of international non-governmental organizations that have been providing vital humanitarian aid in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Malaysia condemns the decision by the Israeli Government to approve 19 new settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. We are deeply alarmed by the surge in armed settler violence and the forced displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank. These actions further entrench Israel's illegal occupation and undermine the prospect for a peaceful and sustainable settlement.

Israel's increasing belligerence is due to the impunity that it continues to enjoy. The Security Council, as the custodian of matters concerning international peace and security, must ensure that international law and the Charter of the United Nations are upheld. All relevant United Nations resolutions must be fully implemented, and the decisions and advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice must be complied with. In this connection, Malaysia recalls General Assembly resolution ES-10/24, which calls for the establishment of an international mechanism for reparations for Israel's wrongful acts in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Reparation is a legal obligation under international law and an essential step toward justice, redress and reconciliation.

Malaysia underscores the significance of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, adopted by the General Assembly in September 2025. It reflects the overwhelming will of the international community and reaffirms the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the realization of a sovereign, independent State of Palestine, based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Malaysia urges all parties to translate this global consensus into concrete political action. The credibility of the Organization rests on our collective willingness to uphold justice without selectivity or double standards. Malaysia calls for decisive actions by the Council to ensure accountability and justice, and to protect the world's rules-based order.

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

Mr. Parvathaneni (India): I thank Somalia for convening the quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East. I also thank the briefers for their remarks.

Today's debate is timely, as different parts of the Middle East are marked by protracted conflicts, political divisions and humanitarian distress. These issues are interlinked, and their implications go beyond the region and impinge upon the broader landscape of international peace and security. India hopes that sustained dialogue and diplomacy achieve durable solutions that can positively impact the lives of the people and the security of the region.

India takes note of recent progress with regard to the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025), in order to end the Gaza conflict. India also takes this opportunity to express appreciation to the United States in addressing this long-standing issue. On the political front, India has always consistently supported a sovereign, independent, viable State of Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel, within secure and recognized borders, which is at the heart of any lasting solution. In pursuit of its commitment, India became the first non-Arab country to recognize the State of Palestine in 1988. India has advocated that the means to achieve this end is through dialogue and diplomacy. The reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza and the resumption of delivery of public services and

humanitarian assistance is a herculean task calling for the sustained support and commitment of the international community to alleviate the pain and suffering of our Palestinian brothers and sisters.

At the same time, let us be clear that terrorism has no place in civilized societies and must be condemned in all its forms and manifestations. There have been incremental improvements in the humanitarian situation in Gaza. However, the harsh winter and scale of destruction continue to make the task difficult. Food and fuel shortages, lack of access to basic facilities for health and education, hygiene and sanitation, impact all sections of society, particularly women and children. India reiterates its call for safe humanitarian access. Member States must support the yearning of the Palestinian people to lead normal lives.

The scale of reconstruction required in Gaza is massive. The United Nations Office for Project Services estimates that Gaza has 60 million tons of rubble. The rubble also contains harmful material. Therefore, traditional reconstruction models would have limitations in dealing with this unique situation. An innovative approach with technological rigour is required. India has sought to contribute meaningfully to humanitarian relief efforts, particularly bilaterally, as well as in partnership with the United Nations. Over the course of the past two years, we supplied nearly 135 metric tons of medicines and supplies. There are ongoing Indian projects at various stages of implementation to the tune of \$40 million. In cumulative terms, the extent of support to the Palestinian people currently stands at over \$170 million.

On Syria, political security and humanitarian dimensions must be considered in their interrelation. We support a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, in line with resolution 2254 (2015). India remains fully committed to assisting the friendly people of Syria through the provision of humanitarian support and supplies and capacity-building. As the third largest contributor to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, Indian peacekeepers have demonstrated their will and determination to carry out its mandate.

Turning to Lebanon, India remains committed to the peace, stability and development of Lebanon. More than 900 Indian army personnel have been deployed to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon since 1998. We have emphasized that the safety and security of peacekeepers are non-negotiable. The Blue Helmets cannot become targets or victims. Capacity-building, technical assistance and support to the Lebanese Armed Forces must be strengthened in order to equip them with the necessary capabilities and resources by the end of this year so that they can meaningfully discharge their enhanced responsibilities.

On Yemen, India enjoys strong bilateral relations and friendship with its people. India calls for supporting unity and stability in Yemen. We would like to emphasize the focus on the safety of Indian nationals in Yemen, as well as the need for stepping up humanitarian operations to assist the Yemeni people. Our assistance in the form of medicine, medical equipment, vaccines and food supplies, along with capacity-building and educational scholarships, have helped alleviate the hardships faced by the Yemeni people.

In closing, India believes that the challenges facing the Middle East are interconnected and require comprehensive, inclusive and sustained diplomatic engagement and humanitarian support. Guided by dialogue, diplomacy and the spirit of international cooperation, India stands ready to work with all partners to promote peace, stability and humanitarian relief in the region.

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

Mr. Chaivaivid (Thailand): Thailand commends your leadership, Mr. President, in convening this important open debate.

Today, my delegation would like to reiterate three key points.

First, the prolonged humanitarian crisis in Gaza must end. Thailand underscores the urgent necessity of protecting civilians and ensuring the timely, safe, unhindered and sufficient delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those in need. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, mandated by the General Assembly to assist and protect Palestine refugees until a just and lasting solution is achieved, must be safeguarded. Continued international support is essential to prevent any disruption to the Agency's life-saving assistance and essential services for the Palestinian people. With this commitment, Thailand continues to make contributions to ongoing humanitarian efforts in Gaza, most recently with a contribution of \$100,000 in January through the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Secondly, recalling the overwhelmingly supported New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, Thailand reaffirms its unwavering support for a peaceful resolution based on the two-State solution, whereby the States of Israel and Palestine would coexist side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Thirdly, any peace agreement reached will carry little meaning unless it is implemented fully and adhered to in good faith. Commitments on paper must be matched by concrete actions, and respect for agreed terms is essential to building trust, ensuring credibility and achieving lasting outcomes to end the suffering of innocent civilians and restore peace and stability to the Middle East.

In this regard, Thailand welcomes the progress made in the first phase of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which led to the ceasefire agreement. We call upon all parties concerned to adhere to the agreed terms and engage constructively in negotiations under the second phase of the Plan, with a view to achieving a peaceful and lasting resolution of the conflict.

Thailand will continue to closely follow developments in Gaza and support all efforts to translate our collective resolve into meaningful progress towards lasting peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians.

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

Mr. Lametti (Canada): Canada remains firmly committed to a two-State solution, whereby Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in peace, security and dignity. Now more than ever, the two-State solution is needed and is the only just option for a lasting peace. Canada welcomes the progress made in Gaza, including increasing the flow of humanitarian assistance, securing the release of all hostages and commencing phase two of the Gaza peace plan. We thank the United States, Qatar, Egypt and Türkiye for their critical work to make this possible.

To be clear, Canada unequivocally condemns Hamas' horrific terrorist attacks on 7 October 2023, which took the lives of nearly 1,200 people, including Canadians. Political negotiations must lead to Hamas' disarmament and removal from governance in Gaza. Canada will continue to support the Palestinian Authority's reform agenda so that it can play a role in governing Gaza. We note the launch of the Palestinian-led National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, which should be empowered to support the delivery of essential services across all of Gaza.

Despite important advances, we remain seriously concerned that persistent humanitarian access restrictions are leaving Palestinian civilians without essential assistance. We are also concerned that the deregistration by Israel of key international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has further undermined the lifelines that sustain millions of Palestinians. We continue to call for the increase of humanitarian assistance and reiterate that United Nations agencies and international NGOs must be able to operate in Gaza in a sustained and predictable way.

Since the current conflict began on 7 October 2023, Canada has committed more than \$400 million in international assistance. We stand ready to further support Gaza's recovery and reconstruction.

We must also not lose sight of the situation in the West Bank, where settler violence against Palestinians has continued unabated. The unrelenting policy of settlement expansion of the Government of Israel violates international law, threatens the viability of a Palestinian State and challenges the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. We call on Israel to reverse its policy of settlement expansion.

(spoke in French)

Canada is also a major donor to Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations, which work ingeniously and tirelessly to build connections between individuals and communities. It is essential, in both the short and long term, not only to end the conflict, but also to build peace.

We are also concerned about the recent large-scale crackdown by the Iranian regime against its own people. We strongly condemn the killings, forced confessions, torture and arbitrary arrests of protesters by the Iranian regime. Canada salutes the courage shown by the Iranian people in defending their dignity and their fundamental right to peaceful protest.

The Iranian regime's ongoing and persistent human rights violations, combined with its nuclear programme, its proliferation of drone and ballistic missile technology, its support for terrorism and its transnational repression campaign, continue to pose serious threats to peace and security. We call on the Islamic Republic of Iran to comply with its human rights obligations, including by immediately releasing all arbitrarily detained persons and allowing the United Nations fact-finding mission to conduct independent investigations. Moreover, we call on the Islamic Republic of Iran to resume its full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and to cease supporting groups that threaten regional stability.

We are closely monitoring the situation in north-eastern Syria, where recent clashes have raised concerns about the safety of civilians, including religious and ethnic groups. We call on the Syrian transitional Government and the Syrian Democratic Forces to respect the current ceasefire, continue dialogue and efforts to reach a negotiated and sustainable agreement and ensure the protection of all civilians.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Iravani (Islamic Republic of Iran): Despite the ceasefire announced in October 2025, Gaza remains a devastated and besieged enclave. Israel, the occupying regime, has repeatedly and systematically violated this ceasefire. At the same time, the Israeli regime has imposed severe restrictions on humanitarian access, deliberately aggravating starvation, disease and suffering.

This sustained pattern of criminal conduct is accompanied by a deliberate Israeli campaign to dismantle humanitarian action. Israel has systematically targeted the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and international humanitarian organizations through legislation, seizures of United Nations property, closures of schools, expulsion of staff and defamation, despite the absence of any substantiated evidence. The objective is clear: to paralyse humanitarian operations, particularly in Gaza. Meanwhile, Israel persists in expanding illegal settlements across the West Bank, in flagrant violation of international law, United Nations resolutions and binding rulings of the International Court of Justice. The fact that Israel is allowed to commit such crimes without consequence only emboldens its entrenched culture of impunity.

Having failed to achieve its objectives through the 12-day war of aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran in June 2025, the Israeli regime is now pursuing the same aims through political destabilization, incitement of internal unrest and the deliberate spread of chaos inside Iran. Between 8 and 10 January, innocent Iranian civilians and hundreds of law enforcement and police officers were killed by armed and terrorist groups directly supported by the United States and the Israeli regime.

Iran supports every credible initiative aimed at ending the suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza, ensuring the complete withdrawal of occupying forces, establishing a permanent and unconditional ceasefire, guaranteeing unhindered humanitarian access and restoring the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. However, the mechanisms established under resolution 2803 (2025) for the administration of Gaza, including the creation of so-called international stabilization forces and a Board of Peace, effectively undermine the Palestinian people's fundamental right to self-determination, legitimize the continued Israeli occupation of Gaza and reduce the authority of Palestinians over their own land to a mere service-delivery role. These mechanisms disregard the territorial integrity of Palestine across Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem; convert the inherent right to have an independent Palestinian State into a conditional privilege; and effectively facilitate the forced displacement of the population of northern Gaza to other parts of Gaza or beyond. Moreover, they sideline the Security Council by transferring its responsibilities to a Board of Peace selected by the President of the United States and ignore all previous Security Council resolutions on Palestine.

Ending the war in Gaza, however essential, does not relieve Member States or international bodies of their legal and moral obligations. Justice requires full accountability. Those responsible for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity must be held to account.

In conclusion, I categorically reject the baseless allegations made by the representative of the Israeli regime at this meeting. Once again, the representative of this rogue and terrorist regime deliberately departed from the Council's agenda and resorted to lies, disinformation and unfounded accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is a calculated and familiar tactic aimed at diverting attention from the regime's ongoing grave crimes against the Palestinian people in Gaza and its continued destabilizing actions across the region.

Also today, the representative of Latvia made unfounded claims against my country. I remind the representative of Latvia, as a new member of the Council, to act responsibly, refrain from being misled by false narratives and misinformation and uphold the dignity and responsibilities of a Security Council member in accordance with the Charter. I also reject the politically motivated allegation made by the representative of Canada.

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

Mr. Yıldız (Türkiye): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in my capacity as Chair.

At the outset, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Federal Republic of Somalia for convening this quarterly open debate on the Middle East and for the comprehensive briefings provided to the Council.

The successful adoption of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution by the General Assembly-mandated High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and its overwhelming endorsement by the General Assembly on 12 September reaffirmed the long-standing international consensus in support of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the independence and sovereignty of the State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

The ceasefire agreement, concluded in October, marks a critical turning point towards ending the devastating hostilities. While the ceasefire has reduced large-scale violence and facilitated increased humanitarian access, it remains fragile due to recurrent Israeli attacks, ongoing constraints on humanitarian access that are impeding life-saving assistance from reaching the Palestinian population, including further deplorable measures against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and against international humanitarian organizations, and other violations of the ceasefire agreement by the occupying Power.

We welcome the sustained efforts of President Trump of the United States to maintain the ceasefire in Gaza. However, we wish to draw attention to the continuing aggression of Israel, as the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people, especially in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including violations of the historic and legal status quo of the holy sites of Jerusalem. These illegal actions obstruct the smooth implementation of the ceasefire agreement, as stipulated in resolution 2803 (2025).

We stress the need for a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza in order to enable recovery and reconstruction. We recognize that these conditions would enable the Government of the State of Palestine to proceed with the exercise of all its statutory functions in the Gaza Strip, including opening all crossings and ensuring the unimpeded and adequate delivery of humanitarian aid to all parts of the Strip. This phase would greatly contribute to the restoration of stability, while alleviating the severe humanitarian suffering of the Palestinian civilian population, including mass displacement, starvation and famine.

We recall the recent resolution of the twenty-second Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the OIC, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 10 January, which restated its repeated rejection of all plans aimed at the displacement of the Palestinian people, individually or collectively, within or outside their land, or their forced displacement, exile and deportation in any form and under any circumstances, in grave violation of international law and international humanitarian law.

In spite of the foregoing, the OIC welcomes the commencement of the second phase of the ceasefire agreement and the recent announcement of the formation of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza as a temporary transitional body, supporting Palestinians in overseeing their own affairs in their territory. We wish to invite the Council to commence action on the implementation of its relevant

resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), with the aim of transforming the ceasefire into a just, durable and comprehensive peace.

Moreover, given the overwhelming recognition of the State of Palestine and the commitments contained in the New York Declaration of 30 July, we reiterate our call for expeditious action by the Security Council on the admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations. This step is essential for a just and lasting peace and the credibility of the multilateral system.

We further urge the Security Council to give due consideration to General Assembly resolution ES-10/24 of 18 September 2024 and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 19 July 2024, which collectively reflect the universal endorsement of a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in line with international law. These legal instruments affirm the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to an independent State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

We welcome the establishment of the Emergency Coalition for the Financial Sustainability of the Palestinian Authority. We further call for the urgent implementation of the Arab-OIC reconstruction plan and encourage all States and partners to participate actively in these efforts.

On this occasion, we stress the roles of various United Nations agencies, in particular UNRWA, in ensuring a coordinated humanitarian response. We welcome the recent advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 22 October 2025 and emphasize the importance of providing political, financial and legal support to UNRWA.

Accordingly, we reaffirm the statement of the Secretary-General and the resolution of the Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the OIC condemning the Israeli decision to disconnect water, electricity and other essential services to facilities operated by UNRWA, in contravention of its obligations under international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, the relevant resolutions and the advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice. The OIC also calls upon the Council to compel Israel to cease the demolition of UNRWA's Shaykh Jarrah compound in East Jerusalem and return and restore the compound and other UNRWA premises to the United Nations without delay. Furthermore, we strongly deplore the violent demolition of the United Nations compound in occupied East Jerusalem, from which UNRWA was expelled by the occupying Power. This act of aggression and all Israeli violations against the United Nations must be condemned, and Israel must cease and reverse these illegal measures and be compelled to make reparations to the Organization. We emphasize the crucial role of UNRWA in providing vital services to Palestinian refugees and in ensuring regional stability, and we call on Member States to continue to support the Agency politically and financially.

The OIC reiterates that lasting peace in the Middle East requires Israel's complete withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan, and full compliance with resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981). We condemn Israel's incursions into Syrian territory since 8 December 2024, in violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces.

The OIC also condemns Israel's repeated violations of the cessation of hostilities in Lebanon since 27 November 2024, including through aerial and ground attacks, the continued occupation of Lebanese territory, the establishment of so-called buffer zones and restrictions on the freedom of movement of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. These actions constitute a flagrant violation of Lebanon's

sovereignty and of resolution 1701 (2006). We call on the Council to ensure Israel's immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal from Syria and Lebanon.

In conclusion, the OIC urges the Security Council to act with urgency and unity to uphold international law, ensure accountability and end the illegal Israeli occupation and the injustices faced by the Palestinian people.

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

Mr. El Mezouaghi (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate and commend the sisterly Federal Republic of Somalia for its able stewardship of the Security Council this month. I also thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his valuable briefing.

In line with the clear and steadfast commitment of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chair of the Al-Quds Committee, and mindful of His Majesty's continued concern for the situation in the Palestinian territories, Morocco renews its call for enhanced international mobilization to advance a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East. In his message dated 21 November 2025 addressed to the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, His Majesty reaffirmed that,

“the Kingdom of Morocco's unwavering commitment to defending the Palestinian cause and contributing actively and effectively to finding a just solution to it, since the settlement of the Palestinian issue is the core element for achieving peace and stability in the Middle East region”.

The Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the announcement of the entry into force of the second phase of the ceasefire in Gaza. In this context, and pursuant to the instructions of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chair of the Al-Quds Committee, Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, signed on 22 January 2026 in Davos, Switzerland, the founding charter of the Board of Peace during a ceremony chaired by the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. Donald Trump. This signing follows His Majesty's approval for Morocco to join the initiative as a founding member. Proposed by the United States President, the initiative seeks to support peace efforts in the Middle East and to promote a new approach to conflict settlement worldwide.

The Kingdom of Morocco renews its deep appreciation for the tireless efforts and personal engagement of President Donald Trump, which have led to this hope-inspiring outcome. The Kingdom also commends the sustained efforts of all mediators and calls on all parties to fully implement the agreement, enabling the swift and adequate delivery of humanitarian assistance and the launch of reconstruction, within the framework of a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian cause. The Kingdom of Morocco underscores the need to halt settlement activities, annexation plans and incursions into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

The Kingdom of Morocco, whose Sovereign, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, chairs the Al-Quds Committee, reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the two-State solution as an indispensable basis for a just and lasting peace in the region. This entails the establishment of a sovereign State of Palestine on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital and with Gaza as an integral part thereof, living side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security. The Kingdom of Morocco also affirms its full readiness to actively contribute to all agreed phases and tracks, safeguarding the rights of the brotherly Palestinian people and supporting stability in the Middle East.

These developments, which we welcome, call for effective engagement to advance negotiations towards a political solution within a clear timetable, safeguarding the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. At the same time, it is imperative to integrate the economic dimension into the peace process, as a key driver of stability and development. Support for the Palestinian Authority, under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas, must also be strengthened to reinforce its institutions and to meet the Palestinian people's aspirations for security and dignity.

Furthermore, the next phase requires political and financial support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, enabling it to fulfil its vital humanitarian mandate for the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, Morocco reaffirms its unwavering commitment to defending the holy sites, in particular the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, which holds a special place for His Majesty King Mohammed VI in his capacity as Chair of the Al-Quds Committee. This commitment is reflected in the initiatives, programmes and projects implemented by the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency, the executive arm of the Al-Quds Committee, which aims to preserve the legal and historical status of Jerusalem, protect its identity and support the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish an independent State on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President: I now give the floor to the Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (*spoke in Spanish*): We congratulate Somalia on its presidency of the Security Council. We also welcome Bahrain, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Latvia and Liberia to the Council.

Today, 28 January, as the international community celebrates for the first time the International Day of Peaceful Coexistence, we are reminded that coexistence is not an abstract ideal; it is built or broken by concrete decisions taken daily on the ground. It rests on the pillars of respect for the rule of law, human dignity and the equal right of peoples to live in safety and freedom.

In this context, the events that have unfolded in the Occupied Palestinian Territory over the past three months run counter to peaceful coexistence and the pillars on which it rests. The approval by Israel, the occupying Power, of 19 new settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as the re-establishment of settlements evacuated in 2005, constitutes yet another grave mass violation and represents a serious setback. These illegal colonial actions openly seek to destroy the contiguity of the Palestinian territory and preclude the possibility of a viable and independent Palestinian State.

The expansion of settlements has no legal validity. Settlements are illegal, as recently determined by the International Court of Justice, our highest court. They erode what little trust remains that negotiations can yield a just outcome for the Palestinian people.

Meanwhile, settler violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continues to intensify, terrorizing civilians and entire communities. The pattern is clear, and so is the impact: fear, displacement and the constant erosion of daily life, alongside systematic coercion that causes incalculable suffering and undermines the present and the future.

Accountability is essential yet absent under Israel's illegal occupation. Equally appalling are the recent measures directed against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Laws stripping UNRWA of its privileges and immunities permit the seizure and destruction of its

facilities and order the suspension of essential services. All of this is incompatible with Israel's obligations under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. UNRWA is not an optional actor; it is a lifeline for millions of Palestine refugees. It is a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, and its mandate enjoys the overwhelming support of the international community, as part of the Organization's continued responsibility for the Palestine question until it is justly resolved. The International Court of Justice reaffirmed this clearly in its advisory opinion (see A/80/502). Undermining its ability to function will deepen humanitarian suffering and further destabilize an already very fragile region.

Meanwhile, the humanitarian situation in Gaza has grown even more desperate. Winter rains, flooding and freezing temperatures are battering makeshift shelters and destroying fragile tents. Hundreds of thousands — an entire population of displaced people — are exposed to extreme cold and deprived of shelter and sustenance. Many have already died, including babies and children. We are also gravely concerned about and firmly reject the decision taken by Israel to cancel the permits of dozens of international non-governmental organizations, preventing their continued operation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and further depriving the population of desperately needed assistance. Restricting principled humanitarian actors at a time of overwhelming need in Gaza is yet again turning a humanitarian crisis into an even greater catastrophe.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People recalls the General Assembly resolution adopted on 12 December 2025 (General Assembly resolution 80/116), which firmly supports the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on Israel's obligations regarding its presence and activities in the Occupied Territory. The resolution reaffirms core principles that remain as urgent as ever: the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, the centrality of international law and the necessity of a two-State solution based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. These are not slogans; they are obligations.

On this day dedicated to peaceful coexistence, the message must be clear: peace cannot coexist with annexation and oppression, humanitarian access cannot coexist with obstruction, and coexistence itself cannot survive without justice and accountability. The choice before members is not complicated: it is to uphold the law, protect civilians, protect Palestine and demand the peace that we long for, namely a just and lasting peace. If we do not do that, the disastrous alternative is a future of increasingly acute human suffering and conflict that none of us will accept.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Lambrinidis.

Mr. Lambrinidis: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

The situation in the Middle East requires our continued attention and active engagement. The European Union welcomes the announcement of the launch of phase two of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025), and the nomination of a Palestinian National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, with the support of the Palestinian Authority. The EU will continue to support peace in Gaza and looks forward to the implementation of the peace plan in its entirety, including the permanent decommissioning of weapons from Hamas and other non-State armed groups, the delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale and the reconstruction of Gaza. We reiterate that Hamas can have no role in Gaza's future and must never again be a threat to Israel.

The European Union is ready to work together with the United States on the implementation of the comprehensive peace plan for Gaza, with a Board of Peace carrying out its mission, in accordance with resolution 2803 (2025). The EU reaffirms its strong commitment to international law and to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the two-State solution, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, whereby two democratic States — Israel and Palestine — live side-by-side in peace, within secure and recognized borders. In this context, we recall the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution in New York, co-led by France and Saudi Arabia.

The European Union is committed to contributing to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, including through the European Union Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah crossing and the European Union Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories, as well as through engagement in the Civil-Military Coordination Center. The EU stresses the need for the rapid, safe and unimpeded delivery and sustained distribution of humanitarian aid at scale into and throughout Gaza, including via the Cyprus maritime corridor, in accordance with international humanitarian law, and also stresses the need for the United Nations and its agencies and humanitarian organizations to be able to work independently and impartially. In this respect, it calls on Israel not to implement the non-governmental organization (NGO) registration law in its current form and to allow international NGOs to operate and deliver life-saving aid to civilians in need in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Building on the first meeting of the Palestine Donor Group, the EU will engage with all partners to contribute to recovery and reconstruction efforts and continue to support the Palestinian Authority, including in its ongoing reform agenda. We call on Israel to urgently release withheld clearance revenues and to extend the correspondent banking services between Israeli and Palestinian banks, both necessary to ensure the proper functioning of the Palestinian Authority and the delivery of essential services to the population.

The European Union strongly condemns the massive increase in settler violence against Palestinian civilians and the policies and threats of forcible displacement and annexation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as terrorist attacks against Israel. The EU calls on Israel to halt the E1 settlement project and to reverse the expansion of settlements, which are illegal under international law and further undermine the two-State solution, with Jerusalem as the future capital of both States. The EU stresses the essential role of the United Nations and its agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Allow me to turn to Syria. The European Union remains committed to supporting a peaceful and inclusive transition in the country that meets the aspirations of all Syrians. We will continue engaging with the Syrian transitional Government to address the challenges facing the country and to support the political transition, national reconciliation, respect for fundamental rights and socioeconomic recovery and reconstruction. The role of Syrian civil society is crucial to ensuring the success of all these efforts.

The EU reiterates its call for an end to violence across Syria. The new ceasefire between the Syrian transitional Government and the Syrian Democratic Forces is a positive step to stop the escalation in north-eastern Syria. The EU urges all external actors without exception to fully respect Syria's unity, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We welcome the Syrian transitional Government's renewed commitment to fighting the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and their cooperation within the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. We expect that the Syrian transitional Government will effectively fulfil this commitment, also regarding the

camps and detention facilities in north-east Syria. We call on the transitional Government to continue to further enhance cooperation with the United Nations bodies and agencies and all humanitarian actors and to grant them access to all areas of Syria.

As to Lebanon, we welcome the efforts of the Lebanese Government to stabilize the country and stress the need to safeguard Lebanon's stability. We reaffirm our support for Lebanon's security, economic recovery and reconstruction efforts. We also reaffirm our support for the Government's efforts to establish the State's monopoly on holding weapons. We also reiterate the essential role played by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and condemn attacks against United Nations peacekeepers, which constitute grave violations of international law. The EU urges all parties to fully respect the 2024 ceasefire agreement and to implement resolution 1701 (2006) in its entirety. The EU will continue to support Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and State-building efforts, including through its long-standing assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces. In this regard, we welcome the announcement of an international conference to be held in Paris on 5 March.

The EU reaffirms its full respect for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Yemen and reiterates the need to avoid any further destabilization in the country. We call upon all the parties to engage constructively in an inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process under the auspices of the United Nations. Lastly, we reiterate the importance of maritime security and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and the role of the European Union Naval Force Operation Aspides in this regard.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Abdelaziz.

Mr. Abdelaziz (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to begin by commending the presidency for its competent and capable endeavours in the Council this month. We wish to thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov for his briefing and welcome the newly elected members to the Council. I also welcome the participation of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Liberia and Greece in this meeting.

The League of Arab States aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Jordan on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The year 2025 has ended, and 2026 has begun. Yet the Middle East continues to be a hotbed of turmoil and untold human suffering and a backdrop for gross violations of every law, which go unchecked and unpunished. The United Nations system is grappling with grave institutional challenges from within and without, as clearly illustrated by the starkly divergent positions expressed during the open debate on the rule of law convened by the Somali presidency earlier this week and the statement delivered by Secretary-General Guterres at that meeting (see S/PV.10096).

The Middle East, like much of the world, has been profoundly affected by these developments. Despite the successful efforts to broker a ceasefire in Gaza last year and the implementation of the first phase of President Trump's plan, the Strip continues to be subjected to intense Israeli military attacks. Israel continues to obstruct the entry of humanitarian aid, inflicting an unprecedented humanitarian disaster on the Palestinian people and demonstrating Israel's determination to commit genocide, despite the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion. Israel also continues to obstruct the implementation of the second phase of the agreement, even though conditions for completion of the first phase have been met. It persists in defying the International Court of Justice by targeting and demolishing the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in Shaykh Jarrah and attacking United Nations officials, in flagrant

violation of international law, thus compounding the suffering of Palestinian refugees, with impunity.

The ongoing Israeli military presence in the Gaza Strip and the absence of any indication of a genuine Israeli withdrawal confirm that the measures currently being imposed by Israel are intended not to be temporary but instead to entrench new facts on the ground through military force, in flagrant violation of the peace plan adopted by the Council on the basis of President Trump's initiative, which clearly tied disarmament to a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. This is compounded by the growing threat posed by the far-right policies of an extreme right-wing Israeli Government, as reflected in the rampant settlement activity, including in the Gaza Strip, and the upsurge in settler terrorism in the West Bank and at Islamic and Christian holy sites. These practices constitute a wholly unconscionable bid to displace the Palestinian people from their land and to dash any political prospects of a settlement.

At the same time, Israel's rapacious and unchecked expansion of its military aggression is extending to Syria, Lebanon and Yemen in a deluded attempt to impose a new regional hegemony that has been denounced at the regional and international levels and throughout the Arab world. All of this is compounded by Israel's military aggression against the State of Qatar and its recent recognition of Somaliland, in blatant violation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of the Federal Republic of Somalia, thereby posing a direct threat to the security of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Despite mounting international condemnation of all these measures, nothing has been done to stop the violations — a state of affairs that threatens a widespread regional conflagration, with dire consequences for international peace and security.

Against that backdrop, the League of Arab States affirms that the implementation of any peace plan will not succeed unless the Palestinian Authority plays an active and full part and unless the geographical contiguity of the Palestinian State, consisting of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, is preserved and kept under Palestinian Authority control. In this regard, the League states its full support for the Palestinian National Committee for the Administration of Gaza and the other mechanisms that are required to work in close cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, which has actual authority on the ground.

In this connection, the League of Arab States supports the tireless efforts of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution aimed at implementing the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, adopted at the High-level International Conference and endorsed by a majority of the General Assembly. The Declaration must be implemented in tandem with resolution 2803 (2025). The League is confident that the recent announcement by eight Arab and Muslim States of their collective decision to join the United States-backed Gaza Board of Peace, represents a strong Arab and Islamic contribution that has comparable weight to these eight countries' role in drafting and adopting the New York Declaration at the United Nations. This attests to the need to channel international efforts into the twin tracks — the New York Declaration at the General Assembly level and resolution 2803 (2025) in the Security Council — so as to establish an independent Palestinian State in line with the two-State solution and to end Israel's delusional expansionist ambitions in the region, which will bring destruction and devastation there.

The League of Arab States followed the comprehensive statement on national dialogue, constitutional reforms, transitional justice and the preservation of the Syrian national fabric delivered by His Excellency the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Council, at last week's meeting on Syria (see

S/PV.10094). The League commends the presidential decree recognizing the linguistic and cultural rights of Kurdish citizens within their Syrian homeland. At the same time, the League reiterates its support for Syria in the face of Israeli military violations of its sovereignty in blatant breach of the Council's relevant resolutions, as documented in the relevant United Nations reports on the subject. These reports record that only Israel violates the Council's relevant resolutions.

By the same token, the League of Arab States reaffirms its support for Lebanon's security, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity and welcomes the Lebanese Armed Forces' assumption of operational control over the south of the country. It expresses its support for the Lebanese Government's efforts to implement the two-phase plan to bring all weapons under the State with a view to bolstering the presence of the State and its institutions and to fostering stability. The League also underscores the need for resolution 1701 (2006) to be implemented in every respect so as to end all Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty.

In the face of the raging conflict in the Sudan and its severe political and humanitarian consequences, the League of Arab States has welcomed the road map proposed by the Prime Minister in order to achieve the desired peace. The road map will be a foundation that can be built upon. The League underscores the urgent need for a cessation of hostilities and the launch of an inclusive Sudanese-Sudanese political process supported by the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the African Union, leading up to the desired political solution in the nearest future.

In conclusion, the League of Arab States looks forward to the Security Council playing a constructive role in addressing these and other urgent Arab issues, free from geopolitical rivalries. We stand ready to support any and all efforts aimed at eliminating the sources of tension in the Arab world in a manner that upholds the credibility of the United Nations and the multilateral international order.

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

Mr. Cha (Republic of Korea): Last year, amid the two-year long instability and violence in the Middle East, we witnessed a glimmer of hope: the ceasefire in Gaza, through President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. It is noteworthy that President Trump's comprehensive plan for Gaza has garnered overarching support from the international community, including Council members and relevant regional countries, as endorsed by the Security Council through resolution 2803 (2025). It is encouraging that the ceasefire in Gaza has been largely upheld so far. Moreover, we welcome the return of the last hostage and hope that this will pave the way for the next phase of the peace plan.

However, at the same time, the continued volatility and humanitarian suffering remind us that Gaza and the region still have a long way to go. The Republic of Korea warmly welcomes the launch of phase two of the Comprehensive Plan to secure the hard-won ceasefire. This includes the formation of the Board of Peace and its subsidiary entities as a transitional governing administration to oversee and supervise the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

We hope that the Board of Peace, recently launched by President Trump, will be a crucial step towards the establishment of a durable peace and security in the region. We also hope that other follow-up measures, including the formation and deployment of the international stabilization force to stabilize Gaza's security environment, will be subsequently implemented.

In the same vein, the Republic of Korea stresses the importance of the constant delivery of humanitarian aid at scale throughout Gaza. As Gaza is suffering through

a harsh winter, the unhindered entry of critical items such as shelters and blankets must be ensured.

On the other hand, in order to realize the arduous process of the reconstruction of Gaza and to forge a peaceful coexistence among neighbours, the duties of the relevant parties must also be fully observed. It is dismaying that daily reports continue of air strikes, shelling and gunfire across Gaza. We call on all parties to the conflict to strictly abide by the ceasefire agreement.

Turning to the West Bank, it is deeply disturbing that severe instability, violence, impunity and injustice continue unabated. We express our ongoing concern over the consistent expansion of Israeli settlements, the demolition of homes and violent acts by settlers, as well as deadly attacks by Palestinians against Israeli civilians.

We were also shocked to witness the forcible destruction of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) headquarters in East Jerusalem last week. We call on Israel to strictly respect its immunity and privileges and refrain from any action that further deviates from its core obligation.

We must not forget what would constitute the end game of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Along with the vast majority of the international community, the Republic of Korea strongly believes that the two-State solution remains the only just and durable resolution to the Palestinian question.

The Republic of Korea will continue to support global efforts to bring peace to the region and chart a brighter path for all.

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

Mr. Nghifitikeko (Namibia): Just over a week ago, the world witnessed the demolition by Israel of several buildings inside the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) compound. This comes after the Israeli Government stripped UNRWA of its privileges and immunities and seized UNRWA's offices. The Secretary-General condemned the demolition in the strongest terms. These were unprecedented attacks against inviolable United Nations premises that should enjoy the protection of all States, as prescribed under international law.

Meanwhile, military operations continue in Gaza, further exacerbating the already fragile situation. The killing must stop, as men, women and children continue to fight for their survival under harsh weather conditions.

UNRWA remains indispensable in the provision of much-needed humanitarian assistance and essential services to millions of Palestinians. Undermining UNRWA's operations threatens the very lives of those who depend on it. Namibia, therefore, joins the international community in calling on Israel to uphold its obligations under international law and to immediately return all UNRWA occupied offices to the custody of the United Nations.

With the return of the last hostage, we call for an immediate and genuine ceasefire, unhindered humanitarian access to all affected civilian populations and the protection of civilians in accordance with international law.

Namibia also reaffirms its support for the central role of the United Nations in seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant international human rights and humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions.

The United Nations Security Council must, therefore, be kept abreast of developments concerning the establishment, functioning and operations of the Board of Peace, in line with resolution 2803 (2025), which requested the Board of Peace to provide a written report on its progress every six months.

Despite the many challenges to the rules-based order that we are all witnessing, for peace to prevail we believe that international law must be upheld, the rule of law respected and multilateralism strengthened.

Palestinians must be enabled to build a future free from dependency and despair.

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

Mr. Totangi (Sierra Leone): Sierra Leone commends Somalia for its diligent conduct of the presidency, and we thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

Approximately three months into the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, we note the positive developments attributable to sustained international engagement, including mediation efforts and the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025). These bold actions have helped to reduce hostilities, enabled humanitarian operations and supported the release of hostages.

We welcome the announcement of the retrieval of the remains of the last hostage in the Gaza Strip.

While the ceasefire is largely holding and there are signs of stabilization in Gaza, reports from the West Bank of demolitions, displacement and movement restrictions remain deeply troubling.

As we examine international efforts to advance the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, Sierra Leone would like to emphasize the following.

First, we reiterate the obligation to facilitate safe, rapid, sustained and unhindered humanitarian access at scale. We stress the duty to respect and protect United Nations and humanitarian personnel, medical workers and journalists, as well as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and its premises and other United Nations agencies, whose humanitarian mandates and immunities must be respected. On this note, Sierra Leone expresses its concern about the incident at the UNRWA compound in East Jerusalem on 20 January. This incident represents a flagrant violation of international law. United Nations premises are inviolable. We fully align ourselves with the statement made by the Secretary-General on this issue.

Additionally, on the humanitarian front, we note Israel's commitment to the partial opening of the Rafah crossing and urge the reopening of critical entry points into the Gaza Strip.

Thirdly, we reiterate that Security Council resolutions, including recent resolution 2803 (2025), must be implemented in good faith and in line with international law. We note the joint statement made by Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye announcing the formation of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza and the signing ceremony for the establishment of the Board of Peace in Davos.

Fourthly, we stress the need for the early recovery and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip to restore basic services and livelihoods; support the safe, voluntary and dignified return of civilians consistent with international law; and advance unified and legitimate Palestinian governance within an agreed timeframe.

Fifth and finally, it is critical to advance the political process of achieving a two-State solution that will create conditions for a credible pathway towards Palestinian self-determination and statehood. We therefore reiterate our support for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East grounded in international law, the protection of civilians and a negotiated two-State solution, with an independent, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

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

Ms. Brattsted (Norway): The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains catastrophic. On 17 November, the Council adopted resolution 2803 (2025), expressing clear support for the United States-initiated 20-point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. It is vital that all parties respect the agreement and that humanitarian relief and reconstruction can proceed. The announcement of the Plan's phase 2, the release — finally — of the remaining hostage and reports of the reopening of the Rafah border, provide hope.

In line with the resolution, the full resumption of aid into Gaza is essential. The United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and humanitarian organizations, including international non-governmental organizations, must be allowed to enter Gaza and operate safely and without obstruction. International law and humanitarian principles must be upheld. This was also emphasized by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 22 October 2025.

Norway looks forward to working closely with the new bodies established to promote security, peace and stability — including with High Representative Mladenov and the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza — to follow up on resolution 2803 (2025). Norway stands ready to contribute, drawing on more than 30 years of experience in Palestinian institution- and State-building through our leadership of the international donor group for Palestine, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians.

Rebuilding Gaza will require a major collective effort. Everyone must contribute, and Israel must assume its shared responsibility. Palestinian ownership must be at the core of all efforts going forward. Our common objective remains a unified, independent, and viable Palestinian State, so that Israelis and Palestinians can live together in peace and security.

Norway is deeply concerned about the unacceptable developments in the West Bank, where the continued expansion of illegal settlements and settler violence persist with impunity. Israel has an obligation under international law to prevent and prosecute such actions.

Israel's demolition of large parts of the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in East Jerusalem last week, is a clear violation of international law. In its advisory opinion of 22 October 2025, the International Court of Justice stated clearly that Israel is obligated to ensure full respect for the inviolability of United Nations premises, including those of UNRWA. The destruction of United Nations premises is the latest example of the systematic obstruction of United Nations operations in Palestine. It is not only a violation of international law, but also a direct attack on the United Nations as a whole and therefore sets a very dangerous precedent.

Let us now work together to fully implement resolution 2803 (2025) and to realize a two-State solution that offers hope of a peaceful future for both Israelis and Palestinians.

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

Mr. Larsen (Australia): This debate comes as tensions across the Middle East remain high.

Today I reiterate Australia's calls for peace and stability in the region, including our strong condemnation of the Iranian Government's brutal crackdown of its own people. We urge Iran to protect and respect the rights of its citizens. The killing of protesters, the use of violence, raids on healthcare facilities, telecommunications blackouts and mass detentions of citizens seeking fundamental rights and freedoms must stop. Australia stands with the brave people of Iran in their struggle against oppression, and that is why we have taken strong action to hold the Iranian regime to account, including through sanctions.

We all want to see an end to the devastating conflict in Gaza. Australia has consistently advocated for unimpeded and sustainable humanitarian assistance in Gaza, including calling for the removal of restrictions on humanitarian partners that are preventing the delivery of life-saving assistance.

Australia welcomes President Trump's diplomatic efforts towards a lasting peace in Gaza, including the Council's adoption of resolution 2803 (2025) and the announcement of the launch of phase 2 of the 20-point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. We remain committed to working with partners to support the implementation of this Plan. It is the most viable pathway available to end the suffering in Gaza and bring stability and an enduring peace. We continue to urge all parties to uphold the terms of the ceasefire and work towards implementing the Plan in full. Hamas must be disarmed and play no role in a Palestinian State, aid must flow unimpeded, and civilians must be protected. Australia is under no illusions that the work ahead will be anything but complex and difficult, but we must all contribute to securing long term peace in Gaza and building the Palestinian State.

We must not forget the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Like so much of the international community, Australia objects to Israel's demolition of the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Such actions set a dangerous precedent and undermine the multilateral system. United Nations facilities must be protected.

Australia joins the international call on Israel to reverse its December decision to approve 19 new settlements in the occupied West Bank. We have been clear that Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and risk fuelling further instability. Together with the international community, we continue to underscore that a two-State solution remains the only avenue for enduring peace and security for both Israel and Palestine.

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

Mr. Ammar (Tunisia): We thank Somalia for convening this meeting.

Since the most recent open debate on the situation in the Middle East (see S/PV.10023), held in the Council on 23 October, nothing has really changed in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The ceasefire has been repeatedly violated by attacks from the occupying Power. Restrictions on humanitarian access continue, aggravated by the recent operations of destruction against United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. There has been no implementation of what is to be the second phase of the ceasefire agreement. At the same time, we have witnessed the decline in international media interest in the situation in Palestine, particularly with regard to the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

The chaos in the region is the result of decades of occupation by force, manipulation and unsuccessful unilateral military interventions. Today, this trend is only dangerously increasing, in a context where multilateralism is less effective than

ever. This is in line with our progression towards a new world, shared among a few members whose aim is to extend and secure their respective zones of interest. This can only increase the risks of much bigger conflicts among them, but affecting all of us, as has happened in the past.

We in Tunisia appeal for those historical tragedies not to be repeated. Unilateral approaches cannot solve our world's problems; they can only deepen them. Tunisia reiterates its unconditional support for the legitimate struggles of the Palestinian people against colonialism and for them to regain all their inalienable and imprescriptible rights over their entire territory, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

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

Mr. Al Faily (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to extend to the President my sincere thanks for the opportunity to participate in this meeting. I also thank the members of the Council for their ongoing efforts to fulfil their responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

The Palestinian question remains the moral test for the international community as a whole. The international system has begun to be characterized at times by double standards and bias, whereas its duty is to support peace, which must be achieved through an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the safe delivery of humanitarian aid to the besieged and the needy among the wounded and injured without conditions or obstacles, the lifting of the siege and the guarantee of the full protection of civilians.

The Israeli entity is undermining regional and international efforts to establish a peace process that pervades the region and is turning the region into a hotbed of tension instead of establishing peace and stability therein. This is a result of unjustified Israeli military attacks on the Palestinian people and the application of a policy of collective punishment and genocide.

The Sharm el-Sheikh agreement of 13 October 2025 represents a turning point in the path of crises in the Middle East because it laid a foundation for a permanent cessation of military operations in the Gaza Strip after years of conflict and destruction and enhanced international engagement, with the presence of more than 20 States. The agreement reflects a wide regional and international desire to deal with the crisis, and this cooperation is needed to make peace sustainable.

Iraq believes that the agreement reached in Sharm el-Sheikh is not an end in itself but a first step towards realizing the rights of the Palestinian people. Such efforts will remain incomplete unless and until the occupation ends, the resolutions of international legitimacy are respected, settlement activity stops and the Palestinians receive legal and political guarantees.

Iraq also calls on the international community to bear its responsibility in guaranteeing the full implementation of the initiative in a manner that leads to sustained calm and opens the door to a just and permanent political path for the Palestinian question.

We also condemn the decisions issued by the Israeli entity regarding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the halting of its humanitarian activities in delivering humanitarian aid to the millions of Palestinian refugees who live under the weight of the winter cold, as well as the occupation authorities' storming of United Nations headquarters, their demolition, the seizure of property and the raising of the flag of the Israeli entity over them. These acts are gross violations and a clear breach of international norms and laws.

In conclusion, Iraq renews its firm stance in support of the rights of the Palestinian people and its rejection of all forms of aggression against Gaza and its people, confirming that a just political solution based on ending the occupation is the only way to achieve security and stability in the region. Iraq stresses that real peace cannot be achieved except by a just solution ending the Palestinian question that includes establishing an independent State of Palestine with Al-Quds as its capital, guaranteeing the legitimate rights of the Palestinians to their land and not conceding these constants.

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

Mr. Soberón Guzmán (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We align ourselves with the statements to be made by the representative of Uganda, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of Venezuela, on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the statement made by the representative of Nicaragua, in his capacity as Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The Middle East region is going through a period of deep instability as a result of the application of the United States doctrine of peace through force, which undermines multilateralism. The genocide against an entire people, prolonged conflicts, occupations and unilateral actions against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the region constitute an affront to peace and a violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, which gravely threaten international security.

The historical complicity of the United States and its unrestricted political, diplomatic, military and financial backing for Israel have sustained for decades a criminal and annexationist policy, in flagrant violation of the multiple Council resolutions on the Palestinian question.

Israel's attacks against the civilian population and essential infrastructure in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which have deprived the Palestinian people of the most elementary services for life, hindered the delivery of humanitarian aid and utilized hunger as a weapon of war, constitute crimes against humanity, apartheid and genocide, for which Israel must be held accountable.

With a despicable attitude, Israel continues to violate the ceasefire. In November 2025, after the signing of a delayed and fragile peace plan, the occupying Power carried out military incursions in the northern West Bank, which left various people wounded and hundreds detained. These facts are not isolated; they form part of a systematic strategy of occupation, colonization and collective punishment by the Zionist regime to impede by force the establishment and recognition of the independent State of Palestine.

We denounce the Israeli declaration of the provisional ceasefire line, known as the "yellow line", as the new frontier between Gaza and Israel, which constitutes an additional violation of the peace plan and of international law. At the same time, we demand the withdrawal of Israeli occupation troops from the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

We strongly condemn the attack perpetrated by Israel on 20 January against the facilities and personnel of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in East Jerusalem. This action hinders the provision of vital assistance to millions of Palestinian refugees. Attacking humanitarian workers and United Nations institutions is an unacceptable act that undermines their humanitarian efforts and aggravates the suffering of the civilian population.

Cuba reaffirms the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to have an independent and sovereign State, on the basis of the two-State solution, within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and one that guarantees the right of return of refugees. We urge the immediate admission of Palestine as a full Member State of the United Nations. Doing so is the first step to advance towards the long-awaited two-State solution.

Israel's policies of aggression, aimed at reconfiguring the Middle East by force, perpetuate the cycle of violence and insecurity in the region. Cuba condemns Israel's territorial usurpation in southern Lebanon through the construction of illegal walls that limit access to Lebanese land and the continuation of targeted assassinations against Lebanese people, in grave violation of international law, which constitutes an attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that nation. Likewise, we join the rejection, in particular by the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations, of Israel's unilateral action against the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Somalia. This new aggression generates regional and international instability, might have profound implications for peace and highlights Israel's double standards in continuing to prevent the recognition of Palestine as an independent State.

Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from the Syrian Golan — a territory recognized as an integral part of Syria — and from all occupied Arab territories is urgently needed.

We call for an irresponsible aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran to be avoided, and we strongly oppose the use or threat of the use of force in international relations. We reaffirm that true peace cannot be achieved through force but rather through dialogue and negotiation among equals, not under threat, pressure or coercion.

It will not be possible to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East without a comprehensive and definitive solution to the Palestinian question. It is imperative that the international community act with firmness and determination. Impunity cannot prevail, and the defence of the Charter of the United Nations must guide every action of the Security Council with a view to fulfilling the founding objectives of the Organization.

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

Mr. Utebaev (Kyrgyzstan): My delegation thanks Somalia for convening this open debate and the briefer for his contribution. We also welcome the high-level representatives who spoke this morning.

According to the latest reports provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, we note some positive dynamics. The opening of the Rafah border crossing will allow more humanitarian assistance to enter, which means that more aid will reach civilians in need. These steps are important and should continue. Since the ceasefire, United Nations agencies and their partners have delivered hundreds of thousands of aid packages, reaching thousands of children, families and vulnerable communities. These efforts reflect the unwavering dedication of the humanitarian actors working on the ground under extremely difficult circumstances. United Nations personnel must be protected under international law.

However, the humanitarian situation remains grave. United Nations agencies report severe shortages of food, clean water, medicine and fuel across Gaza. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs notes that clean water access is limited, and water systems remain damaged. Medical supplies are at critical levels, threatening life-saving procedures. These conditions leave hospitals overwhelmed

and families in desperate need. More than 1 million people still require urgent shelter support. Children are especially vulnerable and need urgent assistance. Kyrgyzstan stresses that the protection of civilians must be ensured at all times. All parties must fully respect international law, including international humanitarian law. We call for full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza. Aid deliveries must be predictable, consistent and sufficient. The Security Council has a responsibility to support de-escalation and to build on positive dynamics. All sides must exercise restraint.

Kyrgyzstan believes that military solutions cannot bring a lasting peace. Dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable path forward. The killings must stop. As stated by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic during the United Nations General Assembly in September (see A/80/PV.5), the only way to establish lasting peace is to implement the principle of two States for two peoples. Palestine must gain independence based on the 1967 borders. This must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, including the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, and international law.

Kyrgyzstan calls for continued humanitarian access. We urge further de-escalation. We call for concrete steps towards a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

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

Mr. Mythen (Ireland): I thank Somalia for convening today's meeting and thank Mr. Alakbarov for his briefing.

I deliver this statement on behalf of members of the core group of the shared commitments on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), namely Algeria, Brazil, Guyana, Indonesia, Ireland, Jordan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Norway, Palestine, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain and Türkiye.

We express our deep concern about and condemn the further actions taken by the Israeli authorities over the past couple of weeks against UNRWA's premises in occupied East Jerusalem. We likewise express our deep concern about the grave impact these actions have on the Agency's ability to deliver its mandated education, health, relief and social services to Palestine refugees.

These most recent grave attacks are the latest in a series of unprecedented and systematic measures imposed by the Israeli authorities against UNRWA, which seek to challenge its legitimacy, obstruct its operations and ultimately dismantle its work across the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The actions undermine UNRWA's United Nations mandate, which has just been renewed for another three years by the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority. They violate international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant United Nations resolutions and run counter to the findings of the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of 22 October 2025 (see A/80/502).

Israel, as occupying Power, is obliged under international law to ensure full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and to enable the continued functioning of United Nations humanitarian operations, in line with international humanitarian law and the relevant international legal obligations. We call upon Israel to abide by its obligations under international law, including under the United Nations Charter and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, to cease the unlawful actions and forcible closure of UNRWA premises and to fully restore

UNRWA's demolished Shaykh Jarrah compound and return it and other UNRWA premises to the United Nations without delay.

The core group stresses that Israel has no sovereign rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and that any application of its laws or claims seeking to alter the status of United Nations premises are unlawful and without legal effect. The group also calls upon Israel to stop impeding UNRWA's indispensable work in the Gaza Strip as a provider of life-saving humanitarian relief and essential basic services, ranging from education, healthcare and psychosocial support to water and waste management. UNRWA has the network, the expertise and the acceptance of the local communities to deliver at scale. In just one of numerous concrete examples, over the past 10 days, UNRWA, together with UNICEF and the World Health Organization, has been implementing an immunization catch-up campaign for children under 3 to address vaccination gaps after more than two years of conflict.

In the face of enormous political, operational and financial pressures, UNRWA continues to provide an indispensable lifeline to Palestine refugees across the region and contributes tangibly to regional stability. The work of UNRWA, together with other United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations, is essential to confront the catastrophic humanitarian situation and to deliver life-saving assistance and essential services to the civilian population in Gaza, the West Bank including East Jerusalem and the wider region until a just and lasting peace is reached through the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the two-State solution. The core group of the shared commitments on UNRWA reaffirms its support for the Agency and its General Assembly mandate and reiterates its call to halt all attacks and measures against UNRWA and to ensure that it is allowed to carry out its indispensable work in line with its mandate.

Let me now make some remarks in my national capacity.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Ireland welcomes the ongoing efforts to implement phase two of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, including the formation of the 15-member National Committee for the Administration of Gaza. We are relieved that the remains of the last Israeli hostage held in Gaza have now been recovered. We extend our deepest condolences to the family of Ran Gvili, and to echo the word of Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov, we also hope that the process of healing for the families and all those affected may now begin in earnest.

Moving forward to the second phase of the Plan is essential for the people of Gaza to begin to rebuild their lives and for peace and security in the region. We share concerns that the scope of the Board of Peace that is now envisaged would appear to be wider than the mandate provided by the Security Council. Ireland, together with European Union colleagues, remains ready to work with the United States on the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, in accordance with resolution 2803 (2025). As the second phase begins, we must ensure that all parties adhere to their commitments in full and desist from any actions inconsistent with what has been agreed.

Ireland is deeply concerned that humanitarian access has not materialized to the extent set out in the Comprehensive Plan and that humanitarian aid continues to be severely restricted by Israel, including through restrictive registration measures against international non-governmental organizations. Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Helen McEntee, witnessed such restrictions on so-called dual-use

goods during a visit to the Rafah crossing earlier this month. She also witnessed the impressive operations and readiness of humanitarian workers to deliver aid at scale.

Israel must immediately remove its restrictions on aid and facilitate essential supplies and services to access all parts of the Gaza Strip. Ireland is deeply concerned about the destructive actions taken by the Israeli authorities last week on UNRWA premises in East Jerusalem. These measures come in addition to wider concerted efforts on the part of Israel to dismantle UNRWA operations. Ireland reaffirms its support for UNRWA's mandate and has announced an additional €20 million in funding to the organization. We call on Israel to halt all attacks and measures against the Agency. Israel must respect international law and the privileges and immunities of the United Nations.

We must not lose sight of the situation in the West Bank, where Israeli military operations have caused widespread destruction and significant displacement. We also strongly oppose the approval of the E1 settlement plan, which is a flagrant breach of international law. We call for the release of tax revenues owed to the Palestinian Authority. Such unilateral actions violate international law and risk fuelling instability. The West Bank, including East Jerusalem, must be central to efforts to reach agreement on a durable peace plan based on the two-State solution. Ireland is an active member of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. Today, Ireland is hosting a meeting of the Global Alliance in Dublin, at which we will share elements of our own experience of an inclusive and, ultimately, successful peace process in Northern Ireland. With our colleagues, we look to transform the commitments outlined within the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution into concrete and timely actions.

Turning to Lebanon, we welcome the efforts of the Lebanese authorities towards disarming non-State actors. All parties must abide by their commitments under the 2025 disarmament plan. Israel's violations of Lebanon's sovereignty continue to endanger these efforts. Ireland wholeheartedly supports the continuing work of the peacekeeping mission of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, in which we are proud to serve.

Today we stand at a crossroads, with an opportunity to implement the necessary measures for lasting peace and justice for Israelis and Palestinians alike and to build upon existing processes that centre on human rights, international law and accountability. It is in the interest of each and every one of us to seize this opportunity.

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

Mr. Hoang Nguyen Nguyen (Viet Nam): I thank Somalia for convening this important open debate.

Viet Nam aligns itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

At a time when the world is witnessing complex and simultaneous crises across the region, it is imperative that the Security Council remain fully seized of the developments in the Middle East, in particular in Gaza. The volatility of the current situation and its far-reaching implications for regional and international peace and security demand sustained attention and engagement. Viet Nam welcomes the progress achieved thus far in the implementation of phase one and the commencement of phase two of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which represents a constructive step towards reducing violence, alleviating humanitarian suffering and advancing the political track to achieve durable peace. Viet Nam also notes that resolution 2803 (2025), adopted more than two months ago, reaffirmed the Council's

responsibility to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan is carried out in full conformity with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. It also underscored the expectation that all relevant parties would implement their commitments in a consistent and responsible manner.

At the same time, Viet Nam remains deeply concerned about the fragility of the ceasefire, which continues to be tested by sporadic violence, allegations of non-compliance and even destruction of United Nations premises. While humanitarian conditions in Gaza have seen limited improvement, the overall situation remains dire, marked by massive destruction, prolonged displacement and the continued disruption of essential services. Humanitarian access is still constrained, and food insecurity remains severe. Viet Nam opposes all actions that heighten tensions or undermine the prospects for peace. We call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and to fully respect the United Nations Charter, international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the provisional measures rendered by the International Court of Justice. The protection of civilians and civilian objects, including essential infrastructure, must remain an overriding priority. Safe, sustained and unhindered humanitarian access must be ensured, alongside efforts to restore basic services.

Viet Nam consistently supports collective international efforts to address conflicts through peaceful means in accordance with international law and with full respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We emphasize the central role of the United Nations, including the Council, and reaffirm our support for the work of the relevant United Nations entities, including the indispensable role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in coordinating and delivering humanitarian assistance in Gaza. Viet Nam reiterates its unwavering support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and for the two-State solution. We support the relevant international initiatives to this end, including the United Nations 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 resulting New York Declaration of September 2025.

Guided by its long-standing principles and consistent position, Viet Nam's decision to participate in the Board of Peace reflects our commitment to contributing to a peaceful settlement of the conflict and the reconstruction of Gaza and to a lasting and comprehensive resolution of the Middle East peace process in line with international law, the United Nations Charter and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2803 (2025).

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

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): This quarterly meeting of the Security Council is taking place amid a particularly sensitive context for the Middle East. Despite the ceasefire brokered in October 2025 and reaffirmed by the Security Council through resolution 2803 (2025), Mexico expresses its deep concern at the deaths of nearly 2,000 Palestinians over the past two months and the continuation of military operations, settler attacks, the displacement of entire families and the destruction of homes and civilian infrastructure. In Gaza, much of the population remains displaced. In the middle of winter, the lack of adequate housing and sufficient aid has claimed lives through hypothermia. It is alarming that even with a ceasefire officially in force, humanitarian assistance continues to be insufficient and severely hampered.

As the international community, we must support the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Recent developments affecting UNRWA facilities are of the utmost gravity for the restrictions

they place on humanitarian assistance and the implications for the protected status and immunity of the facilities of a body such as the United Nations. Mexico condemns the demolition of UNRWA facilities in Shaykh Jarrah, as UNRWA's work is vital to nearly 6 million Palestinian refugees. Also of particular concern is the fact that the land confiscated has been set aside for the construction of new homes for settlers, in blatant contravention of international law.

Mexico notes with alarm the decision to prohibit access to Gaza to international non-governmental organizations operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Notice thereof — given to 37 humanitarian organizations, which make up approximately 15 per cent of all those operating on the ground — deals a severe blow to the already dire humanitarian situation. The disappearance of that relief spells a worsening humanitarian catastrophe.

Amid this state of affairs, Mexico underscores that the Security Council cannot and must not remain indifferent. Guaranteeing unhindered humanitarian access is not optional; it is the direct responsibility of the Council. These events reaffirm the urgent need to move towards a clear political horizon, namely, the two-State solution, whereby Israel and Palestine live side by side in peace and security within secure and recognized borders based on 1967 lines — parameters endorsed in no uncertain terms in the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. The Palestinian people's right to self-determination must be fully respected.

We acknowledge the efforts made by the United States of America, the State of Qatar and the Arab Republic of Egypt to move towards the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. Progress must be made on the modalities and timelines for demilitarization, the phased withdrawal of Israeli forces and the composition and oversight mechanisms of the new governance arrangements. In accordance with resolution 2803 (2025), the newly established Board of Peace shall coordinate the financing plan for the redevelopment of Gaza, in a manner consistent with the principles of international law, until the Palestinian Authority has successfully completed its reform programme. Mexico is considering its participation in accordance with its Constitution and the principle of the self-determination of peoples, as well as Mexico's recognition of the State of Palestine.

The Council must ensure that there is genuine implementation in accordance with the provisions of resolution 2803 (2025). This, in turn, requires coordination and participation by the United Nations to oversee aspects related to governance, reconstruction and development in Gaza. Similarly, we believe that the eventual deployment of the international stabilization force should benefit from the advice of the United Nations Department of Peace Operations.

I conclude by reiterating that peace in the Middle East will not be possible as long as human suffering, prolonged occupation and the denial of fundamental rights remain normalized. The international community must act decisively to protect human dignity, preserve international law and lay the foundations for peaceful and lasting coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis. Likewise, we must lay and strengthen the foundations for peaceful coexistence through narratives that speak of peace and mutual prosperity.

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

Mr. França Danese (Brazil): Brazil aligns itself with the statement made by Ireland on behalf of the core group of the Shared Commitments on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The gravity of the situation in the Middle East and risks of regional escalation demand that the Security Council do more, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. Selective application of international law or paralysis deepen instability and undermine the credibility of the United Nations.

I shall concentrate on the situation in the State of Palestine, particularly in Gaza, which requires intense international attention. It is unacceptable that, since the ceasefire, almost 500 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza by Israeli actions; and that Israel arbitrarily expands its illegal control, forcibly displaces civilians and maintains illegal restrictions on humanitarian aid, with deadly consequences. The guarantors of the ceasefire must ensure its full implementation.

The protection of civilians and the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance are legal obligations and must be fully respected.

Only a political solution, grounded in international law and on the two-State solution, can deliver sustainable peace. This entails an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel in peace and security, within the pre-1967 borders, including the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in full respect for the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

Strengthening Palestinian institutions and restoring the political and geographical unity of the State of Palestine are crucial. The New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution reiterated the international commitment to translate long-standing promises into concrete action for peace.

This Organization, and this body in particular, offer the only legitimate and internationally accepted framework for the resolution of all issues involving international peace and security. It is crucial to implement resolution 2803 (2025). Brazil strongly suggests that the State of Palestine be invited as a member of the Board of Peace, which should focus its work on the situation in Gaza.

That situation cannot be dissociated from the whole context of occupation. In the West Bank, the actions and statements of Israeli authorities are unlawful and unacceptable. The continuous illegal expansion of settlements aims at preventing the implementation of the two-State solution.

Brazil condemns, in the strongest terms, the incursion by Israeli security forces into UNRWA premises in East Jerusalem, as well as the demolition of UNRWA buildings. Those actions are flagrant violations of all Israel's obligations under the international community, international law and international humanitarian law.

As Chair of the UNRWA Advisory Commission, Brazil reaffirms its strong and unwavering support for the Agency. We also underscore the 2024 and 2025 advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice on the Israeli occupation and urge Israel to vacate UNRWA installations and to fully respect the Agency's mandate.

We stand at a crossroads. Continued inaction or half-measures perpetuate violence and suffering, while weakening the Council. Brazil calls on the Security Council and the United Nations, guided by international law and the United Nations Charter, to act with unity and a renewed sense of responsibility.

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

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I wish to commend Somalia for its leadership of the Council during this month.

For the first time in many years, the Middle East stands at a moment of real opportunity. Kazakhstan joins the international community in welcoming the

sustained ceasefire in Gaza and the tangible steps taken towards ending large-scale hostilities. We also welcome the recent return of the remains of the last Israeli hostage, which represents an important humanitarian step. We note with appreciation the decisive diplomatic efforts led by the United States, under the leadership of President Donald Trump, with the support of Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye, which made this progress possible.

Kazakhstan also welcomes the adoption of resolution 2803 (2025), which endorsed the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and supported the establishment of the Board of Peace as a mechanism to accompany the post-conflict phase. We consider this initiative to be an important attempt to mobilize international engagement, stabilize the situation on the ground and advance reconstruction efforts. In this context, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan has accepted the invitation extended by President Trump to participate in the Board of Peace, guided by Kazakhstan's firm belief that all credible diplomatic avenues must be used to achieve lasting peace in the Middle East.

We attach great importance to maintaining a balanced and inclusive international approach. In this regard, we welcome the successful conclusion of the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and the adoption of the New York Declaration under the joint leadership of France and Saudi Arabia. Kazakhstan supports diplomatic initiatives aimed at regional reconciliation, including the Arab Peace Initiative, the Abraham Accords and other efforts that contribute to dialogue, confidence-building and normalization of the situation.

We reaffirm our principled position in support of a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement based on the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security, within internationally recognized borders and in accordance with international law.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains extremely fragile. Unimpeded humanitarian access, early recovery and reconstruction are urgent priorities. Kazakhstan underscores the indispensable role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in alleviating human suffering and supporting the Palestinian people during this critical transition.

We also believe that peace in Gaza must serve as a catalyst for broader regional stability, including in Lebanon, Syria and Yemen.

In conclusion, Kazakhstan reaffirms its readiness to contribute constructively to international efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, in full accordance with the United Nations Charter and relevant Security

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): After more than two years of the devastating conflict in Gaza, we finally have a framework, endorsed by the Council through resolution 2803 (2025), that offers a realistic and comprehensive pathway from emergency response to reconstruction, paving the way for a sustainable political settlement. In this context, the United Arab Emirates welcomes the launch of the Board of Peace and the formation of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza and affirms its commitment towards the full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, including through its membership in the Board of Peace and the Executive Board for Gaza.

For decades, the United Arab Emirates has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to the Palestinian people. During the war on Gaza, my country

spearheaded international efforts to provide humanitarian aid to the Strip. Those efforts continue, most recently with the delivery of more than 7,300 tons of relief supplies to Gaza aboard the Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid humanitarian ship.

However, we are fully aware that humanitarian assistance alone cannot restore what was destroyed. During the next phase, the commitments already undertaken must be fully honoured, and the implementation of phase two of the comprehensive peace plan must be accelerated. This must include Israel's adherence to the agreed withdrawal and guarantee the disarmament of Hamas and other armed groups, the restoration of essential services and the facilitation of reconstruction efforts. Now that all hostages have been returned, we stress the need for the full reopening of the Rafah crossing in both directions in order to allow the resumption of movement of people and the flow of humanitarian aid and commercial goods.

We further underscore the importance of ensuring unimpeded humanitarian access to all those in greatest need, especially given the staggering humanitarian need, with nearly 800,000 people living in flood-prone areas as the bitter cold continues to claim lives. In this context, we reaffirm our support for United Nations humanitarian efforts in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including those of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

My country expresses its deep concern about the continued deterioration of the situation in the occupied West Bank. The recent approval by the Israeli Cabinet of the establishment and legalization of 19 settlements in the West Bank constitutes a dangerous escalation and a violation of international law. This decision will further fragment Palestinian territory and undermine prospects for peace. At the same time, settler violence persists at alarming levels. These illegal practices must end, and those responsible must be held accountable.

With the holy month of Ramadan approaching, we stress the importance of ensuring that worshippers have unimpeded access to Al-Aqsa Mosque and all other holy sites in Jerusalem and of respecting the custodial role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan over these sites.

In conclusion, today we have an opportunity to transform the ceasefire into a lasting peace, through a genuine and collective commitment to the full implementation of the comprehensive peace plan and to the launch of a clear and irreversible political process. This process must lead to the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side in peace and prosperity with Israel. The United Arab Emirates affirms that it stands ready to support all such efforts.

The President: There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until tomorrow afternoon, directly following the adjournment of the 10,099th meeting, concerning Haiti.

The meeting was suspended at 6.05 p.m.