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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Abdullahi	(Somalia)
<i>Members:</i>	Bahrain	Mr. Alrowaieci
	China	Mr. Zheng Minghao
	Colombia	Mrs. Ríos Serna
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mr. Mupepe Matomene
	Denmark	Ms. Ibrahim
	France	Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault
	Greece.....	Mr. Zves
	Latvia.....	Ms. Camane Locmele
	Liberia	Mr. Sillah
	Pakistan.....	Mr. Taj
	Panama	Mr. Barrios La Fontaine
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dergachev
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.....	Mr. Coyle
	United States of America.....	Ms. Patterson

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting resumed at 3.50 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 light on the microphone will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Olabi (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I address you today as a Permanent Representative and as an eyewitness. On 10 January, I visited the separation zone in southern Syria together with the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix. We met with Syrian men and women from the Qunaytirah Governorate and listened to accounts of their suffering. We heard from fathers whose sons had been abducted by the Israeli occupation. We felt the pain endured by Syrian farmers who have lost their agricultural lands and fruit trees, which were razed by the occupation's bulldozers. The Syrian women there told us that the homes in which they had lived their entire lives and which had sheltered them were destroyed — and for what purpose? They were destroyed to make way for the establishment by the occupation of earth berms and military fortifications on Syrian land.

We listened to the testimonies of defenceless Syrian residents regarding the continued targeting of civilians by the occupation forces, all under false security pretexts, while they sought to earn their livelihoods. We promised them that we would convey their plight to the world through this platform, the United Nations. We also promised that we would work for the return of their sons, dozens of whom were abducted by the occupation during the establishment of military checkpoints that fragmented communities, paralysed movement, terrorized citizens, subjected them to harassment through searches and resulted in enforced disappearance — once again, all on Syrian territory.

In the past few days, Israeli occupation aircraft have repeatedly sprayed unidentified chemical substances on Syrian land and forests. The question arises: are the occupation's alleged security concerns related to trees, pastures and livestock? Does the occupation not understand that the dignity and livelihood of the Syrian people are no less important than life itself?

Syria will continue its efforts and will not stand idly by. It is taking immediate and necessary measures to identify and assess the damage resulting from the unlawful Israeli occupation in southern Syria. My Government is making efforts to document this damage so that it may serve as a legal basis for accountability and for claiming compensation for the harm caused by Israeli military practices. In this regard, we reiterate our demand for the cessation of the unlawful presence of Israeli occupation forces in the area of separation since 8 December 2024.

At this sensitive and critical time, when the importance of the mandate of peacekeeping forces in southern Syria is clearly demonstrated, the Security Council adopted resolution 2811 (2025). Although concise, this resolution preserved the established international parameters, in particular resolution 338 (1973) and the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

We emphasize the vital role played by the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and the Observer Group Golan, which I met personally, in monitoring Israeli violations and reporting them as neutral witnesses of the United Nations.

In conclusion, despite Syria's positive engagement in direct talks with Israel, mediated by the United States, Israel continues to attempt to pursue a destructive approach by inciting segments of the Syrian people against one another through false

slogans. However, the Syrian people are fully aware of these Israeli schemes. In a scene embodying unity and solidarity among Syrians, we all witnessed how the dignitaries of the esteemed Druze community offered condolences to the families of Bayt Jinn for the 13 martyrs who fell as a result of the Israeli massacre. Likewise, Syrian American Jews were among the most prominent advocates for lifting sanctions on Syria following their return after decades, even as Israel called on the United States Administration to maintain those sanctions. They stood by their country. In the end, the Syrians prevailed.

Finally, let us be clear: the ceasefire line and the area of separation established by the 1974 Agreement constitute a geographical space separating the Syrian homeland from the occupied Syrian Golan. They are not our borders with Israel. The issue of the occupied Syrian Golan is not a sovereignty dispute with Israel. The Golan is Syrian land, and military control does not equate to sovereignty. The Israeli fantasy regarding borders, walls of protection and alleged security risks is not grounded in reality — neither geographically nor politically. Nevertheless, my country remains convinced that peaceful means are the most effective means to resolve disputes. Our openness to diplomacy and dialogue and the restraint we demonstrate must not be interpreted as a concession or weakness. Syria will not bargain over the recovery of its land or its rights. If Israel believes that our engagement in security talks constitutes a waiver of the rights of the Syrian people, it is without a doubt mistaken.

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

Mr. Bayley Angeleri (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations.

We meet today once again under the shadow of a tragedy that continues to unfold before the eyes of the international community. Three months after our most recent open debate on this agenda item (see S/PV.10023), the situation on the ground throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular in the Gaza Strip, remains dire and catastrophic and continues to deteriorate, revealing an alarming pattern of deliberate disregard for international law by the occupying Power.

Despite the ceasefire announced in October 2025, Gaza remains a devastated enclave. Israel, the occupying Power, has repeatedly violated the ceasefire through air strikes and other attacks, killing and injuring Palestinian children, women and men, restricting humanitarian access and subjecting an entire traumatized civilian population, most of whom remain displaced, to conditions that are — to say the least — incompatible with human dignity. Winter has only worsened this suffering, with reports of deaths, including among children, due to exposure to cold, lack of shelter, food insecurity and inadequate healthcare. A ceasefire that does not translate into protection, reconstruction and freedom from the siege is not only fragile; it is not peace. It is merely a pause in the destruction and human suffering that continues today.

We must also recall that in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli settlement expansion has accelerated in recent months, with thousands of new residential units approved, land seizures intensified and entire communities threatened with forced displacement. We must also warn that plans to colonize the E-1 area would only sever the territorial contiguity of the West Bank, thereby irreversibly undermining the viability of the two-State solution.

Daily military raids, arbitrary arrests, including of children, and rampant settler violence — often carried out with total impunity and official protection — have unfortunately become the norm. Settler gangs are terrorizing the Palestinian people,

forcing entire communities to leave their lands in fear for their lives. These acts constitute grave violations of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and directly contravene resolution 2334 (2016).

Over the past months, Israel has intensified its systematic campaign to dismantle the humanitarian lifelines sustaining the Palestinian people. Our Group expresses deep concern about the legislative assault against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The legislation adopted by the Israeli Knesset in December 2025, mandating the suspension of water, electricity, fuel, communications and banking services to UNRWA facilities and authorizing the seizure of United Nations property, represents a grave and unprecedented escalation that entails, *inter alia*, the revocation through domestic law of the privileges and immunities accorded to UNRWA. The incidents on 8 December 2025 and 20 January 2026 at UNRWA's Shaykh Jarrah compound and on 12 January 2026 at the UNRWA health centre in Jerusalem are concrete examples of what the future may look like.

Let us be clear: this is not an administrative dispute. It is an attack on the United Nations itself, as we have clearly stated in the special communiqué that we issued on this subject on 8 January. It is an attempt to extend the exercise of sovereignty in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by openly violating international humanitarian law, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and the legal obligations reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 22 October 2025. By criminalizing cooperation with a United Nations agency and attempting to paralyse its operations, especially in East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, Israel is not only failing to comply with its obligations as an occupying Power; it is also seeking to unilaterally relieve the international community of its permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine.

Equally alarming is Israel's decision to deregister dozens of international non-governmental organizations, effectively halting their life-saving work across the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This coordinated campaign against humanitarian actors, many of which Israel has also classified as supposed terrorist organizations, reveals an undeniable intent: namely, that of depriving the Palestinian population of the means to survive, forcing its displacement and imposing demographic and political changes on the ground through coercion, rather than law.

That is why we take this opportunity to reaffirm our unwavering support for UNRWA and reaffirm our rejection of any attempt to dismantle, replace or weaken its mandate through illegal measures. UNRWA is indispensable not only in terms of humanitarian assistance, but also to safeguard the inalienable rights of Palestine refugees, including the rights to return and compensation. We must reiterate that an attack on UNRWA is an attack on the United Nations system as a whole.

All these developments cannot be viewed in isolation. They are part of a broader strategy to entrench the illegal occupation and to exclude any possibility of attaining a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, thereby preventing the achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East and further undermining international peace and security. In this context, the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations reiterates that accountability is not optional; it is a legal and moral imperative. Impunity has only emboldened the occupying Power and fuelled the current catastrophe, which we have witnessed with profound shock and distress, against a backdrop of years of deplorable military occupation.

For its part, the use of the veto by the United States of America cannot continue to be employed as a means of shielding Israel from responsibility, as this would only prolong this unlawful situation that, over the years, has gravely undermined the credibility of this body and eroded trust in multilateralism. Justice is therefore essential to putting an end to the prevailing cycle of impunity.

Allow me to express our deep concern about the broader regional implications of Israel's actions. The continued provocations, violations of sovereignty and threats and use of force against countries in the region risk igniting a wider conflict with catastrophic consequences. This is coupled with the unilateral actions of the United States of America in the region, including continued large-scale air strikes and constant threats against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the non-use of force, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, is essential to prevent further destabilization.

In this critical moment, the international community must act with courage and consistency. Expressions of concern no longer suffice. The Security Council must uphold its responsibility to demand a permanent ceasefire; to call for full, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access and protection of the United Nations and its personnel; and to take concrete measures to ensure full respect of and compliance with international law. With regard to UNRWA, it must also call for the repeal of the most recent and previous laws enacted by the occupying Power; call for the return of United Nations property; and call for restoring UNRWA's full operational capacity throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms its steadfast solidarity with the Palestinian people and its firm support for their just cause and their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and independence. We reiterate our call for a sovereign and viable State of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions and on the basis of the two-State solution, while also guaranteeing the right of return of Palestine refugees. We also call once again on those who have not done so yet to recognize the State of Palestine without further delay. In this context, we reaffirm our support for the admission of the State of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations.

History will judge not only those who committed these crimes and their enablers, but also those who stood idly by or remained silent. The humanity of our time cannot allow injustice to become destiny. Saving Palestine preserves the international legal order and the United Nations for all peoples. Let us choose law over impunity, justice over force and dignity over despair.

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

Mr. Ananyan (Armenia): We extend our gratitude to the presidency of Somalia in the United Nations Security Council for convening this open debate on the situation in the Middle East and thank the briefers for their insightful remarks.

Owing to its geographic proximity to the Middle East, historically friendly relations with the countries of the region and the sizeable presence of Armenian communities across the region, Armenia has always closely followed developments in the Middle East and contributed to international efforts aimed at bringing lasting peace and security to this important part of the world through tangible engagement, including peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance.

In this context, we are deeply concerned by the reports of recent escalation in the south of Lebanon, despite the ceasefire of November 2024. We call on all sides to exercise restraint and engage in dialogue to address issues of concern through

peaceful means. Armenian peacekeepers in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, alongside their international partners, continue to fulfil their peacekeeping duties with professionalism and dedication in order to maintain peace and security in the region.

We reiterate Armenia's position in support of achieving a peaceful, just and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in line with the two-State solution.

Armenia emphasizes the need to protect civilians, ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access and uphold international humanitarian law as indispensable elements of any lasting peace. Currently, the Government of Armenia is working with the World Health Organization to organize the treatment of dozens of children from Gaza in the hospitals of Armenia, in solidarity with those facing acute humanitarian crises.

We also stress the importance of consolidating the ceasefire and preventing further regional escalation that could undermine the fragile stability across the Middle East. In this vein, Armenia participated in the Middle East peace summit in Sharm el-Sheikh. We appreciate President Trump's personal contribution and continued efforts aimed at establishing peace in Gaza and addressing humanitarian issues. We also value the contribution of the mediator States, in particular Qatar, Egypt, Türkiye and others, to advancing dialogue and facilitating steps towards a sustainable settlement.

Armenia welcomes resolution 2803 (2025) on Gaza, adopted on 17 November last year, and our Government stands ready to contribute to the Board of Peace and the international stabilization force. In this regard, Armenia signed the Charter of the Board of Peace as a founding member, reaffirming its principled commitment to post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction and the consolidation of peace. Armenia stands ready to actively engage within the Board of Peace, in close coordination with international partners, to contribute constructively to sustainable peace on the ground.

We reiterate Armenia's consistent support for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of friendly Syria. A Syrian-led and Syrian-owned post-conflict rehabilitation and peacebuilding process is crucial to ensure durable peace in the country. Armenia stands ready to contribute to post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts, including through further provision of humanitarian and medical assistance and the renewal of humanitarian demining activities.

The Republic of Armenia looks forward to working with all international partners genuinely interested in achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and in establishing prosperity for all.

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

Ms. Rivera Carmona (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to express my gratitude for the convening of this debate and to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your presidency this month. We also appreciate the briefing by Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator and Resident Coordinator of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

My country welcomes the ceasefire agreement signed on 8 October, thanks to the mediation efforts of the United States, Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye. We appreciate the release of all hostages held by Hamas, including the last release, which took place this past weekend.

Chile views with deep concern the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip, with emergency services limited by restrictions imposed in areas occupied by Israeli

forces. The magnitude of human suffering is alarming. The high number of civilian casualties, including thousands of children, and the massive destruction of essential infrastructure are contrary to the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law.

We encourage the parties to fulfil their commitments in good faith, ensure the protection of the civilian population, urgently address humanitarian needs and maintain dialogue as the only way to advance towards a just and sustainable peace through the implementation of the two-State solution, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

Chile reiterates that all parties to the conflict are obliged to respect international law, international humanitarian law and human rights. Also, we view with concern the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, owing to severe weather conditions that have led to an increase in respiratory diseases, increased levels of overcrowding and a sustained deterioration of living conditions.

The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has highlighted that the occupied West Bank is experiencing its most serious humanitarian crisis since 1967, with nearly 33,000 people still forcibly displaced in Palestinian refugee camps in the north.

With regard to the occupied West Bank, we reiterate our concern about the continued expansion of settlements and the plans announced by the Israeli authorities for new construction, as well as the violence perpetrated by settlers against Palestinians in these areas. As the International Court of Justice emphasized in 2024, the settlements are illegal and constitute a flagrant violation of international law because they irreversibly alter the demographic composition of the territory and undermine the viability of the two-State solution. The Court also demanded that Israel end the settlements as soon as possible.

With regard to the attack on 20 January on the UNRWA Sheikh Jarrah compound in Jerusalem, as well as the recent arson attack, we echo the statements made by the Secretary-General, who strongly condemned the actions and recalled that the compound remains the property of the United Nations and is, therefore, inviolable and immune from any form of interference.

We urgently call for full, safe and uninterrupted humanitarian access and respect for the fundamental role of United Nations humanitarian agencies, particularly UNRWA, whose work is indispensable for the survival of millions of people. Chile also reiterates that only the implementation of a political solution, based on international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, will allow for progress to be made towards a just and lasting peace.

Lastly, we call on the Council to fully assume its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security by adopting concrete measures that contribute to the protection of civilians, respect for international law and the creation of the necessary conditions for a cessation of hostilities and the resumption of a credible political process.

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

Mr. Muhumuza (Uganda): I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the 121 members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

I congratulate the Federal Republic of Somalia on its accession to the presidency of the Security Council this month and express appreciation for granting NAM the opportunity to present its position on the question of Palestine.

NAM reaffirms its long-standing, common and principled position on the question of Palestine and is deeply concerned about the implications of this historic injustice against the people of Palestine and most critically the Gaza conflict and its unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe. NAM supports all prospects for a just solution to this historic injustice and for peace and security in the region. The grave situation in Gaza has led to a worsening humanitarian situation not only in Gaza but also throughout the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, with rising Israeli military raids, forced displacement of entire Palestinian communities, settler violence and constant violations against the historic and legal status quo at the Holy sites of Jerusalem.

NAM condemns in the strongest terms all forms of violence, particularly Israeli military attacks and Israel's collective punishment against the Palestinian people, as grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. The killing and injury of 72,000 Palestinian civilians in Gaza, the majority of whom were children and women, as well as medical personnel, humanitarian workers and journalists, is an indictment against the mandate of the Security Council. NAM demands an immediate and complete cessation of all forms of armed hostilities, violent repression and illegal Israeli policies and practices against the Palestinian people and other nations in the region.

The Members of the United Nations conferred on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with Articles 12 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council must uphold its mandate to maintain international peace and security and must act to implement its own resolutions, as provided for in the United Nations Charter. We call on the Security Council to uphold its responsibilities and to act forthwith for the full implementation of all its resolutions pertaining to the question of Palestine, including its most recent resolutions: 2334 (2016), 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023), 2728 (2024) and 2735 (2024), as well as 2803 (2025), adopted following the ceasefire agreement.

The Non-Aligned Movement expresses its appreciation for the role played by the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Qatar in ongoing efforts to ensure a permanent ceasefire. We call for the safe and effective distribution of sufficient humanitarian assistance throughout the Gaza Strip to all the Palestinian civilians who need it, including medical needs, with full respect for the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Healing, recovery and rebuilding for the Palestinian people in Gaza cannot be delayed any longer. They cannot continue to be deprived of the food, water, medicines and shelters that are desperately needed to alleviate the catastrophic humanitarian conditions that they have suffered for too long.

In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement commends the efforts of the Arab Republic of Egypt to convene and host the Sharm el-Sheikh peace summit on 13 October 2025, which focused on unequivocal support for the implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement to end the illegal Israeli war on the Gaza Strip and the ceasefire agreement concluded on 9 October 2025 and mediated by the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Qatar, Türkiye and the United States of America, aimed at ending the illegal Israeli war on the Gaza Strip, enhancing the resilience of Palestinian people on their land and advancing the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful political settlement for the Palestinian question through ending Israel's illegal occupation of the State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and achieving the two-State solution, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

NAM condemns the daily Israeli violations of the cessation of hostilities announcement since its entry into force on 27 November 2024, with Israel committing

thousands of aerial and territorial violations against Lebanon and launching raids claiming the lives of and wounding hundreds of victims. NAM calls on the Security Council to assume its responsibilities and to force Israel to withdraw from all Lebanese occupied territories immediately, fully and unconditionally and release all Lebanese captives held in Israel.

NAM condemns the Israeli incursions into the Syrian territories, in a flagrant violation of international law, the United Nations Charter and the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces and calls on the Security Council to exert pressure on Israel to fully withdraw from all Syrian territories. NAM condemns the repeated Israeli attacks against the Syrian Arab Republic, as they constitute a clear aggression against a sovereign State and a flagrant violation of the provisions of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the New York Declaration arising out of the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution as a reaffirmation of the unwavering international commitment to a just and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The Movement calls for the necessary coordination and cooperation among all States to advance the Declaration's objectives to mobilize international efforts at the political, economic, financial, legal and security levels and to foster momentum by building on national, regional and international initiatives aimed at achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace for the Palestinian people. NAM welcomes the recognition of the State of Palestine by a majority of countries and calls on the Security Council to urgently recommend the admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations, with respect for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, as a long-overdue commitment to lasting peace in the Middle East.

NAM member States once again reiterate their call for the continued provision of necessary humanitarian and socioeconomic assistance to the Palestinian people, including Palestine refugees. The Movement reaffirms the continued indispensability of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), along with other United Nations agencies and international organizations, in the provision of urgently needed humanitarian assistance, in line with international standards, and urges the international community to support the Agency in all ways, including with sufficient and predictable funding. NAM rejects all attempts by Israel to weaponize humanitarian assistance and undermine UNRWA and thereby threaten multilateralism and the General Assembly mandate to provide humanitarian assistance and also rejects Israel's attacks on UNRWA facilities and all its illegal measures against the Agency, in violation of its Charter obligations, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, relevant resolutions and the advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice of 22 October 2025 and 19 July 2024. Such illegal actions must be halted. They are a threat to multilateralism and the right and duty of the General Assembly to mandate the provision of humanitarian assistance, including to the Palestinian people.

To conclude, the Movement seizes this opportunity to reiterate its call for collective international efforts to uphold international law in order to bring an end to the historic and grave injustice against the Palestinian people. NAM member States reaffirm their commitment to promoting a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects, including for the plight of the Palestine refugees, and reaffirm their support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve justice and fulfil their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations, including to self-determination, freedom and independence in their sovereign and independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. NAM

calls on all Member States to uphold their obligations in accordance with international law, the relevant resolutions and the rulings by the International Court of Justice and to undertake tangible actions, including urgent measures of accountability, bring an end to this prolonged and tragic injustice, end the illegal Israeli occupation and help the Palestinian people to finally realize their rights.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Babo Soares (Timor-Leste): Timor-Leste warmly welcomes Somalia's leadership of the Security Council and thanks you, Mr. President, for convening this timely open debate. We express our sincere appreciation to the briefers for their candid and comprehensive assessments of the situation in the Middle East.

The adoption of resolution 2803 (2025) is a significant step towards ending the conflict in Gaza. By endorsing a comprehensive plan and establishing transitional mechanisms, the Council has reaffirmed its responsibility to act decisively in support of international peace and security. Timor-Leste underscores that the credibility of these measures will depend on their full implementation in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Protecting civilians must remain paramount. At this time, all parties have an obligation to ensure the safety, dignity and fundamental rights of civilians and to guarantee the security of both Palestinians and Israelis. We reiterate our call for a peaceful United Nations-led transition in Gaza, grounded in clear mandates, robust oversight and strict adherence to Security Council resolutions to ensure legitimacy, accountability and sustainability. Timor-Leste emphasizes the importance of consolidating and monitoring the ceasefire. We support the establishment of an independent United Nations-mandated ceasefire monitoring mechanism with regular and transparent reporting to the Council. Safe and sustained humanitarian corridors must be ensured. The immediate and unconditional release and return of all the hostages was the priority and has actually been accomplished. Congratulations to both sides for resolving the situation.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to demand swift and coordinated action. Humanitarian access must be restored and expanded under United Nations coordination, with full protection for humanitarian personnel and facilities. In this regard, Timor-Leste underscores the indispensable role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and calls for decisive measures to prevent further disruption of life-saving services.

With respect to transitional arrangements, the Board of Peace and the international stabilization force must operate strictly under the explicit authority of the Security Council. Their mandates should include transparent reporting, independent oversight and a clearly defined timeline towards civilian-led governance. These mechanisms must remain temporary and stabilizing, facilitating — not replacing — a return to legitimate civilian administration. Timor-Leste reaffirms the importance of accountability and the rule of law.

We support impartial and independent investigations into alleged violations of international law, conducted with due process and protection for witnesses and calibrated to support reconciliation and long-term peace. We also note the risk of regional spillover. Timor-Leste supports convening a United Nations-led regional dialogue to promote de-escalation, address cross-border security concerns and enhance coordination in relation to humanitarian access. Achieving lasting peace also requires guaranteeing Israel's existence and security, alongside the demilitarization of Gaza and a clear path towards Palestinian self-determination, economic recovery

and statehood. Robust confidence-building measures are essential to transform political frameworks into a durable, lived peace.

Looking ahead, Timor-Leste encourages the Council to mandate periodic reviews based on measurable benchmarks for security, humanitarian access, civilian protection and human rights, while investing in early recovery, institutional capacity-building and inclusive peacebuilding, including the meaningful participation of women and youth. While acknowledging initiatives outside the Council, Timor-Leste firmly believes that a United Nations-centred approach anchored in international law and collective responsibility offers the most credible pathway to a just and lasting peace. Timor-Leste stands ready to support diplomatic and humanitarian efforts that protect civilians, advance peace and reinforce multilateralism. The credibility of the Council and the hopes of the affected civilians depend on our collective resolve.

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

Mr. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, at a most critical and delicate juncture.

We are meeting today more than two years after Israel's aggression against the Gaza Strip, at a time when it is now more urgent than ever for Israel to uphold the ceasefire agreement so that the distressed people of Gaza can be saved and an end can be brought to Israel's ongoing violations of the agreement. Accordingly, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reiterates its call for the implementation of every phase and provision of the ceasefire agreement and the opening of the crossings to allow the unimpeded and unconditional entry of humanitarian aid for delivery throughout the Strip. This will pave the way for the transition to phase two of the agreement, leading to the full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and of resolution 2803 (2025), while stressing the importance of launching early recovery and reconstruction efforts throughout Gaza.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia recently signed a document joining the United States-led Board of Peace, in support of its efforts as a transitional body, in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which was approved pursuant to resolution 2803 (2025). The aim of this process is to establish a permanent ceasefire, support the reconstruction of Gaza and push for a just and lasting peace based on the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State in accordance with international law. The Kingdom reiterates its categorical rejection of Israel's flagrant violations of international and humanitarian norms and laws and holds the international community responsible for addressing these practices, including the ongoing crimes against international relief organizations and their workers.

In this context, my country condemns the attack that targeted the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East as a dangerous attempt to undermine the status of Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It calls for the necessary protection to be provided to humanitarian organizations and for their ability to perform their tasks unhindered to be guaranteed.

The Kingdom also affirms the importance of supporting the work of the provisional Palestinian National Committee to enable it to carry out its tasks in managing the daily affairs of the population of the Gaza Strip while preserving the institutional and geographical ties between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and ensuring the unity of Gaza and of the Palestinian territories. It rejects any attempts to divide them or undermine their unity.

In conclusion, a just and comprehensive peace can be achieved only by taking a number of actions. Foremost among them are establishing a permanent ceasefire, preventing displacement and annexation, ensuring Israel's complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, supporting the reconstruction of the Strip and pushing for a genuine political horizon that leads to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, within the 1967 borders, in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Finally, my country calls on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities and take practical and serious steps towards a comprehensive and just peace that guarantees security and stability in the region.

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

Mr. Greco (Italy): We align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, and we wish to offer the following remarks in our national capacity.

The situation in the Middle East is fluid, characterized at once by instability and unresolved disputes and by historic achievements and positive developments. In this context, Italy believes that the international community must proceed with continued attention and active engagement without underestimating the progress made. We must build on the results achieved in order to achieve peace in the region.

Regarding Gaza and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the adoption of resolution 2803 (2025) by the Security Council was both a milestone and a starting point. Two months later, the United States has announced the launch of phase two of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which the resolution endorses. We have not forgotten the compromise that made this development possible, and we welcome the return to Israel of the body of the final hostage still held in Gaza. At the same time, we note with great concern the humanitarian catastrophe still unfolding in the Strip, where humanitarian access continues to be insufficient and subject to excessive restrictions. The full opening of all crossing points to both vital aid and reconstruction materials is fundamental to allow for the recovery and the development of the Strip. The United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should be enabled to play a central role in assisting the civilian population in Gaza as envisaged in President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and in resolution 2803 (2025).

From the outset, Italy has strongly supported resolution 2803 (2025) and commended the mediation efforts by the United States, Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye. We renew our commitment to the full implementation of the United States peace plan and our support for the ongoing diplomatic work to disarm Hamas. We believe that coordination among partners and international engagement are key to protect the ceasefire, secure peace and build a future for the Palestinians. The deployment of the international stabilization force can make the difference, and Italy will contribute to the training of Palestinian police under the scope of that force. We welcome the appointment of the Palestinian National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, which enjoys the support of the Palestinian Authority. The ultimate goal is the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

The end of Hamas rule over Gaza is a crucial step in this direction. We are closely monitoring the situation in the West Bank, and we condemn in the strongest terms settler violence, settlement policies and all actions aimed at jeopardizing the perspective of a viable two-State solution. In the same spirit, Italy will continue to support the Palestinian Authority and its programme of reform, encouraging the definition of a clear timetable to monitor its progress. Both policies need resources. We call on Israel to release withheld clearance revenues and to extend the

corresponding banking services between Israel and Palestinian banks. The beginning of phase two of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict is an opportunity that we cannot miss, with potential positive spillover throughout the entire Middle East.

In Syria, we have witnessed the outbreak of hostilities between Damascus and the Syrian Democratic Forces. We call on the parties to fully respect the agreements. In line with our support for an inclusive political transition that guarantees the rights and participation of all Syrians, we reiterate our call for a peaceful integration of the Kurds. One year after the fall of the Al-Assad regime, the current phase represents a crucial test for the transitional Government in economic, political and security terms. We trust that President Al-Sharaa and the Syrian authorities will honour the commitments that they have made to the international community and, first and foremost, to the Syrian people. We believe that it is important to support Damascus in taking responsibility while facing demanding challenges, such as control of the north-east and the fight against Da'esh.

Turning to Lebanon, we applaud the direction taken under the leadership of President Aoun with regard to economic reforms and the disarmament of Hizbullah. We believe that there is room to overcome the institutional and financial crisis. To this end, respect for the ceasefire on both sides of the Blue Line and the stabilization of southern Lebanon are fundamental, also with a view to reconstruction efforts. We warmly welcomed the announcement that the Lebanese Armed Forces completed the first phase of the plan for the State monopoly on weapons.

We continue to support the pivotal role played by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in easing tensions along the Blue Line, contributing to de-escalation and ensuring the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). We are concerned about the frequent incidents that have been occurring recently at UNIFIL's expense. We would like to remind the Israel Defense Forces that any action against the safety of peacekeepers is a serious violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and hinder the prospect of achieving a sustainable peace. At the helm of UNIFIL for the fifth time, Italy will continue to support the Lebanese Armed Forces. Strengthening their capabilities is crucial now that the United Nations mission is drawing to a close.

Finally, we call for the resumption of talks between Israeli and Lebanese civil representatives to reach a lasting agreement that puts an end to the threat of Hizbullah and to Israel's raids and military presence in Lebanon.

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

Ms. Rahlaga (South Africa): We thank the Federal Republic of Somalia for convening this quarterly open debate, thereby providing all States Members of the United Nations an opportunity to address the Council on developments in the region, but also for the plight of the people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to remain firmly in the minds of the global public.

South Africa aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We further align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the core group for the statement of shared commitments on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

South Africa believes that peace in the Middle East remains contingent on resolving the question of Palestine in a just and peaceful manner. Our failure to find a lasting solution to the plight of the people of Palestine and to guarantee their self-determination, security and freedom remains an enduring blight on the credibility of the Security Council.

While the ceasefire agreement brought initial hope for an end to the untold suffering of the Palestinians, the ongoing lack of a full, permanent resolution and the

continued, slow-paced destruction of daily life in Palestine have caused that hope to erode. Hopes were further dashed by Israel's consistent violations of the ceasefire, with almost daily attacks on people, in a continuing trend of genocide against the population in Gaza. As of January 2026, while a ceasefire agreement that began in October 2025 has reduced the scale of high-intensity bombardment, it has not brought the promised relief to the people of Gaza, who continue to endure profound suffering.

It is alarming to note that since the ceasefire and up until 21 January 2026, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the occupied territories recorded the killing of 216 Palestinians, including 46 children and 28 women, in Israeli attacks far from the so-called yellow line, and mainly on shelters of internally displaced persons and residential buildings. This included 126 reported attacks by Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles across Gaza, resulting in the killing of 87 Palestinians, including 12 children and seven women.

The catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza demands urgent action, and we call for the rapid, safe and unimpeded delivery and sustained distribution of humanitarian aid at scale into and throughout Gaza. We also call for unimpeded access for the United Nations and its agencies and humanitarian organizations, including international non-governmental organizations, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Since the previous quarterly debate of the Council on the question of Palestine (see S/PV.10023), we witnessed the Security Council's endorsement of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict of 29 September 2025, through resolution 2803 (2025), which conferred an inordinate amount of power on the Board of Peace. This Board assumes the administration of Gaza until the Palestinian Authority completes reforms. With this endorsement, the Council has outsourced the oversight of a non-inclusive peace process concerning Gaza to a non-United Nations body, which has subsequently been broadened into a mechanism that assumes the Charter-given responsibility of the United Nations Security Council related to the maintenance of international peace and security. This is, indeed, a concerning development that undermines the right to self-determination of the people of Palestine and has broader implications for the United Nations' role in pursuing its central mandate.

In this respect, South Africa reiterates that the only path to a just, lasting and comprehensive resolution of the conflict in the Middle East is the two-State solution, with the State of Israel and a sovereign viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Palestinians deserve peace, security and dignity, just as Israelis do. Therefore, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Plan and any other effort to establish a just and lasting peace in the question of Palestine must abide by international law and prioritize the human rights of the Palestinians. Related to this, we express grave concern over the deteriorating situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. We reject and strongly condemn any annexation attempts, settler violence, including against Christian communities, the establishment of settlements that are illegal under international law and unilateral acts or any expulsion or displacement of Palestinians from Gaza or the West Bank.

We further call on Israel to reverse the E-1 settlement plan which undermines the two-State solution and constitutes a continued policy of brazen violation of international law. Likewise, we support the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, and we strongly condemn the Israeli security forces for entering the headquarters of UNRWA in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of occupied Jerusalem on 20 January 2026.

These actions undermine UNRWA's United Nations mandate; violate international law, the Charter of the United Nations and relevant United Nations resolutions; and run counter to the findings of the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of 22 October 2025, which calls for full cooperation with UNRWA and the reversal of measures that banned UNRWA's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Israel, as the 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 relevant international legal obligations. UNRWA must be permitted to be fully operational as it remains the backbone of humanitarian operations in Gaza.

In conclusion, United Nations Member States must work collectively to take active, irreversible steps to end Israel's unlawful occupation and realize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination through statehood that delivers true sovereignty on equal terms with Israel. South Africa will continue to support all efforts towards this goal.

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

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): I thank Somalia, President of the Council for January, for convening this quarterly open debate.

Each time this debate returns to the Council the toll is visible, in emptied neighbourhoods, in families driven from their homes and in grief, with nowhere to go. People following this meeting can picture the houses Israel destroys, the new settlements it approves and the innocent lives it takes. People are listening for decisions from the Council that change what happens at checkpoints in occupied Palestine, at the clinic door and in the bread line. Minutes matter here because inaction turns into rubble; silence turns into permission.

I will make three points here.

First, the Government of Maldives condemns Israel's illegal demolition of a United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) building in East Jerusalem and the wider pressure campaign against UNRWA facilities in occupied Palestine, including the Jerusalem Health Centre. Threats of closure and the cutting off of electricity and water have turned humanitarian work into a target. When a clinic's lights go out it is the patients who pay. When United Nations premises are treated as if they were disposable, the signal spreads fast. Israel is returning to the law of the jungle. Israel must reverse these measures immediately, restore facilities, reinstate essential services and safeguard humanitarian staff and operations.

Secondly, the ceasefire announced in November is producing one result. That is Israel's continued killing of Palestinians. The legitimate Palestinian resistance is now being muted through force, and the world is being pushed towards forgetting Israel's genocide in Gaza. At the same time, aid is remaining restricted, hunger is deepening and civilians are dying during supposed pauses. Gaza is remaining under siege. Hospitals, water systems and schools are still shattered. More than 2 million people are surviving on humanitarian assistance, even as the registration of several international aid organizations is being revoked.

Thirdly, peace cannot be built while the ground is being remade. In late December, Israel approved 19 new settlements in the occupied West Bank, tightening control and sabotaging any credible path to a two-State solution. When this goes unanswered, impunity becomes a method and insecurity spreads, including actions violating Somalia's sovereignty and threatening that of Qatar and Iran. Palestine needs urgent humanitarian assistance and sustained support to recover, rebuild its economy and secure its people. A two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders, with

East Jerusalem as Palestine's capital, and Palestine's full membership of the United Nations must be realized.

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

Ms. Jóhannsdóttir (Iceland): We congratulate Somalia on its successful month of presidency.

Iceland welcomed the long-awaited ceasefire announced few months ago, which offered desperately needed respite to the people in Gaza. Resolution 2803 (2025) marked a critical juncture on the path to peace by endorsing the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, welcoming the establishment of the Board of Peace and authorizing the establishment of a temporary international stabilization force. Crucial steps have been taken, including the release of all living hostages and the return of those killed. Iceland further welcomes the announcement of the launch of phase two of the Plan, the implementation of which will be critical. However, as Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov highlighted yesterday, many obstacles remain. This is a moment of both profound opportunity and significant risk.

Iceland has repeatedly condemned the horrendous terrorist attacks on Israel on 7 October more than two years back. We have also unequivocally called for Hamas to relinquish control of Gaza in favour of the Palestinian Authority. There is no justification for terror, and Hamas has no role in the future of Gaza or Palestine. For the people in Gaza, however, genuine relief from the immense suffering they have endured depends on receiving the aid, including shelter and medicine, that they so urgently need. Homes and livelihoods must be restored, and forced displacement must end. Regrettably, international obligations remain unmet in Gaza, owing to Israel's continued restrictions on both humanitarian access and the operations of key humanitarian partners, including the United Nations.

As a long-standing contributor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Iceland has repeatedly voiced its concerns about Israeli actions against the Agency. The recent demolitions of UNRWA's headquarters in East Jerusalem constitute an unprecedented disregard by a Member State for United Nations privileges and immunities. Iceland has also joined others in calling on Israel to ensure that international non-governmental organization (INGOs) continue to be permitted to operate in Gaza and that their deregistrations be halted. INGOs provide an important part of the essential assistance so desperately needed in Gaza.

Taken together, these measures run counter to last year's advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (see A/80/502), which very clearly States that Israel, as the occupying Power, has a legal obligation to ensure the well-being of the civilians under its occupation. This situation must change, and without delay.

The continued occupation in the West Bank must not fall off our radar. There, Palestinians are experiencing the worst restrictions and the heaviest militarized operations for decades, in addition to settler violence enabled by impunity.

That brings me to my final point. The only viable, long-term path towards peace remains the two-State solution, whereby Israelis and Palestinians live side by side in peace and mutual recognition. The State of Palestine must build its future on the foundations of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Security Council must live up to its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations in its pursuit and maintenance of international peace and security. This includes ensuring the full implementation, in accordance with international law, of resolution 2803 (2025).

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.