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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Cooper/Mr. Kariuki/Ms. MacNaughtan.....	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Bahrain	Mr. Alrowaiei
	China	Mr. Fu Cong
	Colombia	Mrs. Zalabata Torres
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mr. Mukongo
	Denmark	Ms. Lassen
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Greece.....	Mrs. Balta
	Latvia.....	Ms. Pavļuta-Deslandes
	Liberia	Mr. Brown II
	Pakistan.....	Mr. Dar
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Somalia	Mr. Osman
	United States of America.....	Mr. Waltz

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: I would like to welcome the Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers and other high-level representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Egypt, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Ms. Hiba Qasas, Founding Executive Director of the Principles for Peace Foundation; and Mr. Nadav Tamir, Executive Director of J Street Israel.

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

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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

I give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: This is a pivotal moment in the Middle East. After years of devastating conflict and immense human suffering, there is an opening, one that could allow the region to move in a different direction. But that opening is neither assured nor indefinite. The decisions taken in the coming weeks by the parties and by members of the Council will determine whether it is sustained. Our collective efforts must now consolidate the ceasefire in Gaza and alleviate the suffering of the population. We need concrete progress towards stabilization and recovery, consistent with international law, to lay the foundations for lasting peace.

The Board of Peace meeting in Washington, D.C., tomorrow is an important step. We have a responsibility to work collectively to implement phase two of the Gaza ceasefire and advance efforts towards a credible political path leading to a negotiated two-State solution. This must include the demilitarization of the Strip, the decommissioning of weapons held by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups and the establishment of security arrangements that can facilitate the important transitional governance tasks of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza. In parallel, the entry of assistance into Gaza must increase significantly. This is essential for an inclusive Palestinian-led recovery and reconstruction.

Encouraging progress in aid access and delivery has been made since the ceasefire came into effect in October. Still, the vast majority of Gaza's population remains displaced and continues to endure extremely harsh living conditions. Humanitarian operations in Gaza have continued amid severe constraints. Scaled-up entry of shelter materials, educational supplies and medical equipment, among other items, is urgently required. The United Nations and its partners are expanding efforts to stabilize and rehabilitate essential systems and services as a bridge for longer-term recovery. The opening of the Rafah crossing, on 2 February, to pedestrian movement in both directions was a welcome development. The United Nations team on the ground is working closely with local and international stakeholders to promote a safe, dignified environment at the

crossing and to enable those in need to access medical assistance. The United Nations has supported the medical evacuation of many patients and has received hundreds of returnees. Thousands still urgently require treatment unavailable in Gaza.

We remain committed to supporting the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) and all relevant resolutions. Despite the ceasefire, Gaza is still not at peace. In recent weeks, the Israeli military intensified strikes across Gaza, hitting densely populated areas and killing dozens of Palestinians. Air strikes were particularly heavy on 31 January and in early February. Armed exchanges between Palestinian armed groups and Israeli soldiers have also continued.

In the occupied West Bank, meanwhile, the situation is deteriorating rapidly. There, Israeli forces have continued large-scale operations across the West Bank, frequently involving live fire and raising serious concerns about the use of lethal force. Widespread raids have been accompanied by home takeovers, mass detentions, movement restrictions and repeated displacements of Palestinian families, particularly in the north. Attacks by Palestinians against Israelis and confrontations between Palestinian and Israeli security forces have also continued. Israeli authorities have also expanded operations in areas around Jerusalem and extended their operations in the northern West Bank. These developments have unfolded alongside continued settlement expansion, rising settler violence and accelerated demolitions and evictions in East Jerusalem.

We are witnessing the gradual de facto annexation of the West Bank, as unilateral Israeli steps are steadily transforming the landscape. I echo the Secretary-General's grave concern regarding the Israeli Security Cabinet's reported decision to authorize a series of enforcement measures and the transfer of authorities in Areas A and B of the occupied West Bank. If implemented, these measures will constitute a dangerous expansion of Israeli civil authority in the occupied West Bank, including in sensitive areas like Hebron. The moves could lead to settlement expansion by removing bureaucratic barriers and easing land purchases and building permits. I reiterate the Secretary-General's condemnation of the Israeli Government's 15 February decision to resume land registration procedures in Area C of the occupied West Bank. The decision threatens to dispossess Palestinians of their property and expand Israeli control over land in the area. Israel should immediately reverse these measures. All Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and their associated regime and infrastructure have no legal validity. They violate international law and United Nations resolutions.

Continued unilateral Israeli measures to withhold clearance revenues have deepened a persistent fiscal crisis for the Palestinian Authority. This has led to partial salary payments for civil servants, severe cuts to basic services and growing arrears and debt for the private sector and financial institutions. Correspondent banking agreements, essential for the Palestinian economy, were renewed on 12 February for an additional two weeks. A long-term extension, alongside renewed technical discussions between Israeli and Palestinian financial regulators, is critical for financial stability and for enabling large-scale recovery in Gaza, in line with resolution 2803 (2025).

Allow me to conclude by stressing that at this fragile juncture for the region, we cannot afford half measures. The United States-led Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict must be implemented fully, alongside urgent action to de-escalate and reverse the dangerous trajectory in the occupied West Bank. At the same time, we must seize this opportunity to restore a credible political horizon — one that leads to a lasting peace in Gaza, brings an end to the occupation and realizes a two-State solution in line with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The United Nations remains steadfast in its commitment to that goal and to supporting Palestinians and Israelis in achieving it.

The President: I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Qasas.

Ms. Qasas: I wish to start by thanking the United Kingdom for the invitation to brief the Council.

I address Council members today as a Palestinian raised in the West Bank under the reality of insecurity and occupation, as a new Swiss citizen and the Founding Executive Director of the Principles for Peace Foundation — a Geneva-based global peacebuilding organization that also works on the question of Israel and Palestine — and as a convener of the Uniting for a Shared Future (USF) coalition, which, today, brings together more than 550 Israeli and Palestinian leaders from politics, security, business, civil society and the media. We came together in the wake of 7 October 2023 and the Gaza war and built our coalition around enlightened self-interest.

Today, USF is the main functioning binational infrastructure at scale, whereby senior leaders from both peoples still engage and organize pragmatic action for a political solution within a regional framework. Our coalition carries the trauma, fears and aspirations of both peoples. Palestinians live through occupation, loss, displacement and violence. Israelis live with insecurity, loss, fear and uncertainty. We do not relativize pain, and we do not dehumanize the other. We are realists, we are possibilists, and we are patriotic pragmatists in equal measure. We start from one truth: the status quo is not sustainable for either people. Neither side can have lasting security, dignity and prosperity at the expense of the other.

We welcome resolution 2803 (2025) and the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, which keeps the political horizon central. We also express gratitude to the United States Administration for its leadership, with regional partners, in brokering the ceasefire and sustaining attention on what comes next. Phase two will decide whether this is a bridge to stability or a pause before the next war. It will only hold if Gaza's recovery is inseparable from the West Bank, linked in design, protected by safeguards and anchored in a clear, time-bound political destination. Gaza cannot succeed if the West Bank collapses.

President Trump spoke of a golden era for the Middle East. That future is possible and can only be unlocked by resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, removing a central driver of instability and fuel for radicalization. As long as this conflict remains unresolved, regional normalization, integration and the expansion of the Abraham Accords will remain contested, fragile and fraught.

This is why success will require an alliance of the willing, prepared to advance the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict through disciplined implementation and investment, mutual accountability and sustained political cover.

The facts are stark. In Gaza, displacement and despair are near total, and access remains constrained at key crossings. In the West Bank, record settler attacks, demolitions, displacement and accelerating settlement and outpost activity are eroding contiguity by the day, alongside administrative and cabinet measures that facilitate changes in land control and ownership. These actions are dangerous for Palestinians, but they are also dangerous for Israelis, because they fuel insecurity, radicalization and the collapse of any credible political destination.

Our coalition developed immediate confidence-building measures, with an implementation pathway to safeguard the political horizon, while phase two is under way. I will highlight seven priorities requiring active engagement by the Council and by the Board of Peace.

First, movement and access in Gaza and the West Bank must be eased. The ban on humanitarian non-governmental organizations must be reversed. Gaza crossings must be operationalized and modernized, and movement in the West Bank, including routes via Jordan and permits for labour and commerce, must be eased.

Second, Palestinian fiscal and banking functionality must be restored to prevent the collapse of the Palestinian Authority. Withheld revenues must be released, correspondent banking restored and currency circulation unblocked so salaries can be paid and the private sector can restart.

Third, political, governance and administrative Palestinian Authority reform must be backed, with realistic expectations and verification, and credible Palestinian elections must be supported.

Fourth, territorial feasibility must be protected now in order to safeguard and advance the political horizon. Steps that sever contiguity must be halted, beginning with freezing E-1 and expansion in the southern Jerusalem corridor, as well as stopping changes to land ownership in the West Bank.

Fifth, violence and incitement must be deterred on all sides. Consequences must be applied for terrorism, militia regrouping and settler violence, and it must be ensured that any security and stabilization architecture, including international stabilization force deployment and disarmament, is verifiable and accountable from day one.

Sixth, legitimate transitional governance in Gaza must be enabled, allowing the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza to enter Gaza, to succeed and to operate under international political protection, and the technocratic Palestinian Administration in Gaza must be linked with the West Bank.

Seventh, an Israeli-Palestinian political dialogue track must be supported by starting with what already exists. At Uniting for a Shared Future we have built a dialogue infrastructure and have recently launched, in Davos, with the support of the Swiss Government, a working group to advance the political horizon. This infrastructure exists. What exists must be built upon.

Let me be clear about the political destination we believe in. Regional stability, prosperity and security require a new regional political and security architecture that resolves the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a non-militarized Palestinian State, living side by side, in safety and security, next to Israel, embedded in an integrated and safer neighbourhood. Our coalition is a supportive constituency for the success of phase two in Gaza as a bridge to that horizon. Our offer to the Council is practical and ready to deploy.

First, we offer an Israeli-Palestinian political dialogue infrastructure it can use immediately, as a nucleus and shadow dialogue capability, when no official channel exists between Israelis and Palestinians.

Secondly, we offer a sounding board for implementation.

Thirdly, we offer legitimacy and delivery support, mobilizing public consent and private sector capability.

As the main binational coalition of Israeli and Palestinian leaders working for this horizon, the Uniting for a Shared Future stands ready to engage with the Board of Peace, with Council members and regional and national partners to help to translate political intent into executable steps.

I close with gratitude to the United Kingdom presidency for this platform. On behalf of our coalition and the Principles for Peace we welcome the United Kingdom's

initiative to host a peacebuilding conference and launch a peace fund to support civil society in Israel and Palestine.

I also wish to thank the Governments that have backed our work in our coalition, including the German Government, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Ireland, Belgium and regional partners who continue to support our capability to support regional dialogue, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I was raised in a reality in which each generation inherits the trauma, the fear and unfinished business of the last. That is not a strategy, it is a sentence.

We can either condemn both peoples to a perpetual state of insecurity, of loss, of trauma and occupation, or emancipate both peoples from this reality. As solution-minded leaders, we are committed to work with everything we have for the latter, because both our peoples and the people of the region deserve better.

The President: I thank Ms. Qasas for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Tamir.

Mr. Tamir: I thank the United Kingdom for convening this session and for the opportunity to address the Council. *Ramadan kareem* to all the Muslim members.

I appear before the Council as an Israeli patriot and a Zionist, and as a member of the Israeli-Palestinian coalition, Uniting for a Shared Future, a partnership of Israelis and Palestinians who believe that the only viable way to resolve the conflict and to ensure security, dignity and prosperity for both peoples is through a two-State solution embedded in a broader regional framework.

Despite the profound trauma experienced by both Israelis and Palestinians following the 7 October 2023 massacre and the devastating war that followed, this moment presents a historic opportunity, one that must not be missed. The growing sense of urgency within the international community and across the Middle East must be translated into a clear and irreversible pathway towards a demilitarized Palestinian State, alongside Israel, anchored in a regional coalition that integrates both Israel and Palestine into the region while marginalizing jihadist and terrorist forces on all sides. This is not only a two-State solution. This is, in effect, what we at J Street call a 23-State solution: Israel, Palestine and the 21 Arab States that endorsed the Arab Peace Initiative, normalizing relations and cooperating for mutual security and prosperity.

Importantly, this regional vision is not disconnected from Israeli public opinion. Surveys by the aChord Center for Social Psychology at the Hebrew University, conducted even during the most difficult periods of the fighting, reveal that a majority of the Israeli public would accept a Palestinian State if embedded within a comprehensive normalization agreement between Israel and the Arab States. Approximately 61 per cent of the public prefer separation from the Palestinians over annexation. This data indicates that ultimately, even when the winds of war are blowing, the Israeli public is much more realistic than its current leadership.

Israelis understand that the path to security passes through normalization, which will include the establishment of a Palestinian State, alongside Arab normalization of relations with the State of Israel. This is why Gaza cannot be treated as an isolated arena.

There is now broad recognition that what happens in Gaza does not stay in Gaza. It spreads throughout the region and beyond. This understanding was reflected in the Council's consideration of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and in the recent wave of recognitions of a Palestinian State, recognitions understood not as the end of negotiations, but as their beginning.

Previous diplomatic efforts fell short either because they focused exclusively on bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, as in the Oslo Accords, the Camp David summit and the Annapolis conference, or because they attempted to bypass the Palestinians, as with the Abraham Accords.

Today we have an opportunity to combine the bilateral and regional tracks. This integrated approach is the only one capable of delivering tangible peace dividends — security, stability and prosperity — for Israelis and Palestinians alike. To move forward, we need the Security Council's support in advancing the 20-point plan and explicitly including the West Bank within its framework. While global attention is understandably focused on Gaza, the West Bank is at serious risk of explosion. De facto annexation is occurring daily, and recent steps toward de jure annexation further endanger prospects for a negotiated solution. Palestinian communities are being displaced through terror perpetrated by organized extremist settlers, undermining both stability and Israel's own democratic character.

We must demonstrate to Israelis, Palestinians and the broader region that the most effective way to remove Hamas from its brutal control of Gaza and to prevent it from remaining an armed militia, is through a credible diplomatic process and the creation of a genuine political horizon for the Palestinian people.

Israel is entering an election year, and the Palestinians urgently need elections as well. For pro-peace constituencies on both sides to prevail, the international community must make clear that the 23-State solution is not a distant aspiration but an achievable reality. Trauma has bred fear and despair. That can change if a political process delivers real security and ensures that another 7 October and the devastation that followed in Gaza will never happen again.

We stand at a crossroads: the choices are annexation and expulsion, which would lead to endless bloodshed; or a negotiated future grounded in mutual recognition and regional integration. The voice and engagement of the international community are critical. They can demonstrate to the Israeli public, most of whom seek security and normalcy, that peace is feasible and that it will enhance, not diminish, Israel's security. Israel was also deeply traumatized after the 1973 war with Egypt and Syria. Yet, within a few years, we achieved peace with Egypt. After the first intifada, despair gave way to diplomacy, and the Oslo process paved the way for peace with Jordan.

History shows that trauma can be transformed into opportunity if leadership is courageous and the international community is resolute. Some Israelis argue that recognizing a Palestinian State alongside Israel would reward Hamas. They are mistaken. It will, in fact, undermine Hamas by rejecting its vision of endless conflict and empowering Palestinians who seek coexistence.

Israel cannot be the democratic homeland of the Jewish people if Palestinians are denied a homeland of their own. Our futures are interdependent. Our joint Israeli-Palestinian coalition, led by Hiba Qasas and her organization, the Principles for Peace Foundation, demonstrates that a different path is possible. We have developed concrete, actionable plans and stand ready to work with all who are committed to leading us out of the current tragedy and towards a secure and prosperous future for the entire region, one that will also strengthen global stability.

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

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom.

Let me begin by welcoming my fellow Ministers joining today's session and also by thanking Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing and Hiba Qasas and Nadav Tamir for their powerful remarks, which remind us of the opportunity that lies

before us. It is an opportunity to end the cycle of violence and suffering, to build a better future free from terror and free from occupation, to bring lasting peace and security to the region and to come together in the very spirit of this United Nations.

For more than two years, the human cost has been unimaginable: families shattered, communities destroyed or displaced, trauma that will reverberate for generations. The pain of the horrific Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel on 7 October 2023, the suffering of the hostages and the devastation of the war that followed in Gaza, with more than 70,000 Palestinians killed — all that is ever present.

Thanks to the leadership of the United States, Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye, alongside a wider intense diplomatic drive from many of the nations represented here today, a ceasefire was secured and endorsed by the Council in resolution 2803 (2025). The hostages are home, and the families of those deceased can finally lay their loved ones to rest.

We have an international determination to deliver phase two of the peace plan, but the ceasefire itself remains fragile, and the progress we all seek is at risk. We have seen ceasefire violations on both sides. Hamas has continued to attack Israeli forces, and more than 600 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli attacks since the ceasefire began. This is deeply disturbing and undermines phase one of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict.

Gaza must not get stuck in a no-man's land between peace and war. Therefore, to deliver phase two, we see four priorities for urgent action.

First, we must begin the serious process of decommissioning Hamas' weapons. In line with the 20-point plan, Hamas must destroy its terrorist infrastructure and weapons production sites as a first step towards full demilitarization, and we stand ready to play our part. Hamas must have no future role in the running of Gaza because that is crucial for the security of Israelis and Palestinians alike. Alongside this, we need to see the Palestinian police strengthened, the International Stabilization Force deployment and the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the Strip.

Secondly, we need to build stable Palestinian governance. The National Committee for the Administration of Gaza must be supported to succeed. This crucial body, which was included alongside the Board of Peace in resolution 2803 (2025), now needs to be supported to deliver for the Palestinian people, leading day-to-day service delivery and recovery efforts and establishing its legitimacy and credibility. That is the best way to weaken Hamas and render it irrelevant. And there must be a clear plan for the links and transition from the Committee to a reformed Palestinian Authority because Palestine must be run by Palestinians.

Thirdly, we must prevent the destabilization of the West Bank and preserve the viability of a Palestinian State. We have seen the Palestinian economy face strangulation, including the Israeli Government's withholding of some of the Palestinian Authority's own tax revenues. We are witnessing an all-time high of Israeli settlement expansion and settler violence, in flagrant breach of international law, with Palestinian families and communities driven from their homes, beaten while farming their own land. These are attacks that sow terror among civilians. This is deeply wrong, a clear contravention of the resolutions of the Council and counterproductive — it only makes the Israeli and Palestinian peoples less secure.

Fourthly, most important of all and most immediately, we must address Gaza's catastrophic humanitarian situation. Families, repeatedly displaced, are spending this winter desperately seeking shelter amid the rubble, without electricity, without water supplies or healthcare. Children have frozen to death and died while awaiting medical evacuations. This is unconscionable, and crucially, it is preventable. To address these

dire needs, the United Kingdom has contributed more than \$100 million for humanitarian support in Gaza this year. Since the ceasefire, aid flows have increased, and more crossings are partially reopened. But the level of need cannot be met unless more restrictions are lifted, covering essential medical equipment, components for field hospitals and basic shelter items, because delays and restrictions cost lives.

And we also risk now going dangerously backwards. The Israeli Government policy of deregistering and shutting down the operations of international non-governmental organizations in Gaza, including British organizations such as Save the Children, risk choking off essential access to people in desperate need and closing fragile health facilities. So, we need an urgent change in course. I therefore urge the authorities to urgently ensure that experienced and long-standing organizations can continue to operate. The United Nations and its partners must remain at the heart of the response throughout the whole of Gaza, including through the proper protection of all staff, premises and operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the United Nations.

Last September, I came to the United Nations and, alongside allies, affirmed the United Kingdom's recognition of the State of Palestine. And this historic step, 75 years after Britain's recognition of the State of Israel, reflected our commitment to a two-State solution, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the security of Israel. I spoke then about the profound peril facing that two-State solution and the need for the world to come together and take action for peace. That remains true today. So, Britain remains steadfast in its support for the security of Israel and its people because a two-State solution can be the gateway to transforming the region with normalization, regional integration and peaceful coexistence.

But security cannot be achieved by an indefinite or humiliating occupation that denies security and sovereignty to the Palestinian people. Despite the trauma, despite the suffering of recent years, there remains the hope for a better future. And as we have heard from the powerful testimonies of our civil society briefers today, in March, the United Kingdom will hold a peacebuilding conference to bring together Israeli and Palestinian civil society leaders to build trust and challenge divisions because peace is built not just by Governments but by whole societies. The United Kingdom has its own experience of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland, which was a conflict that many said could never be resolved and involved communities that many said could never coexist. There are other members of the Council who have equivalent or deeper insights. We know we cannot undo the trauma of the past, but we can chart a different course for generations to come so as to help to realize Palestinian self-determination, to help to provide Israel with long-term security and to secure the two-State solution as the only path to lasting peace and security for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Dar (Pakistan): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this very important meeting. It is indeed a pleasure to see you chairing today's very important discussion. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her sobering briefing, followed by two more briefings, which were very candid.

We are meeting today at a critical juncture. On the one hand, intensified diplomatic efforts are under way to consolidate the ceasefire, alleviate the suffering of Palestinians and advance implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025). On the other hand, Israel's continued ceasefire violations, annexation attempts and illegal actions across the Occupied Palestinian

Territory continue to undermine these efforts and threaten prospects for a just and lasting peace.

Pakistan remains fully engaged in diplomatic efforts aimed at a permanent cessation of hostilities and a just resolution of the conflict. We appreciate the peace efforts led by United States President Donald Trump. In this regard, we are working closely as part of the group of eight Arab and Islamic countries, namely Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Türkiye and Pakistan.

Israel's recent illegal decisions to expand its control over the West Bank are gravely disturbing. In the joint statements of 7 and 17 of February, the Foreign Ministers of the eight Arab and Islamic countries condemned in the strongest terms these measures and decisions aimed at imposing unlawful Israeli sovereignty, entrenching settlement activity, designating land as so-called "State land" and enforcing a new legal and administrative reality in the occupied West Bank. We affirmed that these illegal measures are null and void and constitute a clear violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. They all violate the relevant Security Council resolutions, foremost among them resolution 2334 (2016), and the 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (see A/78/968). The group of eight Arab and Islamic countries also expressed its strong condemnation of Israel's repeated violations of the ceasefire in Gaza, which have already resulted in the killing and injury of more than a thousand Palestinians.

A successful peace process requires a conducive environment built on trust, restraint and good faith. Actions that alter facts on the ground and prejudice final status issues are mala fide and profoundly counterproductive. Since the ceasefire, hundreds of Palestinians have been killed. United Nations premises, including the facilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, have been attacked. Restrictions on humanitarian operations and pressure on international humanitarian organizations continue to impede humanitarian assistance, which has yet to flow at the scale required. This is totally unacceptable and also reminds us of the fragility of the current situation.

Against this backdrop, the full and faithful implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) is absolutely essential. The ceasefire must be fully respected with a view to a permanent cessation of hostilities. We must ensure safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian assistance at the right scale. The recovery and reconstruction phase must begin without delay and without annexation, forced displacement or the alteration of the territorial unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Illegal settlement activity, settler violence and attempts to alter the demographic, legal or historical character of the Occupied Territory, including the holy sites, must cease immediately.

It is imperative to advance a credible, irreversible and time-bound political horizon leading to Palestinian statehood in accordance with international legitimacy. It is in pursuit of these objectives that Pakistan, as part of the group of eight Arab and Islamic Countries, joined the Board of Peace in support of its mandate, as endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025). We hope that the Board of Peace, under the framework of resolution 2803 (2025), will lead to concrete steps towards the implementation of a permanent ceasefire, the further scaling up of humanitarian aid, the reconstruction of Gaza and the realization of the right to self-determination of the people of Palestine through a credible, time-bound political process consistent with international legitimacy and the relevant United Nations resolutions, resulting in an independent, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. This is the ultimate goal supported by the international community. Palestinian-led governance and institutional strengthening with the central role of the Palestinian Authority are indispensable in this regard.

Tomorrow, Pakistan will participate in the inaugural meeting of the Board of Peace with the objective of reinforcing ongoing diplomatic efforts. We engage in this process with the firm conviction that sustained diplomacy, anchored in international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and guided by accountability, provides the only viable pathway to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. There can be no durable peace without justice, no stability without accountability and no sustainable solution without the realization of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Pakistan's solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters and their just cause remains unwavering. We stand with them in their legitimate pursuit of the right to self-determination, dignity and freedom.

Pakistan is ready and willing to contribute to all diplomatic initiatives, including President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, the Board of Peace, the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, which must reinforce one another through coordinated and concrete implementation, in the interests of our shared objective of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Waltz (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and our experts for their briefings today, and I welcome a number of ministers to the Council.

For two long years, we spoke about the way forward, we gave speech after speech, and we considered resolution after resolution in this very Chamber. Now, thankfully, there is a clear path forward in President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. I think it is worth remembering that just a few months ago we had a situation in which the terrorist group Hamas brutally controlled Gaza, they sacrificed their own people for their propaganda aims, and we had 48 hostages suffering in the tunnels that Hamas had built, instead of rebuilding Gaza. Hamas forced them, in many cases, to dig their own graves.

In the few months since, the ceasefire is in place, we have reduced hostilities, we have brought every single hostage home, alive and sadly deceased, and every day we are expanding the level, the scope and the scale of humanitarian assistance.

Phase two will build upon phase one's progress. But security and governance must come first. To that end, the international stabilization force, for which we have seen thousands of soldiers pledged, will create security, preserve peace and establish a durable terror-free environment. We have also announced the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, which will be responsible for restoring vital services in accordance with President Trump's 20-point plan. Under the oversight of the Board of Peace, the National Committee will forge a productive economy and provide Gazans with the opportunity for a better life. We already see the results of the Committee's work. On 2 February, it announced the reopening of the Rafah crossing, which has facilitated life-saving medical evacuations and humanitarian assistance.

The data and the results are speaking for themselves on a number of fronts. On 15 February, dozens of patients and their companions were medically evacuated from Gaza to Egypt. And crucially, for more than three months now, we have passed the benchmark established by the United Nations of 4,200 trucks entering Gaza each week.

Once again, we call on all parties to support the Board of Peace, which was established — I feel as though I am reminding many people of this fact, lately — by the Council with no opposition in resolution 2803 (2025), which again established the international stabilization force and the technocratic committee and will ensure the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Tomorrow, the Board of Peace will host its inaugural meeting in Washington, with a focus on bringing peace and security. Importantly, 27 nations — many nations from the region, the eight Gulf Arab countries and Muslim majority nations — have joined the Board. These are the countries with the most at stake in the region and as its neighbours for the success of Gaza.

The Board of Peace is a board of action. And we will build upon this progress already made by addressing Gaza's early recovery and its humanitarian needs. As a number of members have stated in the Council today, the status quo was not acceptable and it was not sustainable. Old structures were not working. To that end, the Board will announce tomorrow more than \$5 billion dollars in pledges for rebuilding.

The Board is not talking, it is doing. And look, we are hearing the chattering class criticizing the structure of the Board, saying that it is unconventional and that it is unprecedented. Again, the old ways were not working. We had choices of Hamas continuing to control Gaza, an occupation of Gaza, or a new way. I thank the members of the Council for choosing that new way and giving it a chance. We call on the Member States to work with the Board and commit to Gaza's reconstruction. We call on Member States to commit their time and their treasure in a meaningful, tangible way to back the speeches and rhetoric that we have heard in this body.

But before reconstruction can move forward, Hamas must and will disarm. All military, terror and offensive infrastructure, including tunnels and weapons production facilities, must be destroyed and not rebuilt, and Gaza must be demilitarized and deradicalized. There will be no more 7 Octobers. And there, prayerfully, will be no more war. Reconstruction cannot and will not take place in areas in which Hamas has not demilitarized.

Many Council members today and in the media have thanked President Trump for his vision and his tenacity in putting this plan in place. As Chair of the Board of Peace, we are confident that we will see an era of security, prosperity and opportunity for the Middle East emerge.

Mr. Osman (Somalia): Let me begin, Madam President, by expressing our sincere appreciation to the United Kingdom for convening this timely, important and high-level briefing on the Middle East. We also want to thank Her Excellency the Right Honourable Ms. Yvette Cooper, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom, for presiding over this meeting. We want to thank Under-Secretary-General Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing and we also acknowledge and are grateful for the contributions of the civil society briefers, Ms. Hiba Qasas and Mr. Nadav Tamir. We welcome the participation of the Deputy Prime Ministers and Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and Jordan, as well as the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Indonesia, in this meeting.

We meet today again at a moment of grave crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Israeli security Cabinet's recent measures to overhaul land registration and property rights in the West Bank fundamentally undermine international law and the very foundation of the Council's resolutions, specifically resolutions 242 (1968), 338 (1973), 446 (1979), 478 (1980), and 2334 (2016). These resolutions reaffirm the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the illegality of settlements in the occupied territories.

The International Court of Justice has been also clear, most recently in its advisory opinion, that Israel's actions, including settlement expansion and the ongoing denial of Palestinian self-determination, constitute violations of international law.

The ongoing Israeli air strikes in the West Bank, targeting refugee camps and civilian infrastructure, have resulted in mass displacement — a dangerous precedent not

seen since 1967. We remind Israel of its obligation to ensure the protection of civilians and strict observance of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. These actions will only fuel future cycles of violence and further erode any prospect for a two-State solution or lasting peace in the Middle East.

We categorically reject any proposal for the forced displacement of Palestinians, whether within or beyond their territories. Such actions are grave violations of international law and amount to ethnic cleansing. The international community must stand together against any attempt to alter the demographic composition of the Palestinian territories by force or coercion.

Equally, we must strongly condemn Israel's recent move to recognize a secessionist group in the north-western region of Somalia, my country, as an independent entity, as well as reported plans to forcibly transfer Palestinians to Somali territory. These measures blatantly infringe on Somalia's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, and threaten to entangle the Horn of Africa in the destabilizing dynamics of the Middle East conflict. Any effort to impose such political realities on the African continent undermines core principles of international law and sets a dangerous precedent.

The humanitarian operations in Gaza, under a fragile ceasefire, are under severe strain. Aid convoys face repeated delays at key crossings, and fuel shortages have crippled hospitals and shelters.

We strongly condemn the recent Israeli attack on the facilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Targeting an institution mandated by the United Nations to deliver life-saving aid is a flagrant breach of international humanitarian law and further imperils the most vulnerable, in particular women and children.

Humanitarian access is not a privilege, but a fundamental necessity and a legal obligation under international law. Unhindered access for UNRWA and all humanitarian agencies must be guaranteed by the occupying Power.

We are also deeply troubled by Israel's actions at the Holy Mosque in Jerusalem. Respect for religious sites is a fundamental obligation under international law, and Israel must refrain from actions or rhetoric that endanger these sacred places. During the holy month of Ramadan, we urge de-escalation across the Occupied Palestinian Territory and call on Israel to allow worshipers free and safe access to the blessed Aqsa Mosque, preserving the legal and historic status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem.

Looking ahead, the reconstruction of Gaza is essential. We acknowledge the leadership of the United States and President Trump with regard to the ceasefire in Gaza and his 20-point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and take note of the meeting of the Board of Peace in Washington, D.C., tomorrow. We hope that this process will lead to a lasting solution and complement the Organization's efforts. We note the recent recovery plan of the League of Arab States as a positive step, but without immediate funding and political clarity, such plans remain aspirational.

Reconstruction cannot succeed under continued occupation. We categorically reject any suggestion of prolonged Israeli security control or re-occupation of Gaza. The governance and rebuilding of Gaza must be Palestinian-led, Gaza must be unified with the West Bank, and the process must enable true self-determination.

The United Nations must remain at the centre of all efforts—directing reconstruction, coordinating humanitarian aid, upholding international law and ensuring that the collective will of the global community is reflected in every step towards peace.

The present ceasefire must be the start of a genuine political process, not its end. Ending the Israeli occupation and realizing a sovereign and independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, is the only viable path to achieve sustainable peace for all.

There is no doubt that the challenges of the Middle East are deeply interconnected, with one common denominator.

Allow me to conclude with the words of the late United States President Jimmy Carter:

“The bottom line is this: Peace will come to Israel and the Middle East only when the Israeli Government is willing to comply with international law, with the road map for peace, with official American policy and with the wishes of a majority of its own citizens, and to honour previous commitments by accepting its legal borders.”

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome Minister Yvette Cooper, who is presiding over this work of the Council today. I also welcome the participation of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Egypt, Jordan and Israel, as well as that of the representatives of Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Qatar, Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates.

I thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for her lucid briefing. I also thank Ms. Hiba Qasas and Mr. Nadav Tamir for their briefings, which were valuable contributions to the Council’s debate. I commend the commitment of their coalition, United for a Shared Future, to the Paris Call of 13 June 2025.

By adopting the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution on 22 September 2025, we emphatically reaffirmed that we support the prospect of two States living side by side in peace and in security. Since then and with the commitment of the United States, the possibility of putting an end to the nightmare that began on 7 October 2023, is now a realistic option. We should rejoice in this, and we must now get to work. With the repatriation of the remains of the last Israeli hostage and the launch of the second phase of the peace plan, a window of opportunity has opened that it would be irresponsible to allow to close.

The West Bank is experiencing an unprecedented crisis that threatens the prospects for peace, even as decisive diplomatic efforts on Gaza are under way. France reiterates that the future of the West Bank and that of Gaza are inextricably linked: the weakening of one compromises the stability of the other.

We strongly condemn the decisions taken by the Israel’s Security Cabinet to extend Israeli control over the West Bank, particularly in Areas A and B. These decisions are contrary to international law and seriously undermine the Oslo Accords and the Protocol concerning the Redeployment in Hebron. These measures, along with the start of the process of land registration in the West Bank — unprecedented since 1967 — and the approval of the E1 project, are part of a push towards annexation, which we categorically reject. They undermine the territorial continuity of a viable future Palestinian State, and they undermine the two-State solution. They worsen the already precarious situation of the Palestinian Authority, whose viability is being threatened by Israel’s restrictions on banking transactions and withholding of tax revenues. France calls upon Israel to reverse these decisions forthwith.

We denounce the resurgence of settler violence, demolitions, expulsions and forced displacement affecting thousands of Palestinian families in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. We are deeply concerned about the situation of the United Nations

Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Legislative measures targeting the Agency and the demolition of its headquarters in East Jerusalem are unprecedented actions against a United Nations institution, undermining its ability to deliver vital services to the Palestinian people. France calls upon Israel to lift restrictions that obstruct UNRWA's operations and to guarantee the protection of its premises.

In Gaza, addressing the humanitarian emergency is the top priority. More — far more — needs to be done, in accordance with the principles of humanitarian action. We call upon Israel to lift all obstacles to the delivery of assistance throughout the Strip and to allow all humanitarian actors, both those at the United Nations and those working for international non-governmental organizations, to continue to do their work on the ground.

There is also a need to work towards a political solution, building upon the adoption of resolution 2803 (2025). France applauds the efforts of the United States, Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye to implement phase two of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which should lead to the reconstruction of Gaza, the disarmament of Hamas, lasting security for Israel and the return to Gaza of a reformed Palestinian Authority.

The operationalization of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza is a positive step forward that should promptly result in its deployment on the ground. The partial reopening of the Rafah crossing, with the redeployment of the European Union Border Assistance Mission and that of the Palestinian Authority, is also an important step forward. France is contributing directly to that effort by deploying personnel from the national gendarmerie.

We call upon all parties to hold themselves accountable. Tenuous progress in Gaza cannot coexist with decisions which, in the West Bank, undermine the foundations of the two-State solution. In the spirit of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, France will remain fully mobilized to safeguard this political horizon, based on international law and the resolutions of the Council.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Under-Secretary General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing on the situation in the Middle East. We listened attentively to the assessments shared by civil society representatives. We welcome the participation in today's briefing of a number of delegations at the ministerial level. We congratulate all Muslims on the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan.

This latest Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East is taking place against an extremely dangerous backdrop, once again due to the illegal decisions of the Israeli leadership vis-à-vis the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Over the past 10 days, a number of members of Israel's military-political cabinet announced the adoption of a package of measures to revise the legal status and control modalities in Areas A and B of the West Bank, in addition to the launch of a land registration process in Area C, designating this territory as State property open to expanded operations by the Israelis.

All of this is nothing but a blatant attempt to legalize the decisions to expand settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, confiscate land, demolish Palestinian property, usurp water resources and establish control over certain religious holy sites in Hebron and Bethlehem. In other words, we see an obvious intention on West Jerusalem's part to give itself carte blanche to irreversibly change the status quo in the West Bank, including by entrenching the creeping expansion and expelling the local population.

The texts of the aforementioned decisions are yet to be published, but media outlets have been citing unnamed sources in the Israeli leadership about the alleged intent to resolve land ownership disputes in the West Bank and to develop infrastructure there. However, the true intention camouflaged by these slogans is precisely to irrevocably nullify the well-known international legal foundation for the Middle East settlement and the two-State solution as the cornerstone thereof. In this context, the egregiously provocative statements by Israeli Minister of Finance Bezalel Smotrich speak volumes, about the intent to continue the settlement revolution and to kill the very idea of a Palestinian State.

We assume that the aforementioned arbitrary package of administrative measures, if implemented, would constitute a direct violation of the 1995 Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, including the 1997 Protocol concerning the Redeployment in Hebron and the 1998 Wye River Memorandum. All these documents were signed by the Israeli Prime Ministers at the time, including the current Head of Government, Benjamin Netanyahu, ratified by the Knesset and circulated by Israelis and Palestinians as official United Nations documents.

It is with regret and with alarm that we note that, under various pretexts — be they security concerns or counter-terrorism efforts — Israel continues to breach its treaty-based obligations as the occupying Power and to violate the provisions of specific Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016) and 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 (decision 80/506). Such utter disregard for international law and a policy of creating irreversible facts on the ground are being rejected categorically by the overwhelming majority of the international community.

Like many of those present in the Security Council Chamber, the Russian Federation unreservedly condemns West Jerusalem's attempts to expand Israeli jurisdiction and control mechanisms to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. We align ourselves with the calls made by the Secretary-General for the Israeli leadership to reverse course and refrain from further measures that derail the prospects of implementing the two-State solution. It is a pity, however, that he was unable to summon the courage to condemn these decisions.

We also stand ready to support any proposals that are likely to be put forward by our Middle Eastern and regional partners, including on developing a unified Security Council and General Assembly position on this matter. We are convinced that it is high time for the Israeli authorities to acknowledge that there is no alternative to a peaceful settlement of the conflict and to listen to the voices of those who genuinely seek to establish a real peace and prosperity in the Middle East.

We view dangerous trends in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as being connected to the equally alarming situation in another integral part of the future Palestinian State, namely, the Gaza Strip. In particular, we must note the absence of any meaningful progress on the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) in support of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. It goes without saying that the ceasefire in Gaza and the release of all Israeli hostages and some Palestinian detainees was an important and long-anticipated event. One cannot underestimate the significance of stopping the bloodcurdling massacre in the enclave. However, judging by incoming reports, the mass killing of Palestinians in Gaza continues. Since 10 October 2025, more than 600 people have been killed as a result of Israeli strikes. According to regular United Nations reports, there are persistent problems with the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Strip, including as a result of Israeli access denials or access delays for humanitarian convoys. Thousands of Palestinians continue to languish in Israeli prisons, and in addition to existing

restrictions on humanitarian access to these people, there are plans to hand down death sentences for them.

We expect unequivocal calls for de-escalation in both Gaza and the West Bank to be voiced in one form or another during a series of events planned for tomorrow in Washington, D.C., by the Board of Peace, which Israel itself recently joined. We are still awaiting information from our American colleagues about the parameters for the future presence of the International Stabilization Force in Gaza. Three months on from the adoption of resolution 2803 (2025), we, like other colleagues on the Council, have no details in this respect.

For our part, we would like to reaffirm that Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, will continue to resolutely uphold the principles of a just settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in accordance with Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, on the basis of the two-State solution endorsed by international decisions. We believe that there is a need to step up international efforts to revive the political horizon with a view to resolving the Palestinian issue. Such collective steps should culminate in the creation of a sovereign State of Palestine within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital and coexisting in peace and security with Israel.

Mr. Brown II (Liberia): I thank the Under-Secretary-General and the other qualified briefers for their sobering insights.

We cannot speak about the Middle East without acknowledging the initiatives led by the United States, Qatar, Egypt and other regional leaders and stakeholders, who activated the momentum towards de-escalation, improved humanitarian access and dialogue.

As we welcome the meeting of the Board of Peace tomorrow in Washington, D.C., today Liberia will begin not with lamentations, but with a road map. If we are serious about peace in the Middle East, five steps are immediately necessary: first, immediate and verifiable protection of civilians; secondly, guaranteed and sustained humanitarian access at scale; thirdly, a freeze on unilateral actions that predetermine final status issues; fourthly, structured, time-bound political negotiations with regional guarantees; and fifthly, a regional security and economic compact that makes peace more profitable than war. Everything I will say today expands on these five points.

As we have heard from our briefers, for millions in the Middle East, war is not an interruption of life — it is life itself. Entire generations have been born under occupation, blockade, displacement or bombardment. Children, who should be learning algebra and literature, are instead learning the sound of drones and artillery. Mothers measure time not in school years but in ceasefires that did not hold. This is not only a humanitarian tragedy; it is an international failure.

Over decades, data from multiple United Nations agencies demonstrate a recurring pattern in which political processes collapse and humanitarian needs triple, in which humanitarian access shrinks and radicalization expands and in which economic contraction persists for more than five consecutive years in conflict zones and a relapse into violence becomes statistically more likely. The Middle East has lived through this cycle repeatedly. The destruction of infrastructure is rebuilt, only to be destroyed again. Armed operations degrade adversaries, but they only entrench grievances. Security measures imposed without political legitimacy produce only temporary calm. If force alone worked, the Council would not be meeting decade after decade on the same files. The current trajectory is not strength; it is repetition.

History teaches us something fundamental. From the Magna Carta to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, humankind has gradually recognized a simple truth:

power without restraint destroys both ruler and ruled. No people are immune from this law of history. Borders may be disputed. Narratives may compete, faith traditions may differ, skin tones, languages and nationalities may divide us, but biology, grief and hope do not. Mankind is one. The child in Gaza and the child in Tel Aviv inherit the same century. The destinies of the people of the Middle East are interwoven, whether they acknowledge or accept it or not. War in the modern Middle East is not merely destructive; it is economically irrational. Conflict depresses regional gross domestic product growth. It drives capital flight, increases food insecurity, disrupts energy corridors and destabilizes global markets. Billions are spent containing crises that could have been prevented through structured diplomacy. Perpetual war is not a strategy; it is a waste.

The first obligation is simple: civilians must be protected. International humanitarian law is not optional. It is not selective. It does not bend to politics — at least, it should not. It applies and must apply equally. Indiscriminate attacks, hostage-taking, collective punishment and the targeting or misuse of civilian infrastructure must cease. Protection cannot be rhetorical. It requires clear operational deconfliction mechanisms, independent monitoring, accountability structures and explicit commitments from all armed actors. Without the protection of civilians, there is no moral credibility and no political foundation.

Humanitarian access must be predictable, scalable and insulated from political bargaining. Temporary corridors that open only to close, then open, then close again at will do not stabilize societies. They exhaust them. Food, water, fuel, medicine and shelter are not concessions; they are obligations. When babies die of preventable causes in conflict zones, it is not because solutions are technologically impossible. It is because decisions were not made. The Council must insist that aid flows consistently and at volume, commensurate with the need on the ground.

Unilateral actions that alter demographics, territorial realities or legal status in disputed areas undermine trust and narrow political horizons. History shows that when political horizons narrow, extremism widens. A freeze on settlement is not ideological. It is preventive diplomacy. Peace cannot grow where facts on the ground are engineered to avoid it or to foreclose it.

Crisis management is not a peace process. A credible political pathway must be restored, structured, sequenced and made time-bound. The two-State solution remains the internationally endorsed framework, not because it is perfect, but because no viable alternative has gained lawful or political consensus.

Negotiations, therefore, must address borders and security arrangements, Jerusalem, refugees, mutual recognition and guarantees. Regional actors must serve not as proxies, but as guarantors. Without timelines and benchmarks, diplomacy drifts. Without regional backing, agreements collapse. Without accountability, commitments fade.

Peace must be economically anchored. A regional compact linking reconstruction, trade corridors, energy cooperation, water management and infrastructure investment would alter incentive structures. When economies interlock, war becomes more expensive than peace.

The Middle East possesses extraordinary human capital, technological capacity, cultural depth and strategic geography. Its youth population would power innovation for generations, if not consumed by recurring wars. Peace must offer visible dividends.

In conclusion, the wars of the Middle East have outlived their justifications. Each party believes it is defending something essential: security, dignity and survival. But if the method of defence guarantees endless destruction, then wisdom requires reassessment.

The world has entered an era in which regional wars no longer remain regional. They spill into migration flows, energy shocks, economic instability and global insecurity. We are beyond the point at which indifference is affordable. Let us choose restraint over retaliation. Let us choose negotiation over repetition. Let us choose a future in which children inherit schools instead of sirens.

Ms. Pavļuta-Deslandes (Latvia): Let me thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her informative briefing. I also express deep appreciation to civil society briefers Ms. Hiba Qasas and Mr. Nadav Tamir for their valuable contribution to our discussion. Their words reminded us, with both courage and humanity, that even amid hardship, the future for both peoples need not be defined by the conflict. This foundational truth must be strengthened by courageous leadership and sustained international engagement.

The Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, put forward by President Trump and endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025), is at the heart of ongoing international endeavours to achieve peace and stability in Gaza. Every effort must now be made to advance the next steps towards its full implementation. The established ceasefire and the long-awaited completion of phase one, including the return of all hostages taken by Hamas, have brought hope that, instead of continued loss and suffering, people in Gaza and in Israel may finally experience peace and security.

Phase two, currently under way, sets out practical steps that need to be implemented, without delay, to restore dignified daily life for the people of Gaza. These include ensuring an unhindered flow of aid, the adequate provision of medical and winterization supplies, the clearing of rubble, the restoration of the full functionality of hospitals and schools and the launch of reconstruction efforts across Gaza. The National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, entrusted with these responsibilities, should be empowered with the necessary means, tools and access to effectively implement its mandate, as set out in the peace plan and resolution 2803 (2025).

The reconstruction of Gaza is closely linked to security and governance. The demand for Hamas to disarm and relinquish power must be enforced. The people of Israel deserve to live in peace and security, without the daily threat of terrorism. We await the upcoming Board of Peace meeting announcing the deployment of a United Nations-authorized stabilization force, as well as the indispensable financial contributions required for development projects to be implemented for the benefit of the people of Gaza.

We welcome the reopening of the Rafah crossing and urge the parties concerned to work towards increasing the number of people able to cross the border in both directions every day. We support the redeployment of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Rafah and remain convinced that the Mission can contribute to safe and controlled cross-border movement.

An unimpeded flow of goods remains essential and urgent, as the humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to be deeply alarming, with civilians facing shortages of food, water, medical supplies and safe shelter. We commend the vital work of the United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners operating under extremely difficult conditions, and we reaffirm our support for their efforts to meet urgent civilian needs.

We take note of the ongoing reforms of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and the tangible steps taken to implement the recommendations of the Colonna report, thereby enhancing the United Nations Agency's accountability and transparency in delivering humanitarian support and services. We underscore the importance of fully respecting the immunities of the United Nations, its personnel and premises, as essential for the effective fulfilment of their humanitarian mandate.

At a time at which international attention is focused on resolving the conflict in Gaza, we must not lose sight of the West Bank. Escalating settler violence against Palestinian civilians, land confiscations, house demolitions and settlement expansions have reached unprecedented levels. These developments fuel tensions and perpetuate a cycle of violence, exposing both Palestinians and Israelis to increasing security risks. This cycle of violence also raises the threat of terrorism for the Israeli people.

Recent steps approved by Israel's security Cabinet aimed at expanding control over the entire West Bank are unacceptable and disrupt ongoing international efforts to achieve peace and stability, including the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Plan. These decisions undermine existing agreements to which Israel is a party and are incompatible with international law and resolution 2334 (2016). We condemn policies and threats of forcible displacement and annexation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and urge Israel to abide by its obligations under international law.

We are deeply concerned about the severe fiscal difficulties the Palestinian Authority continues to face as a result of the conflict-related economic consequences. We urge Israel to release the withheld clearance revenues so that the Palestinian Authority can meet its budgetary obligations, including the payment of public sector salaries and the provision of essential services. The Palestinian Authority has to be assisted in strengthening its institutional capacities, advancing its reform agenda and addressing security challenges in order to provide effective governance in the West Bank and, eventually, in Gaza.

In conclusion, allow me to underline that the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Plan and resolution 2803 (2025) requires genuine engagement by all parties. Ongoing international efforts to achieve lasting peace and security in the Middle East must strive for a political solution that addresses the security concerns and legitimate aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians. A just and lasting peace requires that Gaza and the West Bank be treated as one unified entity. We firmly believe that a negotiated two-State solution, in accordance with internationally agreed parameters as defined by Security Council resolutions and the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, remains the only viable path to lasting peace in the Middle East.

Mrs. Balta (Greece): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her thorough briefing, as well as civil society representatives Hiba Qasas and Nadav Tamir for their insightful remarks.

We meet today at a critical juncture, where a fragile peace provides the foundation upon which lasting relief and reconstruction can be built.

Greece has been among those consistent voices in the Council calling for a structured pathway towards peace. The ceasefire must be sustained and consolidated; governance arrangements must be legitimate and durable; reconstruction must be comprehensive and well-coordinated.

In this direction, we have strongly supported the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025). In this context, Greece will attend the inaugural meeting of the Board of Peace for Gaza tomorrow as an observer.

We have also welcomed the nomination of a Palestinian National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, with the support of the presidency of the Palestinian Authority. Any transitional framework must reinforce the role of the Palestinian Authority as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The full disarmament of Hamas and of all other armed groups must be addressed urgently and effectively. Durable peace requires Israel's long-term security and the full protection of Israeli citizens, as well as the tackling of hate speech and antisemitic

rhetoric. At the same time, legitimate governance structures embedded in a broader and credible political horizon for Palestinians is crucial.

Authorizing the International Stabilization Force and defining its mandate and operational modalities is another milestone towards achieving peace and building the day-after in Gaza. To be effective, reconstruction plans must be coordinated internationally and carried out with transparency and accountability. The central role of the Palestinian National Committee, the Palestinian Authority and key regional partners is crucial in this regard.

At the same time, the humanitarian aspect should be at the forefront of a credible political process. While we acknowledge improvements on the humanitarian front, including the partial reopening of the Rafah crossing, significant challenges persist. The toll of the conflict remains high, having left hospitals and infrastructure severely damaged and having led to widespread deprivation. We reiterate our call for the unimpeded, large and at-scale humanitarian access, including via the Cyprus maritime corridor.

Greece is ready to contribute to humanitarian and early recovery initiatives, especially to those that can have an immediate positive impact on the ground, such as rubble removal and housing initiatives aiming to actively ameliorate the living conditions of the population. Furthermore, we are ready to allocate a substantial financial contribution towards hospital units in East Jerusalem through the Palestinian-European Mechanism for Management of Socio-Economic Aid/European Union mechanism.

Beyond Gaza, we are deeply concerned about the recent measures aimed at increasing control across the West Bank and East Jerusalem. We oppose any plan to annex the West Bank, as such actions, coupled with rising settler violence, including against Christian communities, undermine the prospects of a negotiated two-State solution. As stated by Minister Gerapetritis, Gaza and the West Bank are a single, indivisible territorial unit for a future Palestinian State.

An empowered and reformed Palestinian Authority is a credible partner for peace and an essential precondition for the viable implementation of the two-State solution. We acknowledge the ongoing efforts by the Palestinian Authority to undertake reforms and to build institutional capacity. Continued financial and political backing, including through the release of withheld tax revenues, avoiding its fiscal collapse, is necessary to ensure the success of these efforts.

Last but not least, the preservation and respect of the status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem, a city with a diverse cultural and religious mosaic, is of paramount importance.

In closing, the path to peace remains narrow, yet it is the only way forward. Greece is committed to working with all members of the Council, with the United Nations and with regional partners to turn commitments into action so that peace becomes a reality. A negotiated, just and lasting peace based on the two-State solution, the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in which Israel and a viable and sovereign Palestine coexist side by side in peace, mutual recognition and security, is the only way forward.

Mrs. Zalabata Torres (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her presentation, as well as to the other briefers for sharing their experiences with the Council. I also welcome the presence of the delegations joining us today.

We are at a decisive moment for the future of Palestine and the Middle East. While windows of opportunity are opening and there is renewed talk of peace, that hope coexists with decisions that undermine its viability.

The situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is deeply troubling. The measures recently adopted by the Government of Israel consolidate de facto annexation and are contrary to international law. The accelerated expansion of settlements, the escalation of violence, the extension of Israeli civil authority and rhetoric that denies the possibility of a Palestinian State directly threaten the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Resolution 2334 (2016) was clear: the settlement policy constitutes an obstacle to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. Today, that obstacle is becoming more entrenched. While mediators are making efforts to open space for political dialogue and advance the implementation of a peace plan, actions on the ground are undermining the very foundations of that process. How can we believe in political commitments when, at the same time, actions are being taken and statements are being made that contradict the solution that they supposedly support?

Gaza and the West Bank are an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Their integrity and contiguity must be preserved. Colombia rejects any measure aimed at altering the demographic or territorial composition, or modifying the status quo of religious sites, while urging Israel to reverse these provisions and fully respect the decisions of the Council and the International Court of Justice.

In Gaza, the situation remains alarming. Violations of the ceasefire and restrictions on humanitarian access persist. Colombia takes note of the formation of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza and the announcement of elections to the Palestinian National Council. These steps can contribute to strengthening Palestinian governance and must be carried out with real guarantees, without interference, as part of a reform process that the Council has encouraged.

At the same time, the economic and financial crisis has become a factor of structural destabilization. The withholding of Palestinian tax revenues and the use of the banking exemption as a means of pressure, with increasingly shorter renewal periods — the most recent being just two weeks — create uncertainty, isolate Palestine from the financial system and deepen the disconnect between Gaza and the West Bank. Empowering a sovereign, unified and economically viable Palestinian State, in accordance with the New York Declaration, necessitates the reimbursement in full of withheld revenues and the existence of a sound economic and financial system.

On the humanitarian front, Colombia welcomes the opening of the Rafah crossing but expresses concern about restrictions on entry into Gaza. It is imperative to guarantee that crossings remain open and to facilitate medical evacuation and the unrestricted entry of aid at scale and in accordance with the principles of neutrality, humanity and independence. Colombia reiterates its condemnation of attacks against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, including the violation of the Agency's privileges and immunities and the restrictions imposed on humanitarian organizations, whose work is vital throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Humanitarian personnel and the press must have full access and protection, in line with the Geneva Conventions, with a view to guaranteeing the protection of civilians and safeguarding fundamental rights, such as access to information and basic services, such as health, food and education.

Before concluding, I would like to briefly touch upon the situation in Lebanon, highlighting our concern about recent reports regarding the use of toxic herbicides north of the Blue Line. In addition to constituting a violation of resolution 1701 (2006), these

acts could have a significant impact on civilians living in those areas, given the herbicides' potential effect on crops and, consequently, civilian livelihoods.

At this critical moment, the credibility of the Council is at stake. It is imperative to demand compliance with resolution 2334 (2016), to preserve the political space for a solution based on the existence of a viable, sovereign and contiguous Palestinian State based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and to move towards the admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I welcome Her Excellency Secretary of State Yvette Cooper of the United Kingdom presiding over today's meeting. I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo, Ms. Hiba Qasas and Mr. Nadav Tamir for their briefings.

For more than 70 years, the Palestinian-Israeli situation has repeatedly plunged into turmoil, undermining peace and stability in the Middle East and affecting international dynamics. The fundamental reason that the Palestinian question remains unresolved to this day lies in the failure to realize the two-State solution, and an independent Palestinian State is still elusive. At present, as the Palestinian question once again reaches a critical juncture, the international community must take a responsible approach for the sake of the Palestinian people and peace in the Middle East and must uphold fairness and justice and take strong actions.

Allow me to make three points.

First, immediately ending the suffering of the people of Gaza is the most urgent priority. Gaza urgently needs a genuine, comprehensive and lasting ceasefire. Any attacks on civilians are unacceptable. The United Nations and other humanitarian agencies, with their thorough experience and complete systems, can build a life-saving bridge for the people of Gaza. Restricting the operations of humanitarian agencies will severely exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. China calls on all relevant parties, especially Israel, to fully comply with the ceasefire agreement and stop all its attacks. We urge Israel to fulfil its obligations under international humanitarian law, fully open border crossings and lift access restrictions on humanitarian supplies, so as to guarantee aid operations by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other humanitarian agencies.

Secondly, it is imperative to advance post-war arrangements for Gaza in a steady and proper manner. Gaza belongs to the Palestinian people. Any arrangements concerning Gaza's future should adhere to the principle of Palestinians governing Palestine, respect the wishes of the Palestinian people, address the legitimate concerns of countries in the Middle East and align with the two-State solution. Any actions to forcibly alter Gaza's territory and demographic composition will not bring about lasting peace and must be firmly rejected. China will continue to support Palestine's central role in Gaza's post-war governance. China supports the Council in closely monitoring developments in Gaza and post-war arrangements and playing its due role.

Thirdly, implementing the two-State solution is the only way forward. Recently, Israel announced multiple decisions to carry out land registration in the West Bank and expand its administrative and law enforcement measures there. These decisions violate the Oslo Accords, international law and Council resolutions. They will lead to an expansion of the illegal occupation in Palestine, undermine the political foundation of the two-State solution and aggravate the fragile situation in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel should heed the strong calls of the international community, halt its settlement activities in and encroachment on Palestinian territories and stop undermining the governance foundation of the Palestinian Authority. To implement the two-State solution and restore fairness and justice to the Palestinian people is the unshakeable responsibility of the international community. We must firmly reject all attempts to

annex Palestinian territories. We must advance the early establishment of a fully sovereign, independent Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, thereby realizing the Palestinian people's rights to statehood, survival and return.

China firmly supports the just cause of the Palestinian people in restoring their legitimate national rights. China will continue to work with the international community to promote a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire in Gaza, alleviate the humanitarian crisis and strive for the implementation of the two-State solution and a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question at an early date.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): We welcome Ms. Yvette Cooper, Member of Parliament and Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the friendly United Kingdom, presiding over the Council, and we thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for its distinguished presidency of the Council this month. I also welcome the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of fraternal and friendly States taking part in this meeting. We appreciate the valuable briefing given by Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and we welcome all the briefers.

Our meeting today coincides with the start of the holy month of Ramadan, which embodies tolerance and cooperation in their loftiest sense, along with the values of giving, sacrifice and faith. We warmly extend our greetings to all Muslims on the occasion of this holy month.

Our meeting today also takes place against a backdrop of continued conflict and heightened tensions in the Middle East and amid continued efforts to arrive at a comprehensive and lasting peace that puts an end to the violence, including the meeting of the Board of Peace that will be held at the leadership level in Washington. We wish that meeting every success.

The ceasefire in Gaza was an important step towards ending civilian bloodshed. We reaffirm the importance of implementing phase two of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which was proposed by His Excellency President Donald J. Trump and endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025). We renew Bahrain's support for the efforts led by His Excellency to bring peace to the region. Bahrain joined the Board of Peace because it is committed to participating in the effort to end the war and move towards a just and lasting peace that upholds the legitimate rights of the fraternal Palestinian people and bolsters stability in the region. In this regard, we call on Israel to refrain from extending its control in the West Bank, as its recent measures constitute a clear violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and the relevant Security Council resolutions, most notably resolution 2334 (2016). Furthermore, these measures run counter to efforts to achieve a two-State solution and establish an independent, sovereign Palestinian State based on the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with the State of Israel. The Kingdom of Bahrain underscores the need to halt these unilateral steps, which could undermine the peace efforts led by the United States of America, reignite the already tense crisis in the West Bank and plunge the region back into a cycle of tension and violence.

The Kingdom stresses the need to adhere to the solutions for peace set out in international references and welcomes the clear position taken by His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations, expressing grave concern about Israel's decisions and warning that the current trajectory in the West Bank, including the latest decision, is undermining the prospects of a two-State solution. That position is in line with the outcomes of the thirty-third Arab Summit hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain in 2024. The Summit's final declaration reaffirmed the united Arab stance in support of

peace, greater recognition of the State of Palestine, the convening of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations and the rejection of any attempt to forcibly displace Palestinians. This stance is consistent with the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, which was adopted thanks to the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the friendly French Republic and affirmed the rejection of territorial and demographic changes, including the forced displacement of Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. We would also refer to the Sharm el-Sheikh peace summit held on 13 October 2025, in which His Majesty the King of Bahrain participated alongside prominent regional and international partners and which saw the signing of an agreement to end the war in Gaza after two years of bloody conflict.

The Kingdom of Bahrain calls on the international community to continue providing humanitarian relief to the brotherly Palestinian people, particularly through United Nations agencies. The Kingdom of Bahrain also calls for support for the reform efforts undertaken by the Palestinian Authority to meet the aspirations of the Palestinian people and contribute to the establishment of their independent State, including the publication of the draft interim constitution and the holding of local elections in April. In this regard, we underscore the need for Palestinian tax revenues to be released and for restrictions on banking transactions to be lifted, as they are impeding economic development efforts in Gaza and the West Bank.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain renews its commitment to supporting the work of the Security Council so as to ensure that it fulfils its responsibilities and arrives at a united and meaningful position that makes a positive contribution to supporting a course correction in the West Bank and to bolstering recent accomplishments, with a view to preserving regional security and stability, maintaining international peace and security and fostering prospects for prosperity for all peoples of the region.

Mr. Mukongo (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): The Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomes the attendance of Her Excellency Ms. Yvette Cooper, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom. It likewise acknowledges the presence of Their Excellencies the Deputy Prime Ministers of Pakistan and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Their Excellencies the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Israel, Egypt and Indonesia. We thank Madam Under-Secretary-General for her briefing and at the same time, we commend the United Nations abiding efforts towards peacebuilding and coexistence in the Middle East. Lastly, we welcome the presence of Ms. Hiba Qasas and Mr. Nadav Tamir.

This meeting, in the view of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is of critical importance given the fragility of the situation in Palestine, in particular in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. As regards the situation in Gaza, the Democratic Republic of the Congo takes note of the fact that the ceasefire, brokered thanks to the tireless mediation efforts of Egypt, Qatar, Türkiye and the United States, is holding, and it urges the implementation of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. The ceasefire must be bolstered and usher in the recovery and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip.

To that end, the Democratic Republic of the Congo asks the parties to strive to improve the humanitarian situation, to exercise the utmost restraint and to abide scrupulously by the obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. It underscores the importance of implementing resolution 2803 (2025) and encourages the Security Council and all partners involved in resolving this crisis to use the momentum marked by the establishment of the Board of Peace to good effect for the benefit of the beleaguered populations.

Recent developments in the West Bank have likewise captured my delegation's attention on account of the repercussions on the civilian population. Restrictions on movement and the deteriorating environment highlight the urgent need to ensure that the achievements of dialogue are preserved by making restraint and mutual respect the bedrock of the peaceful coexistence that all desire. Reaffirming its unswerving devotion to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the sovereign equality of States, respect for territorial integrity, respect for human dignity and our collective commitment to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, my country underlines that these principles cannot be applied piecemeal. At all times, they must consistently and comprehensively inform our collective endeavour and must, in and of themselves, represent the hope of a return to calm in places where the spectre of conflict and tension has loomed large.

In an already fragile regional context, fraught with political, security and humanitarian challenges, the Democratic Republic of the Congo urges the parties to assume their responsibilities and prioritize restraint by averting any measure that might inflame tensions between the peoples. In view of its experience of conflict and its unwavering dedication to the peaceful settlement of disputes, the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains committed to a just and lasting solution. In this respect, it points to the need to desist from any unilateral measure capable of altering the status of the territories concerned, in full compliance with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. My delegation calls on the parties to engage constructively in the exploration of certain pre-existing negotiations frameworks. Those efforts must be turned to good account, drawing on synergies with the Board of Peace's initiative launched by President Trump. All such ingredients, together, are paramount to restoring trust between the two peoples.

In conclusion, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is of the firm belief that a just and lasting solution can be found only through peaceful means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions advocating the peaceful coexistence of two States, living side by side in security.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama welcomes Her Excellency Yvette Cooper and thanks the United Kingdom for convening this session. We also thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, as well as Ms. Hiba Qasas and Mr. Nadav Tamir, representatives of civil society, for their detailed briefings on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Similarly, we welcome the delegations present today who honour us with their participation, including in particular those represented at the ministerial level.

Panama expresses its concern at the rapid deterioration of the situation in the West Bank, as it considers that it would be counterproductive to implement or intensify measures that may be contrary to international law, existing international agreements and the relevant resolutions of the Council, in particular resolution 2334 (2016), with serious implications contrary to the current peace efforts under way that could enable the peoples of Israel and Palestine to live in peace, dignity and security.

According to what we have been told in this meeting, in the West Bank, displacement and demolitions linked to the sustained increase in violence have intensified in 2026. Approximately 700 people have been displaced in nine communities, some of which have been left completely depopulated. Insisting on these actions, aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the West Bank, would risk undermining the minimum conditions for a negotiated political solution to a conflict that has lasted for almost eight decades. It is important to prevent the West Bank from going down a path of devastation and humanitarian crisis.

In Gaza, the ceasefire in force since 10 October 2025, backed by Qatar, Egypt, the United States and Türkiye, has fortunately led to a relative reduction in the intensity of hostilities and commendable initial humanitarian relief. However, the most recent reports indicate that sporadic incidents have caused civilian casualties and the destruction of infrastructure persists, leaving much of the population displaced and surviving in difficult conditions. This fragility confirms that the ceasefire alone is not enough. Political will is required from all parties in order to avoid unilateral measures and actions that, far from contributing to stability, deepen mistrust and distance any prospect of peace.

In that context, Panama welcomes the recent announcements made by United States President Donald Trump regarding the Board of Peace, as well as the financial and international personnel commitments announced by other countries, with a view to advancing the phases of the 20-point plan endorsed by the Council in resolution 2803 (2025). This plan, which must be supported and protected, is a central reference point for consolidating the ceasefire, moving towards a phase of stabilization and laying realistic foundations for the recovery and reconstruction of Gaza, that, among other points, demands that the brutality of Hamas play no role in its future. The future of Gaza must be under a reformed and unified Palestinian leadership, capable of ensuring security for its own population and for its neighbours.

Stabilization and recovery efforts, both in Gaza and the West Bank, require the full and operational support of the United Nations system. We deeply value and support the work of all humanitarian agencies and partners on the ground. Full access to humanitarian assistance is an urgent priority and, therefore, we reaffirm our support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and for non-governmental agencies and organizations with the capacity and experience to provide services that remain indispensable to meet basic needs and provide protection to millions of people. At the same time, we reiterate our concern about any action that affects the inviolability of United Nations premises and insist that the privileges and immunities of the Organization must be respected without exception.

Panama reiterates that the only viable, dignified and sustainable path remains one that allows the peoples of Israel and Palestine to live side by side, in peace and security, within secure and recognized borders, in accordance with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, hopefully in the near future.

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): Let me also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing and Ms. Hiba Qasas and Mr. Nadav Tamir for their important statements that give reasons for hope.

We meet today three months after the adoption of resolution 2803 (2025), which endorsed President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. That plan offered long-awaited hope to civilians in Gaza who have suffered for far too long. It has helped to halt outright famine, reunite hostages with their families and reopen the Rafah border crossing for medical evacuations. In short, it restored the prospect of peace.

Now the challenge is to turn that prospect into reality, to create a comprehensive and lasting peace, a peace in which Palestinians and Israelis live side by side in peaceful coexistence and security. For such peace to take place the following developments are important.

First, the territorial integrity of a future Palestinian State must be preserved. Denmark condemns the recent decision of the Israeli security Cabinet to expand Israeli control in the West Bank. This decision will harm efforts to advance peace and stability for Israelis and Palestinians alike. It clearly also undermines the viability of the two-State solution. Any attempt at annexation runs counter to Israel's obligations under

international law and must be prevented. Denmark calls on Israel to reverse this decision and to immediately halt and reverse the continued expansion of settlements, the legalization of outposts, the seizure of Palestinian land and the implementation of the E-1 plan. These actions not only deprive Palestinians of their land but rendering the creation of a contiguous and viable Palestinian State virtually impossible.

Secondly, the ceasefire in Gaza must be fully respected by all parties, and resolution 2803 (2025) fully implemented, including regarding humanitarian aid. Despite recent improvements, humanitarian needs in Gaza remain immense and urgent, while too much life-saving aid continues to be prevented from entering. Denmark calls on Israel to fully lift all restrictions on humanitarian aid. This includes shelter, medicine, food, equipment for rubble removal and items considered dual-use, as well as measures ensuring that children can return to school. We urge Israel to allow greater freedom of movement for people through the Rafah crossing and the reopening of additional crossings, including the Allenby crossing to Jordan.

The United Nations-led humanitarian system, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), working hand in hand with international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), remains best placed to carry out the monumental task of delivering humanitarian aid at scale. We therefore call on Israel to reverse its decision to deregister international NGOs.

We reiterate our deep concern regarding Israeli legislation, prohibiting and de facto preventing any UNRWA presence within Israel and in Jerusalem, including by demolishing the UNRWA headquarters. We urge the Government of Israel to abide by its international obligations to ensure the protection and inviolability of United Nations premises.

Thirdly, Denmark is committed to achieving tangible progress on the peace plan, including the reconstruction of Gaza, and we underline the need for Palestinian self-determination. We reiterate our call on Hamas and other armed groups to give up their arms. Terrorist organizations must be disarmed and cannot play any role in Gaza's future governance.

The ceasefire in Gaza was hard-won. It must be preserved. But we must not forget the West Bank. Both are inseparable, indispensable parts of this whole — of a future Palestinian State, of a future that offers security for Israelis and dignity, self-determination and hope for Palestinians.

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

Mr. Mansour (State of Palestine): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Madam President, for convening this briefing and for your decision to preside over it. I also thank the Deputy Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of Jordan, Egypt, Pakistan and Indonesia for participating in this meeting. Allow me also to thank the three briefers. I would also like to thank the Arab and Muslim countries, including the mediators, for mobilizing support for the cause of Palestine and for their participation in this important meeting.

Today is the first day of Ramadan, the holy month that should be a month of peace and spiritual reflection. Sadly, Palestinians in occupied Palestine are being stripped of their ability to live their faith freely and peacefully. From the centuries-old Christian and Muslim houses of worship destroyed, to the assault on Haram al-Sharif and Al-Haram al-Ibrahimi, to the military checkpoints and restrictions against Muslim and Christian pilgrimage, there is no peace, anywhere, anytime. The Holy Land, sacred for the three monotheistic religions, yearns for peace and remains deprived of it.

For a while now, Israel's goal has been to remove the Palestinian people in order to seize Palestinian land. The scale and pace have changed dramatically, but the tools and objectives are the same — settlements and settler terrorism, land expropriation under diverse excuses and house demolitions, the takeover of land registration — all to serve that ultimate objective: annexation.

Palestine belongs to the Palestinian people. It is not up for grabs, and it is not for sale. It is not a land without a people. And despite all its efforts, Israel will not transform us into a people without a land.

The latest Israeli decisions mean that we have reached the end of the road. Now annexation is in full display. Unchallenged, it will define our region's future and doom it. It will also redefine the world we live in.

Whatever the Israeli Foreign Minister will claim today, everyone here knows the truth: this Israeli Government considers us alien to our own land and refuses to recognize our existence as a nation. It claims to be defending civilization by oppressing us and denying us our fundamental rights. It might ask itself: why does the world care about the fate of the barbarians? There is something fundamentally racist about this colonial narrative underlying all these illegal policies.

The Foreign Minister is also too late. His colleagues have already confessed. Finance Minister Smotrich stated: "We are strengthening our grip on the territory and killing the idea of establishing a Palestinian State in the heart of the country". As a true racist and extremist, he called this Palestinian State an Arab terrorist State.

In 2023, after 7 October, the Foreign Minister himself declared: "Gaza must be smaller by the end of the war. First, it is a security matter. Second, because this is the price of loss that the Arabs understand".

Yesterday, the world mobilized at the United Nations to condemn and reject the Israeli measures towards annexation. Over 100 States and organizations have joined a statement to that effect. All 15 Council members have expressed their opposition to annexation. Annexation is a breach of the Charter of the United Nations, of the most fundamental rules of international law and of United Nations resolutions, including those of the Council. It strikes at the heart of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. It is a breach of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and constitutes an existential threat to ongoing peace efforts. The Security Council has a duty to act, and all States that seek peace must act.

What does it tell us that Israel doubled down on annexation despite international rejection and outrage, days before the meeting of the Board of Peace in Washington, D.C., and while the United States Administration, alongside regional and international actors, are seeking to consolidate the fragile ceasefire in Gaza? This is the same ceasefire Israel that is undermining by killing Palestinians, restricting humanitarian aid and access, hampering the proper functioning of the Rafah crossing and opposing the natural role of the Palestinian Government in Gaza.

Let me be clear: we welcomed President Trump's Plan. For us, it was about saving lives through the ceasefire and by ending famine. It was to ensure, as the Plan states, that there will be no annexation, no occupation, and no forcible displacement. We hoped that these would be the first steps towards the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination, including their right to their independent State, leading to peace, as stated by the Plan.

The ceasefire agreement saved lives — Palestinian and Israeli lives. President Trump, through the ceasefire, delivered the release of the Israeli hostages. But the agony of the Palestinian people is very far from over. Israel does not want a ceasefire. Its goals

remain occupation, annexation and forcible displacement — in Gaza, now split in two, and in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The question before us is clear. Israel had to choose between annexation and peace. It chose annexation. We all reject annexation. How, then, are we going to stop Israel? The Israeli Government is moving fast. It hopes to be done before the world mounts a proper response. It will pretend, tactically, to give in from time to time, and it will pursue a land grab strategically. And if not confronted, it will impose its will on all. This is delusional. Palestinians have been confined in smaller and smaller spaces, but they have not disappeared. Their numbers have continued to grow.

Now Israel speaks of control from the river to the sea — a space in which there are 7.5 million Palestinians. What exactly does it intend to do with them? Provide them with equal rights? I doubt it. Or does it intend to make their lives impossible through death, devastation and displacement, in the hope that they will be convinced there is no life possible in their ancestral land? And will we all watch while Israel tries to do just that?

The Israeli Government is seeking an explosion in the West Bank. It is frustrated that it has not yet occurred. In its mind, that explosion would allow it to go all the way. That is why Israel is taking these decisions. That is why it is conducting military incursions and allowing and facilitating settler violence, forcibly displacing communities and destroying refugee camps. That is why its extremists are invading Haram al-Sharif, why Ben-Gvir passed a law to execute Palestinian prisoners and why he films scenes of their humiliation and abuse. That is why Israel is stealing our financial and natural resources. That is why it is attacking and undermining the Palestinian Authority — a Palestinian Authority that is committed to peace and to the two-State solution, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, and that is cooperating with all regional and international peace efforts. Israel seeks our collapse or expulsion, a vacuum or violence — or rather, a vacuum and violence. It seeks anything that would allow it to liquidate the Palestine question, unaware that, in doing so, it would be running to its own doom.

The only response is to assert, in words and actions, that the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, constitute the territorial unit of the State of Palestine and that their political and geopolitical unity should not be delayed any longer. The Palestinian Government must be empowered in implementing its policy of one State, one law, one weapon. It may be worth reminding Israel that it is sitting here in the United Nations based on a commitment to respect General Assembly resolution 181 (II) on the two-State solution and General Assembly resolution 194 (III) on the rights of Palestine refugees. That is how it was granted membership. Israel enjoys the rights and privileges of this membership without ever honouring the responsibilities and commitments that come with it, and while showing only disdain and contempt for the United Nations Charter, United Nations resolutions, United Nations bodies and representatives; while attacking United Nations agencies, notably the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; and while assaulting and killing United Nations personnel and peacekeepers and destroying United Nations buildings and infrastructure. How long will we continue to tolerate all of that?

Palestine, notably Gaza, is ground zero of the assault on international law. What is accepted there is normalized everywhere. The two-State solution must not become the two-State illusion. If the Council believes that it is the only way forward, then the Council must end the occupation and save the Palestinian State to save peace. After 80 years of Nakbah, decades of military and colonial occupation, and after 7 October 2023 and the genocide in Gaza, we must finally make peace.

We condemned the killing of civilians, whether Palestinians or Israelis. But we have a far greater duty to stop the killing. Palestine must be free. Palestinians must be free, as they are not less worthy of life and liberty than any other people. And Palestinians and Israelis must be able to live in peace. Act now for freedom, justice and peace.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gideon Saar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel.

Mr. Saar (Israel): I come here today as the Foreign Minister of the Jewish State in our ancestral homeland, the land of Israel.

First, let me say that it was quite amusing to hear the representative of the Russian Federation speak about the law and international law, about occupation, land expansion and peaceful resolution. I must admit that I had to restrain myself from laughing out loud.

Approximately 4,000 years ago, our patriarch Abraham lived and walked in ancient Hebron, Beer Sheba and Beth-El. More than 3,000 years ago, King David established Jerusalem as our capital. Jewish presence in the land of Israel, even throughout our long exile, has never ceased for even a day. In the history of nations and States, this is probably the clearest case of proven and documented historical rights of any nation to any land. Amazingly, there are so many Powers trying to replace historical truth with modern lies. The truth is simple. We are the indigenous people in the land of Israel.

The archaeological findings in our ancient sites, including the City of David, the Western Wall tunnels and others, tell the history of our land. This jug handle is from the Kingdom of Judea, 2,700 years ago. It has a stamp of the Jewish king on it. This little coin, from nearly 2,000 years ago, reads “freedom for Zion”. Found in the Judean desert, it was minted during the second year of the great Jewish revolt against the Romans. How can Jewish presence in our ancient homeland violate international law? That is a contradiction in terms.

In 1917, the British Government issued the historic Balfour Declaration in order to re-establish a national home for the Jewish people in our land. The same places, in the heart of our ancient homeland, in which it is claimed that the Jews are forbidden to live and that their doing so allegedly violates international law, were recognized by the British Government as belonging to a national home for the Jewish people. I want to present a map of the British Mandate, but I will first make a disclaimer for the Jordanian Foreign Minister, who, I know, is about to say that we have no claim over Transjordan; I want it to be clear. But this is the map from the Balfour Declaration of the British Mandate. Here is Judea and Samaria. Some Council members call it “the West Bank”. In 1921, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Winston Churchill, said on a visit to the land of Israel:

“it is manifestly right that the Jews [...] should have a national home. [...] And where else could that be but in this land [...], with which for more than 3,000 years they have been intimately and profoundly associated?”

In 1922, the predecessor of the United Nations, the Council of the League of Nations, tasked Britain with re-establishing a Jewish national home. Madam President, what do you have left of the lofty historical tradition of Balfour and Churchill? The claims in this discussion — one of many — are yet another example of the hypocritical obsession with Jewish presence in the heart of our tiny land. The claim that Israelis cannot live in Judea and Samaria is not merely inconsistent with international law and Britain’s own Balfour Declaration; it is morally distorted. How can Jews be allowed to live in London, Paris or New York but not in the cradle of our own civilization — ancient

Jerusalem, which Council members call East Jerusalem, Shilo, Hebron and Bet El? This is our country. It is not 13,000 kilometres from our country, unlike the Falkland Islands, which the Argentinians call the Malvinas Islands, in a dispute that the United Kingdom has yet to resolve with Argentina to this day.

President Trump's 2020 deal of the century made it clear: our communities in Judea and Samaria will remain intact in any permanent agreement. There will be peace one day, but it will not be achieved by removing people from their homes — neither Jews nor Arabs. The idea that Jewish communities are an obstacle to peace is outrageous. It is disconnected from the current and past reality in Judea and Samaria. With all due respect, we will not abandon our heritage, security and future to ease other countries' domestic political difficulties. Israel signed the Oslo Accords and received a murderous intifada of suicide attacks. Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza in 2005. We dismantled our communities, our army bases and even our cemeteries. We received the world's largest terrorist State in Gaza and the massacre of 7 October 2023. When will Council members get it? We will not risk our own existence.

The Palestinian Authority (PA), formed on the basis of the Oslo Accords, is grossly violating these agreements, upon which it was founded. The PA committed to fighting terror and incitement. Yet, terrorists will not be found in their jails. Additionally, the Palestinian Authority legislated the distorted pay-for-slay policy, providing salaries to terrorists and their families. How come not one Council member said anything about it — not one? The State Department of the United States reported to Congress that the PA committed to paying more than \$200 million in salaries to terrorists in 2025 alone — significantly more than in 2024. A few weeks ago, Abbas dismissed his Finance Minister to shift the blame for pay-for-slay onto him. But the new Finance Minister admitted a week ago that pay-for-slay will continue despite their financial difficulties. But Council members do not say a word about it, do they?

The Palestinian Authority continues to incite against Jews and Israel in textbooks, schools, kindergartens, mosques and the media. This map from the Palestinian elementary school in Hebron displays skulls on top of the Jewish communities — skulls. What is the message for the children? This is the fate they intend for the Jews. The Palestinian Authority, just like Hamas, is brainwashing the minds of the next generation to hate Jews. Under the Palestinian Authority, there is systematic destruction of holy and archaeological sites. The Palestinians used tractors to damage the biblical site of Mount Ebal, which Council members probably know from the Bible. This was systematic destruction, but not a word has been said about it here. But this is the history of this land that they are destroying.

Palestinians are diverting water and committing environmental offences to harm our citizens, and Council members can see it here: the burning of waste in Palestinian areas deliberately pollutes the air and harms the health of residents in nearby Israeli cities. This body claims to champion environmental protection. Where are Council members' voices?

Nearly 300 structures per month were built in 2025 by Palestinians in Area C alone — massive illegal building in blatant violation of our agreements. Yet, Council members are not saying a word about it. Condemnations are reserved solely for building intended for Jewish communities. How many of them condemned the PA's racist death penalty for anyone who sells real estate to Jews? Can Council members believe that in 2026, the death penalty exists for selling real estate to Jews? Jordanian law, which applies to what they call the "West Bank", forbids the sale of real estate to any non-Arab, be they Jewish or non-Jewish, American, Chinese or Russian. How many of the Council members who condemned the decision, last week, by Israel's Cabinet to cancel it really believe that a racist law like this should exist in 2026? What choice did we have other than to correct these twisted injustices by establishing equality and transparency in real estate

transactions in Judea and Samaria? Is this annexation? Our Cabinet decision also protects the property rights of Israelis and Palestinians alike.

The international community is turning a blind eye to the PA's ongoing practices and violations. This only pushes a solution to the conflict further away. It invented a so-called "State of Palestine", as if such a State existed now, or ever. But the truth is simple: there has simply never been a Palestinian State. Council members speak of "occupied territories". How can they be taken from an entity that never existed by a nation that was always there? This reminds me of the Roman emperor Hadrian. He destroyed Jerusalem and built a new city on its ruins in 130 C.E., calling it Aelia Capitolina. His goal was to erase the memory of the Jewish capital. Has anyone today heard of Aelia Capitolina? But everyone knows Jerusalem. For more than 3,000 years — since King David — Jerusalem has been the Jewish people's eternal capital, and it will remain so forever. West Jerusalem, East Jerusalem: one Jerusalem under Israel's sovereignty.

If Council members wondered where the name Palestine was born, it was the same Hadrian. He renamed the land of Israel Syria-Palestina to try to erase the Jewish connection to our land. It did not work, by the way. Another fact: only Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem ensures the freedom of worship for all three religions: Jews, Christians and Muslims. There are more than 2 million Arab citizens in Israel. They enjoy equal rights, they are represented in our parliament and in our Supreme Court. Of course, they enjoy the freedom of worship. Muslims around the world are beginning to celebrate Ramadan. I wish them *Ramadan kareem*. We will continue enabling freedom of worship, including on the Temple Mount.

But during Ottoman rule and throughout the British Mandate Jews were forbidden from entering the Tomb of the Patriarchs in our ancient city of Hebron. Our ancestors were restricted to praying at the seventh step on the steps outside. In Yemen today, Christians are banned from practicing their faith openly. The Iranian regime considers home churches a national security threat. Not a word is heard about those countries. Israel is the only Power standing against huge forces of barbarism, terror and extremism.

Tomorrow, I will have the honour of representing Israel at President Trump's Board of Peace summit in Washington, D.C. We support President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. At the heart of the Plan is the disarmament of Hamas, demilitarization of the Gaza Strip and deradicalization of Palestinian society there. This is why it is the first Comprehensive Plan, one that deals with the problems at the root.

Hamas is solely responsible for the humanitarian situation that Council members all describe; for the suffering of Israelis and Palestinians alike. Yet members of the Council attack Israel obsessively, with no connection to reality, even when, as the American Ambassador had said, more than 4,200 trucks per week enter Gaza. Statements must be connected to reality and to what shapes it.

I want Council members to honestly ask themselves: what is more impactful, this United Nations meeting, or tomorrow's summit? Have Council members asked themselves why everyone is focused on tomorrow's Washington, D.C. summit, and not this meeting?

It is time to speak the truth. The Palestinians are at the forefront of radical Islam's war to eliminate Israel. It has not changed. And make no mistake, the West is next. It is time to stop the one-sided, unbalanced approach.

I call on the United Nations to wake up before it loses its remaining importance, influence and status.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan.

Mr. Safadi (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you, Madam President, and the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. I thank you for inviting me to this meeting.

The massacre in Gaza has stopped but the suffering of its people has not. Their homes remain destroyed, their schools in ruins, their children hungry, their wounded and sick without treatment.

United States President Donald Trump ended the war after more than two years of killing, destruction and starvation. His Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict laid out a road map for reconstruction, stabilization and progress towards peace. The full implementation of this Plan, in all its provisions, is the path to end this suffering.

Violations of the ceasefire must stop. There have been more than 1,500 Israeli violations of the ceasefire since the ceasefire agreement and more than 600 Palestinians have been martyred since then. Humanitarian aid must flow to Gaza without obstruction. Reconstruction must begin so that Gaza can be rebuilt, while remaining connected to the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem, and so that an independent sovereign Palestinian State can be established on all Occupied Palestinian Territory, living in security and peace alongside Israel on the basis of the two-State solution and in accordance with internationally legitimate resolutions.

The Security Council supports security and stability in the Middle East by supporting the implementation of President Trump's Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and resolution 2803 (2025).

The international community protects the right of all the peoples of our region to live in security and peace by preventing Israel from continuing to annex the occupied West Bank. The entire international community rejects the annexation of the West Bank. President Donald Trump affirmed that he would not allow the annexation of the West Bank. Yet the Israeli Government accelerated its illegal measures, making annexation a reality on the ground and undermining all chances of achieving peace.

The facts are clear. Israel's illegal actions cannot be concealed. For the first time since the occupation of the West Bank in 1967, the Israeli Government approved a bill enabling it to seize Palestinian land and register it as State land, thereby paving the way to the annexation of more than 60 per cent of the West Bank in Area C.

In further illegal decisions, the Israeli Government allowed settlers to purchase land in the occupied West Bank and granted itself demolition and oversight powers in Areas A and B, which are administratively under the Palestinian Authority. They enacted legislation accelerating the confiscation of Palestinian property in East Jerusalem. Before that, the Israeli Government approved the establishment of 54 new settlements and created no fewer than 86 settlement outposts in the largest expansion of settlement activity since the United Nations began monitoring the systematic annexation of occupied Palestinian land. In the past year alone, the Israeli Government approved plans for 27,941 housing units in settlements in the occupied West Bank, double the highest number recorded in 2023, according to Israeli human rights organizations. Israel also resumed the construction of 3,400 settlement units in Area E-1, east of Jerusalem, aiming at separating the northern West Bank from the southern part.

More than 37,000 Palestinians were displaced from their homes in the West Bank, and more than 5,000 homes and units were destroyed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We witness daily provocations, including the statement by an extremist Israeli Minister who said that he wanted to displace the Palestinian people from their land.

Even Islamic and Christian holy sites in occupied Jerusalem have not been spared from Israel's escalating illegal measures. Daily violations of the legal and historic status quo of the holy sites are increasing day in day out. Nearly 65,000 incursions into Aqsa

Mosque, the Haram al-Sharif, were recorded in 2025, amid continued attempts to impose temporal and spatial division and to restrict Muslim freedom of worship, even with the start of the holy month of Ramadan.

Violations against Christians in the occupied territories and their holy sites are also escalating. Israeli extremists are attacking Christian clergy and worshippers. Israeli measures restrict their access to churches. In an unprecedented violation of the historic and legal status of the holy sites, the Israeli Government imposed taxes on church properties, opening the door to the confiscation of these properties and the freezing of church bank accounts.

These Israeli measures, which include seizing and destroying United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East premises and preventing the Agency from fulfilling its United Nations mandate, constitute a blatant violation of international law, of resolution 2334 (2016) and of the 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which affirmed the illegality of occupation measures and the invalidity of the annexation of occupied Palestinian land. Annexing the West Bank means destroying all chances of a just peace. This is a danger that must be averted immediately.

The Board of Peace, chaired by President Donald Trump, meets tomorrow in an important step towards restoring stability in Gaza. But while we work together to end the catastrophe in Gaza, we cannot allow for another catastrophe to unfold with the inevitable outcome of Israel's measures to annex the occupied West Bank and undermine the two-State solution. Preventing this catastrophe requires effective, immediate and impactful international action now. It requires concrete operational steps to protect the two-State solution, which the overwhelming majority of States regard as the only path to a just peace.

What is the alternative to this two-State solution? Is it a one-State solution, where more than 5 million Palestinians live in the occupied West Bank and Gaza under occupation? Or will they be granted their full rights, as citizens with equal rights, with political and civil rights? If that is not the case, the alternative is a systematic apartheid, and this will not lead to peace. It will not achieve security nor stability — not for Israel, not for the Palestinians and not for the region as a whole.

We want a just peace. We are working for a just peace, a peace that fulfils the right of the Palestinian people to freedom and statehood on their historic land, the land of their fathers and ancestors. And no attempt to falsify history will undermine the right of the Palestinian people to their land or their right to the olive trees that were planted by their great-great-great-great-great-grandfathers on their land. Distorting history will not change the reality, and it will not change the fact that there is a Palestinian people living under occupation, a people who want to live in peace and security, like all peoples on Earth. We want a just peace that fulfils the right of the Palestinians and guarantees security and normal relations between Israel and all the Arab countries. The Arab Peace Initiative remains an Arab road map for a secure future in which an independent, sovereign Palestinian State lives on the Palestinian soil in peace and security alongside Israel.

But the question is, what does Israel want? If Israel does not want the two-State solution and does not want to grant the Palestinian people their full democratic rights in one Palestinian State, what does it want? Let Israel answer that question. Those who want peace do not undermine the path to peace. The whole world knows that the two-State solution is the only way to peace.

Peace will not be achieved through entrenching occupation. Peace will not be achieved by annexing the West Bank, deepening the oppression of the Palestinian people and denying them their right to freedom and dignity. Peace will not be achieved

by occupying additional Syrian land and undermining the stability of Syria, whose people have begun recovering from decades of oppression and whose new Government has begun rebuilding their country, affirming its commitment to being secure, stable and non-threatening to anyone. So why is Israel occupying Syrian land? And why is it still destabilizing Syria? Peace will also not be achieved by maintaining the occupation of Lebanese land and failing to comply with the ceasefire agreement.

We must all work to implement President Trump's Plan in Gaza so that more than 2 million Palestinians can regain their right to life and hope for the future. We must stand together against Israel's escalating illegal measures, pushing the West Bank towards explosion and keeping the entire region and its peoples, including the Palestinians and Israelis, hostage to the conflict.

Peace cannot be achieved while occupation persists. The region cannot enjoy stability while injustice and oppression endure and while the Palestinian people continue to be denied their right to freedom. Peace is a shared goal. It is a right — a right for all the peoples of the region. The path to peace is clear. Its foundations are rooted in international law and human values that cannot be abolished by distorted historical narratives, by denying the reality or by denying that there are 5 million Palestinians who are suffering daily as a result of the occupation in their schools, on their streets, in their homes and in their places of worship, whether Christian or Muslim.

Annexing the West Bank amounts to sabotaging every chance for peace and condemning the region to more wars, killing and destruction. This is a crime that the international community must not allow, because it is the Palestinians, the Israelis and all the peoples of the region who would pay the price.

We are at a watershed moment. We can choose peace, a peace that recognizes the humanity of the other — one that recognizes the right of the other — the right of the Palestinian people to their Palestinian State and the right of the Israeli people to live in a State that lives in peace, side by side with a sovereign, independent Palestinian State. We can make this choice, which serves all our interests, including the security and stability of all our peoples, or we can choose more occupation based on delusional narratives and ideologies that aim at eliminating the other and not recognizing their humanity.

If we allow the Israeli Government to continue on this path, our region will remain hostage to more wars and conflicts, and the Palestinians, Israelis and the peoples of the region will never enjoy peace and security. Let us face the truth with courage and objectivity. Let us admit that the peace we all seek shall not be achieved as long as the Israeli Government continues to deny the right of the Palestinian people to exist and as long as extremist ministers call explicitly to kill and displace the Palestinians.

This is a future that we do not want in Jordan or in any other Arab countries. We want a future of peace and security for all peoples of the region. We want a future that guarantees the right of the Palestinians and the security of the Israelis, a future based on respecting the humanity of the other, in which international law is not violated, peoples are not bullied and no one tries to control others or impose their ideology on them.

It is regrettable that hate speech is currently being disseminated by extremists in Israel and being promoted by Israeli ministers. We reject this hate speech, which portrays Islam — a religion of peace and compassion — as a religion of hate, promotes lies and claims that Islam is a religion that kills the other. This rhetoric will not achieve peace. Therefore, let us all recognize the humanity of the other, let us all recognize that everyone has the right to live in safety and dignity, and let us create a future that guarantees peace and a decent life for all.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Badr Ahmed Mohamed Abdelatty, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates of Egypt.

Mr. Abdelatty (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting at a very important time given the intensification of regional and international efforts to achieve a just settlement of the Palestinian question and the continued challenges posed by the policies of the occupying Power in the occupied territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Egypt has supported the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which was put forward by His Excellency President Donald Trump. We would like to reiterate our deep appreciation for his tireless and continued efforts and his keenness to end conflicts and wars and make peace, push for the path of settlement and achieve stability in the Middle East and indeed in the entire world. As everyone knows, Egypt hosted the Sharm el-Sheikh peace summit in October 2025 with the aim of making those efforts a success, rejecting the liquidation of the Palestinian cause and saving the region from an open conflict that would have consequences for regional and international peace and security.

On 17 November 2025, the Security Council adopted resolution 2803 (2025), which is considered to be the binding international frame of reference for the implementation of the interim transitional arrangements in the Gaza Strip, in addition to the previous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the Palestinian question. These resolutions must be treated as a single integrated frame of reference. Egypt has intensified its efforts, in cooperation with all partners, to implement the objectives of the first phase of President Trump's Plan in terms of the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, the settlement of the hostage issue, the return of bodies and the removal of Israeli obstacles to humanitarian aid accessing the Gaza Strip. Today, three months after the adoption of resolution 2803 (2025) and the start of the implementation of the second phase, it is necessary to measure what has been achieved and what still needs to be completed.

Here, I would like to highlight the following points.

First, the responsibility for implementing the commitments contained in resolution 2803 (2025) and President Trump's Plan, with its 20 points, is a collective responsibility from which no one is exempt — everyone must stop the violations of the ceasefire agreement affecting Palestinian civilians, and Israel must stop using administrative obstacles to restrict full and safe access to humanitarian aid and must stop restricting the work of humanitarian organizations, civil society and United Nations bodies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Secondly, efforts must be intensified to launch early recovery and reconstruction throughout the Gaza Strip in a manner that is not limited to physical reconstruction but also includes the restoration of the elements of normal life, including restoring basic services and community structure, providing decent living opportunities and helping Palestinians to stay on their land.

Thirdly, the members of the Palestinian National Committee for the Administration of Gaza must be able to enter all areas of the Strip to manage its day-to-day affairs during the transitional period in order to enable the Palestinian Authority to fully carry out its responsibilities and support the mission of the Executive Committee of the Board of Peace, in accordance with resolution 2803 (2025).

Fourthly, the formation and deployment of the international stabilization force must be expedited to monitor the ceasefire and ensure the continued flow of humanitarian aid. Palestinian police officers must also be deployed to carry out their tasks in maintaining security, leading to Israel's full withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

Fifthly, the Palestinian Authority must be the sole bearer of arms under one comprehensive, national umbrella. Egypt, in coordination with the guarantors, is working hard to build a Palestinian consensus around this objective and to create the conditions for these efforts to yield results that are achievable on the ground.

Sixthly, the success of efforts to end the war hinges on the complete cessation of all Israeli escalations in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and occupied East Jerusalem. While all eyes are on developments in the Gaza Strip, Israel continues its provocative and escalatory policies in the West Bank, the latest of which is the illegal and completely rejected decision issued by the Israeli Government to resume the procedures of the so-called registration and settlement of land ownership in large parts of the occupied West Bank for the first time since 1967. Egypt condemns in the strongest terms the illegal Israeli decisions aimed at imposing illegal sovereignty, the consolidation of settlements in the occupied West Bank and the imposition of a legal and administrative reality there, in a manner that constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention, Security Council resolutions — especially resolution 2334 (2016) — and the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in 2024 (see A/78/968). We reaffirm the need to respect the territorial integrity of the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and to completely reject any attempt to separate or divide those territories.

From this Chamber, we call on the occupying Power to stop undermining the vision of President Trump and the international community, which refuses to annex or occupy any territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as confirmed by President Trump when he flatly rejected the annexation of the West Bank. We call for full respect for the provisions of international law, international humanitarian law and Security Council resolutions. We call for a complete cessation of all military operations and aggressions and any measures that may displace the population or change the demographic or legal character of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We completely reject settler violence, and we call for respect for UNRWA, its mandate privileges and immunities. We call for unhindered humanitarian access to the Palestinian people to be ensured. We call for the flow of traffic at the Rafah crossing in both directions not to be obstructed and for civilians and civilian infrastructure to be protected.

Compliance with these commitments is an irreplaceable entry point for launching a political path towards comprehensive peace, in accordance with the relevant international references, with the aim of realizing the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is their right to self-determination, ending the occupation and consolidating their independent State on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. In this regard, we appreciate the growing international momentum in support of recognizing the State of Palestine, so that it may live in peace and security alongside the State of Israel. We call for increasing this recognition and for granting Palestine full membership in the United Nations.

Achieving comprehensive peace in the region also requires Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights, the implementation of all Security Council resolutions and an end to Israel's repeated attacks on Syrian territories and its ongoing violations of the declaration of cessation of hostilities in Lebanon, including Israel's occupation of border posts and the establishment of buffer zones within Lebanese territories, which violate resolution 1701 (2006). Egypt reiterates its full support for Syria and Lebanon in protecting their sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity.

In conclusion, as we look forward to tomorrow's meeting of the Board of Peace, chaired by President Trump, I would like to quote from a statement delivered by His Excellency President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi at the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit, in which he sent a pivotal message:

“We have before us an unparalleled, and perhaps last, historical opportunity to establish a Middle East free of all threats to its stability and progress, a Middle East in which all its peoples enjoy peace and a life of dignity, within secure borders and with guaranteed rights, a Middle East immune to terrorism and extremism, a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction. This is the new Middle East that Egypt aspires to embody, in cooperation with its regional and international partners.”

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sugiono, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia.

Mr. Sugiono (Indonesia): The ceasefire is currently in place in Gaza, but violence has not fully stopped, and civilians remain at risk. More than 570 lives have been lost, and more than 1,500 people have been injured since the ceasefire took effect. Basic infrastructure and essential services remain devastated. This reality must guide our discussion today. The responsibility of the Council is not only to preserve a ceasefire, but also to safeguard and expand the space for peace.

Indonesia welcomes any effort to reduce violence but a ceasefire without protection for civilians and sustained humanitarian access will not hold. Humanitarian assistance must reach Gaza rapidly, safely and without obstruction. This is not a gesture of goodwill; it is a legal obligation under international humanitarian law. When access is delayed or denied, civilians pay the price.

While Gaza remains under severe strain, developments in the West Bank are moving in the wrong direction. Settlement expansion continues, displacement continues and settler violence continues, often with impunity. The credibility of the current peace framework is undermined when, during its first phase, unilateral measures continue to alter facts on the ground. Recent land registration and administrative measures are not routine technical steps; they establish new legal and administrative realities on the ground and consolidate control over occupied land. Such measures risk advancing de facto annexation and creating irreversible conditions that undermine the political pathway to a just and lasting peace. Indonesia strongly condemns these actions. They have no legal validity under international law and violate Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), and they systematically shrink the very space for peace that the Council seeks to protect.

The legal and historical status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory cannot be altered through unilateral acts, and Israel, as the occupying Power, has no sovereignty over it. Council members must ask themselves: how can we speak of peace while actions that make peace impossible continue unchecked?

Indonesia remains convinced that a just and lasting peace can be achieved only through a two-State solution, based on internationally agreed parameters. There is no credible alternative. And in this context, coherence in international efforts is essential. The work of the Council and the Board of Peace, established pursuant resolution 2803 (2025), must reinforce one another. Peace may have different tracks, but it cannot afford different directions. Approaches that drift away from the United Nations will only weaken credibility and impact. Indonesia will carry this message to the inaugural Board of Peace meeting tomorrow, and our engagement there will remain fully consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and principles of multilateralism. Together with the Group of Eight, Indonesia will continue to support efforts that strengthen the integrity of the current peace framework.

As the holy month of Ramadan begins, the Palestinian people deserve more than the pauses in violence. They deserve protection, dignity and a future of their own. Let the Council act with unity and resolve, not merely to manage the crisis, but to secure the rights of and justice for the Palestinian people.

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

Mr. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to welcome Her Excellency Ms. Yvette Cooper, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. I congratulate you, Madam, and your delegation on assuming the presidency of the Council this month. I also commend the efforts of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom in guiding the work of the Security Council and in particular for convening this meeting at such a sensitive time. We also extend our thanks to the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo. We thank the speakers from civil society for their comprehensive briefings and for providing information that has helped to inform the Council about the latest developments in the Palestinian territories, as the Israeli authorities continue their grave violations of the rights of the Palestinian people.

We are meeting today, more than two years after the Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, at a time in which we are witnessing a new chapter of suffering and violations committed by the Israeli occupation, announced in the past few days, in the form of unilateral measures aimed at imposing Israeli domination over the West Bank, expanding settlements, escalating settler terrorism, forcibly displacing the Palestinian people and seizing their land. These measures reflect Israel's determination to annihilate the Palestinian State.

In this context, Israel's compliance with the ceasefire agreement and its halting of the illegal confiscation and seizure of land take on the utmost urgency and must be addressed without delay, in order to stop the ongoing violations associated with the annexation of defenceless Palestinian lands in the West Bank. Eighty-five countries have condemned and denounced these illegitimate coercive measures. My country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, also condemns in the strongest terms the decision by the Israeli occupation authorities to convert West Bank land into what it calls State property, as part of plans to impose a new legal and administrative reality in the occupied West Bank. There is no doubt that these violations undermine efforts to achieve peace and stability in the region.

Moreover, we affirm that Israel has no sovereignty over the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and we reiterate our absolute rejection of these illegal measures, which constitute a flagrant violation of international law, in particular resolution 2334 (2016), and an attack on the inherent right of the brotherly Palestinian people to establish their independent sovereign State within the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. There is no doubt that the aim of these measures is to alter the demographic composition, character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The advisory opinion issued in 2024 by the International Court of Justice (see A/78/968) was clear and explicit in this regard, affirming that Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and its continued presence there are illegal and stressing the need to end the Israeli occupation and the invalidity of the annexation of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We have all witnessed the Israeli authorities' seizure and demolition of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) compound in East Jerusalem. The authorities also cut off water and electricity to UNRWA facilities, including schools and health centres, in an unprecedented violation of international humanitarian law aimed at undermining the situation of Palestinian refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. With the start of Ramadan, we demand that humanitarian organizations be provided with the necessary protection and that they be able to carry out their tasks unhindered. We condemn in the strongest terms these practices, which target humanitarian work in all Palestinian territories. UNRWA is not a terrorist organization, and allegations to that effect are unacceptable. The international

community must stand together to protect and secure its protection under international humanitarian law.

On this basis, and in response to President Trump's call, the Kingdom will participate constructively and effectively in the meeting of the Board of Peace scheduled for 19 February. We appreciate the efforts of President Trump and his Administration and the attention that they are giving to ending the war and bringing peace to the Gaza Strip. The Kingdom signed the document of accession to the 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 adopted by 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 right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State.

The time has come to open the crossings to allow humanitarian aid to enter and to enable the Palestinian and international committees formed to administer the Gaza Strip to carry out their tasks without restriction or condition, so as to ensure the management of the daily affairs of the Strip's inhabitants and to maintain the institutional and geographical link between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This will ensure the unity of the Palestinian territories and rebuff any attempts to divide them, compromise them or undermine their unity, paving the way for the transition to phase two of the agreement and leading to the full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict.

In conclusion, in order to achieve a just and comprehensive peace, there is a need to establish a permanent ceasefire, prevent displacement and annexation, ensure Israel's complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, support the reconstruction of the Strip and push towards a genuine political horizon that leads to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative. Lastly, my country calls upon the international community to shoulder its responsibilities and take practical and serious steps leading to a comprehensive and just peace that guarantees stability and security in the region.

The President: There are still four speakers remaining. Out of respect for our very hard-working interpreters, I encourage colleagues to be brief in their remarks.

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

Mr. Olabi (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States, comprising 22 countries.

On this day in 1947, the Palestinian question was referred to the United Nations. Today, although 79 years have passed, the Palestinian people continue to endure the woes of Israeli occupation of their homeland and land. The most recent chapter in this suffering features the Israeli occupation's announcement in recent days of invalid unilateral measures aimed at imposing Israeli hegemony over the West Bank and the persistence of settlement activities, settler terrorism, the forced displacement of the Palestinian people and the seizure of their land. This action attests to Israel's determination to attempt to terminate the very Palestinian State, on land whose annexation has been rejected by the international community, without exception. These actions also demonstrate the Israeli occupation's quest to end efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East.

The Arab Group condemns these Israeli decisions and measures in the strongest terms and affirms that they constitute a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and resolutions of international legitimacy, including the Council's resolutions, in particular resolutions 2334 (2016) and 2803 (2025).

The Arab Group expresses its appreciation for the international positions condemning attempts to annex the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including those positions taken by many Council members and the Secretary-General, and yesterday by more than 90 countries and a number of regional organizations. The Group also appreciates the clear position taken by United States President Donald Trump rejecting the annexation of the West Bank.

The Arab Group demands that all these international positions be translated into practical steps that compel Israel to reverse its illegal policies aimed at annexing the Palestinian territories, policies that threaten security and stability in the Middle East. The Group calls on the Security Council to address attempts to annex Palestinian land, in line with the Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security.

The Group affirms the international commitment contained in the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution to take concrete measures, in accordance with international law and in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 19 July 2024 (see A/78/968), to uphold the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to confront the illegal settlement policy in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the policies and threats of forced displacement and annexation.

The Israeli occupation's announcement of these unprecedented steps in the West Bank comes days ahead of the holding of a meeting in Washington, D.C., with the aim of achieving progress towards the implementation of phase two of the ceasefire, of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, and resolution 2803 (2025). This announcement confirms that Israel continues to seek to annex land and displace the Palestinian people in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, instead of cooperating with American, regional and international peace efforts. The Israeli occupation continues to shed Palestinian blood, including in the Gaza Strip, where the Palestinian people continue to be killed and assaulted on a daily basis, the number of martyrs having exceeded 600 since the ceasefire entered into force, not to mention the thousands wounded and the enduring plight of the displaced. Israel continues to obstruct the entry of humanitarian aid.

In this connection, the Arab Group stresses the need to respect the ceasefire, including its humanitarian aspects, through a full lifting of restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip, including temporary housing units, and the commencement of reconstruction. The Arab Group categorically rejects the fragmentation of Palestinian land and any attempts to separate the Gaza Strip from the West Bank and to divide the Gaza Strip. It reaffirms the political and geographical unity of the State of Palestine in accordance with the 4 June 1967 borders and the principle of one Government, one system, one law and one legitimate army. In this regard, the Arab Group reaffirms the role of the Palestinian Authority, including during the transitional period, and the need to respect Palestinian sovereignty and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination during the second phase of the ceasefire and thereby give effect to that right and achieve an independent State of Palestine.

The Arab Group welcomes the General Assembly's overwhelming vote to renew the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for a further three years and condemns Israel's so-called "legislation" and measures against UNRWA, including the demolition and closure of its headquarters and schools and attempts to liquidate it in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Group considers that these measures are directed not only against the Agency, but also against the right of the Palestinian people to return to their land — a right enshrined in General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Accordingly, the Group calls on all States to join forces to defend the Agency and on donor countries to continue

providing support and funding to UNRWA, as the backbone of humanitarian work in the Palestinian territories and the provider of essential services to Palestinian refugees in neighbouring host countries. The Arab Group recalls that the fact that Israel undertook to abide by resolutions of international legitimacy, in particular General Assembly resolution 181 (II) on the two-State solution and resolution 194 (III) on the return of Palestinian refugees, was decisive in both the Security Council's and the General Assembly's acceptance of its membership of the United Nations.

The Arab Group affirms its utter rejection and condemnation of the continued incursions by extremist Israeli officials and settlers into the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy sanctuary. This constitutes a flagrant violation of the historical and legal status quo at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, an unacceptable attempt to divide it temporally and spatially and a violation of its sanctity. Given the repercussions of these continued provocative and illegal violations of Islamic and Christian holy sites, not least since the blessed month of Ramadan has commenced, the Arab Group calls on the international community, in particular the Security Council, whose mandate is to maintain international peace and security, to compel the Israeli occupation to desist from its plans for annexation and displacement. Furthermore, the Group calls on the Security Council to protect the Palestinian people and respect their right to self-determination and independence and to bring peace and stability to the region. The Arab Group will continue to cooperate with efforts to attain these goals and reaffirms its commitment to ending the Israeli occupation and achieving a just and comprehensive peace based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, including those of the Security Council, the terms of reference of the Madrid Peace Conference, including the principle of land for peace, and the Arab Peace Initiative, which remain the sole means of bringing security and stability to the region.

In conclusion, I say to our brothers and sisters in Palestine that the Arab Group will continue to speak with one voice about their hopes and their plight, which must end. There is no will stronger than the will for peace and no voice louder than the voice of truth, which will prevail, no matter how long it takes.

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

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We congratulate your friendly country's assumption of the presidency of the Council this month, Madam President, and we welcome the fact that Her Excellency Ms. Yvette Cooper, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom, has been presiding over this important meeting. We also thank the briefers.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

This meeting is being held in the wake of Israel's illegal actions aimed at imposing unlawful Israeli sovereignty, entrenching settlements and inflicting a new legal and administrative reality on the occupied West Bank, thereby accelerating Israel's attempts to illegally annex it and displace the brotherly Palestinian people. Such actions include a recent decision to convert land in the occupied West Bank into so-called "State property" belonging to the occupying authorities. The State of Qatar condemns this decision, which it regards as an extension of the occupation's illegal schemes to deprive the brotherly Palestinian people of their rights — an issue that demands that the international community show solidarity by exerting pressure on the occupation for it to desist from enforcing the decision and thus avert its grave repercussions. The State of Qatar, alongside eight Arab and Islamic countries, expressed its condemnation of these Israeli measures in the strongest of terms in a joint ministerial statement reaffirming that Israel has no sovereignty over the Occupied Palestinian Territory and warning that Israel's pursuit of its expansionist policies and illegal measures in the

occupied West Bank are a flagrant violation of international law, will fuel violence and conflict in the region and undermine the two-State solution and ongoing efforts to bring peace and stability to the region.

The escalation in the occupied West Bank comes at a critical juncture, following the recently announced start of the second phase of the implementation of the ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip on the basis of His Excellency President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which was the culmination of the efforts of the State of Qatar, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the United States of America and the Republic of Türkiye. The State of Qatar strongly condemns Israel's repeated violations of the ceasefire, which mark a dangerous escalation, and underscores the need for Israel to comply fully with the agreement for the success of the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan and the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025). We also call on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint, to refrain from any steps that could undermine ongoing efforts and to foster conditions conducive to the prompt commencement of recovery and reconstruction.

As part of international efforts to move forward with the implementation of the peace plan, we reaffirm that Qatar welcomes the invitation extended by His Excellency President Donald Trump, President of the United States of America, to Qatar to join the Board of Peace. We reaffirm our support for the implementation of the mandate of the Board, as a transitional body, as set out in the Comprehensive Plan to End the Conflict in Gaza and resolution 2803 (2025), with a view to consolidating a permanent ceasefire, enabling reconstruction and advancing a just and lasting peace grounded in the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar reiterates its firm and unwavering position in support of the Palestinian cause and the resilience of the brotherly Palestinian people, based on international resolutions and the two-State solution, with a guarantee of the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, within the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Qatar will pursue its efforts alongside international partners to strengthen security and stability in the region.

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

Mr. Yıldız (Türkiye): I thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to address the Council.

While our attention is focused on the fragile ceasefire in Gaza, the occupying Power continues unilateral measures aimed at entrenching its unlawful presence in the West Bank. Allow me to outline Türkiye's priorities for the Council's consideration.

First, Türkiye calls for the full implementation of the ceasefire arrangements, including resolution 2803 (2025) and President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. Maintaining the ceasefire is essential to prevent further killings and to allow space for humanitarian assistance, early recovery efforts and meaningful political engagement. We condemn the recurrent attacks and restrictions on humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian assistance entering Gaza must be significantly increased and, most importantly, must flow unhindered. We also underscore the necessity of full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza to enable recovery and reconstruction. Türkiye stands ready to play an active role in reconstruction efforts.

Secondly, we categorically oppose any form of annexation, as stated in the 20-point plan. Türkiye strongly condemns Israel's unilateral measures to expand its unlawful presence in the West Bank. These actions are grave breaches of international law, including resolution 2334 (2016) and the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of 19 July 2024 (see A/78/968), and must be immediately reversed.

Thirdly, we commend the efforts of the United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations operating under difficult conditions and demand that they be allowed to operate in Gaza and the West Bank in a sustained, predictable and unrestricted manner. Türkiye condemns ongoing attacks against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and all impediments to humanitarian assistance. Israel's decision to ban UNRWA's activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as recent actions against its premises in occupied East Jerusalem, constitute blatant violations of international law. The international community must take effective measures to deter violations of international law and ensure sustained support for UNRWA.

Türkiye, together with the group of eight Arab and Islamic countries, has joined the Board of Peace established under the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025). Our engagement is guided by the objectives of, first, consolidating a permanent ceasefire; secondly, supporting Gaza's reconstruction; and thirdly, advancing a just and lasting peace grounded in the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and statehood, in accordance with the 20-point plan.

The Foreign Ministers of the group of eight remain in close coordination and have issued several joint statements reflecting our shared positions. We support the peace efforts led by President Trump and remain committed to the Board of Peace's mandate as a transitional administration. We also express our support for the National Committee for the Administration in Gaza.

We stress that the Council's sustained support for this transitional process, as the primary organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security, is essential.

The momentum created following the ceasefire in Gaza must be translated into implementation of the two-State solution. Türkiye remains firmly committed to the two-State solution, based on relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and the principle of two States living side by side in peace and security.

We call upon the international community, particularly the Council, to discharge its legal and moral responsibilities. The Council should compel Israel to halt its escalation in the occupied West Bank, to fully implement the ceasefire arrangements and to bring its illegal occupation to an end.

Türkiye will continue to act as a constructive, responsible and reliable partner in these efforts.

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

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates): I congratulate the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month and commend Foreign Secretary Cooper for presiding over this high-level meeting. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo as well as Ms. Qasas and Mr. Tamir for their insightful briefings.

Today marks the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan: a time of reflection, of mercy and of empathy. It also comes at a moment of guarded hope for the people of Gaza. The United Arab Emirates welcomes the launch of the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and commends President Trump's leadership in this regard. We express our support for resolution 2803 (2025), which provides a clear mandate for the Plan's implementation. It is essential that it be implemented in full, including the disarmament of Hamas and Israel's full withdrawal, as laid out in the Comprehensive Plan.

The launch of the Board of Peace and the establishment of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza offer a critical opportunity to build the foundations for a sustainable peace, one that upholds the unity of Palestinian land in Gaza and the West Bank and, under a reformed Palestinian Authority, carves a pathway for the implementation of the two-State solution. In this connection, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms that the responsibility for Gaza's governance and administration lies with the Palestinian people.

The United Arab Emirates's membership on the Board of Peace as well as the Gaza Executive Board reflects our commitment to the Palestinian people and to achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace. We look forward to the inaugural meeting of the Board of Peace tomorrow in Washington, D.C. and to the momentum it promises to generate.

However, as we transition to the next phase of the Plan, the reality on the ground in Gaza remains one of unimaginable hardship. Delays at crossings and restrictions on access for humanitarian personnel are preventing sufficient humanitarian assistance reaching those most in need, including children. All parties must honour their obligations under international humanitarian law as well as their commitments under the Comprehensive Plan.

As Gaza's largest bilateral humanitarian aid donor, the United Arab Emirates will continue collaborating with international partners to alleviate Gaza's dire humanitarian crisis by further scaling up the arrival and distribution of aid via land, sea and air.

The United Arab Emirates has, jointly with the group of eight Arab and Islamic countries, condemned the Israeli Government's recent decision to extend Israeli law and control over the West Bank. Any unilateral measure that aims to alter the legal and historical status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory must be rejected and condemned. Such measures threaten the realization of the two-State solution.

The United Arab Emirates is also alarmed by the continued escalation of tensions in the West Bank, including relentless settler violence, which threatens to unravel the progress made in Gaza. It is the responsibility of the Israeli Government to stop these hostile acts and hold perpetrators to account.

The promise provided by the Comprehensive Plan, one of reconstruction and renewal, can only be fully realized if accompanied by a political pathway that leads to the two-State solution; a pathway that leads to the realization of a sovereign, independent Palestinian State; a pathway in which hope and opportunity replace suffering; and a pathway to a world in which Palestinians and Israelis thrive side by side in their own independent, prosperous and secure States.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our interpreters for their additional efforts this evening.

The meeting rose at 7 p.m.