



# Security Council

Eighty-first year

**10118**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Wednesday, 11 March 2026, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Bartos/Mr. Waltz .....	(United States of America)
<i>Members:</i>	Bahrain .....	Mr. Alrowaiei
	China .....	Mr. Fu Cong
	Colombia .....	Mrs. Zalabata Torres
	Democratic Republic of the Congo .....	Mrs. Kabengele Lukundula
	Denmark .....	Ms. Lassen
	France .....	Mr. Bonnafont
	Greece.....	Mrs. Balta
	Latvia.....	Ms. Pavļuta-Deslandes
	Liberia .....	Mr. Shilue
	Pakistan.....	Mr. Jadoon
	Panama .....	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Russian Federation .....	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Somalia.....	Mr. Mohamed Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.....	Mr. Kariuki

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in the Middle East**

**The President:** In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Cyprus, Israel, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic 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; Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Ms. Lynn Harfoush, Executive Committee Member, Lebanese National Bloc Party.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

**Ms. DiCarlo:** Amid an already devastating escalation in the Middle East, the decision by Hizbullah to attack Israel on 2 March has again drawn Lebanon into a conflict it neither sought nor can afford. In violation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), Hizbullah has since fired hundreds of projectiles, including rockets, missiles and drones from Lebanon into Israel and the occupied Syrian Golan. It has also warned those living south of the Blue Line to evacuate.

Israel, in turn, has carried out extensive strikes in southern Beirut, across southern Lebanon and in the Bekaa and Baalbek regions. These operations have reportedly killed more than 570 people and left more than 1,400 injured, according to the Lebanese Government. Israel has also issued evacuation notices for these areas, triggering the displacement of more than half a million people and creating yet another acute humanitarian emergency. Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher will brief the Council in more detail in this regard.

The renewed violence across the Blue Line has largely erased the progress achieved in recent months to consolidate the cessation of hostilities. It also jeopardizes Lebanon's tradition of coexistence, as fear and uncertainty heighten intercommunal tensions. As the Secretary-General previously reported, although the cessation of hostilities reached in November 2024 did not completely end the preceding violence, it brought substantial respite.

Following the cessation of hostilities, the State of Lebanon also took historic and courageous steps to fulfil its obligations under resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004). In August 2025, the Government tasked the Lebanese Armed Forces with developing a plan to establish exclusive State control over weapons. And in January 2026, the Lebanese Armed Forces announced that they had assumed operational control over the South Litani Sector. Furthermore, civilian representatives from both parties participated in two meetings of the cessation of hostilities mechanism in December, a modest but meaningful step towards dialogue.

Nevertheless, significant challenges persisted. Hizbullah refused to cooperate with the Government's efforts to extend State authority throughout Lebanon and establish a monopoly over the possession and use of arms. Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces maintained positions north of the Blue Line at five locations and two so-called buffer zones, while also conducting near-daily strikes on alleged Hizbullah and other non-State armed groups in Lebanon. Still, the progress achieved since

November 2024 underscores the fact that security and stability for the people of Lebanon and Israel are attainable. It is vital to build on these advances, not squander them.

It was therefore encouraging that, on 9 March, President Aoun affirmed Lebanon's readiness to engage in direct negotiations with Israel under international auspices, with the aim of achieving a complete truce. He also proposed that the Lebanese Armed Forces, upon receiving urgent logistical support, would immediately take control of areas of tensions, confiscating all weapons and dismantling Hizbullah infrastructure. Prime Minister Salam has likewise reiterated Lebanon's commitment to achieving a State monopoly on arms. On 2 March, in condemning Hizbullah's actions, he affirmed the Government's complete rejection of any military activity outside the scope of legitimate State institutions and reaffirmed the State's full authority over war and peace decisions. In a landmark statement, he announced the Cabinet's decision prohibiting Hizbullah's military and security activities and mandating the immediate handover of weapons, tasking the Lebanese State security forces with the enforcement of this decision.

These declarations have been accompanied by concrete measures. The Lebanese Army has reported the detention of approximately 26 Lebanese nationals, including Hizbullah members, and one Palestinian, all for the illegal possession of weapons and ammunition. Judicial rulings have been passed down against some of the Hizbullah members arrested. Separately, on 5 March, the Lebanese Government declared a ban on the activities of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Lebanon and revoked visa-free entry for Iranian citizens.

While more hard work will prove critical, such statements and actions are significant. They reflect the clear resolve of the Lebanese State, and they warrant the full support of the Council. The United Nations remains firmly committed to assisting all parties in meeting their responsibilities. To enable Lebanon to fulfil its obligations under resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006), an immediate de-escalation and cessation of violence is imperative. Hizbullah must cease its attacks on Israel and cooperate with the Government's efforts to assert full State authority and establish a monopoly over weapons. Israel must halt its military campaign in Lebanon and withdraw its forces from Lebanese territory. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of both Lebanon and Israel must be upheld. All parties must respect their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. Civilians and civilian infrastructure must never be targeted, United Nations personnel must be protected, and the international community must scale up its support to the Lebanese State security services, particularly the Lebanese Armed Forces, to ensure that they have the capacity and resources they critically require.

The Secretary-General continues to engage with Member States to press for an end to this conflict. The Special Coordinator for Lebanon has been in contact with all relevant actors, including through a visit to Israel earlier this week, to advocate urgently for de-escalation and dialogue. As Under-Secretary-General Lacroix will report, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon peacekeepers remain in position along the Blue Line, often at great risk.

To prevent further loss of life and create the space for meaningful political engagement, violence must stop. Only then can the parties resume the difficult but indispensable work of building a stable and secure future for both Lebanon and Israel. We will continue to work closely with all concerned to restore calm and protect civilians. Our objective is straightforward: a return to a situation in which commitments under resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006) can be pursued in a credible and sustainable manner. This is a moment that requires restraint, responsibility and a willingness to prioritize the well-being of the populations who

bear the brunt of these hostilities. The United Nations stands ready to assist, but the decisions that shape the coming days must be guided by a collective recognition that further escalation benefits no one.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

**Mr. Lacroix:** As members just heard from Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, the fragile situation that prevailed since November 2024 has given way to a significant and dangerous escalation of hostilities. We are gravely concerned that there will be a further worsening of the situation in Lebanon and in the region.

In this dangerous and precarious environment, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remains on the ground, implementing its mandate as far as the security circumstances allow. Since 2 March, when Hizbullah claimed responsibility for an attack on Israel, the group has carried out daily strikes across the Blue Line, including with rockets, missiles and drones, at targets in Israel and the occupied Syrian Golan. Many rockets have been launched from south of the Litani River, which demonstrates the presence of unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons south of the Litani River, in clear violation of resolution 1701 (2006). The Israel Defense Forces have issued displacement orders for the entire UNIFIL area of operations and intensified daily strikes, impacting multiple locations in the UNIFIL area of operations, also in violation of resolution 1701 (2006).

Since 1 March, UNIFIL has reported some 4,120 trajectories, including 2,733 from south to north of the Blue Line and 323 air attacks by the Israel Defense Forces. In this same period, UNIFIL has recorded 1,387 trajectories from north to south. Notably, each trajectory may represent multiple projectiles, and UNIFIL cannot detect some projectiles, such as those fired by portable anti-tank launchers or light weapons. On 9 March alone, UNIFIL recorded 115 air violations — the highest number observed in a 24-hour period since the resumption of hostilities. The Israel Defense Forces have also reinforced the five positions at which they have maintained a presence north of the Blue Line.

UNIFIL has observed incursions by Israel Defense Forces units into Lebanon at several locations, including through Yarun in Sector West and Hula, Khiyam and Markaba in Sector East. On 9 March, one Israel Defense Forces tank was observed near Kunin in south-east Lebanon, seven kilometres north of the Blue Line. Direct clashes between Hizbullah and the Israel Defense Forces inside Lebanon have been reported, including in Hula and Khiyam on 4 March. An extensive build-up of Israeli military assets south of the Blue Line also continues to be reported.

There have been several incidents that have jeopardized the safety and security of our peacekeepers. On 6 March, a peacekeeper from the Ghanaian contingent was severely injured inside his base in Qawzah, Sector West. He is currently being treated at a hospital in Beirut and is now in a serious but stable condition. Several other peacekeepers were injured less seriously while the base was heavily damaged in the resulting fires. We obviously wish a speedy recovery to all involved. A UNIFIL investigation is ongoing, including to determine the origin of the projectiles or munitions that impacted the United Nations position.

On 7 March, an Israel Defense Forces tank stopped in front of a UNIFIL observation post near Markaba in Sector East. Subsequently, the peacekeepers heard multiple rounds of small arms fire, and two of the post's perimeter lights were damaged. On 8 March, two loud explosions were heard near UNIFIL headquarters in Naqurah. Debris consistent with a drone or a rocket and remnants of an Iron Dome interception fell inside the UNIFIL camp. No injuries were reported.

Our peacekeepers have remained in position, in line with the mandate the Council has provided, while continuously reassessing the Force's posture against prevailing risks. UNIFIL continues to maintain constant contact with the parties to avoid misunderstandings, deconflict and de-escalate, where possible. All parties bear a clear and unequivocal responsibility to ensure the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers. We call on all actors on the ground to uphold this obligation and to refrain from any action that endangers UNIFIL peacekeepers.

With the ongoing exchanges of fire severely restricting their movements, UNIFIL's current focus includes ensuring the safety of its personnel and helping to facilitate humanitarian access to affected communities in the area. UNIFIL has supported the local community, in line with its protection of civilians mandate, by transporting dozens of civilians to safety from several villages in southern Lebanon, including children, older persons and persons with disabilities, in close coordination with local authorities. On 7 March, UNIFIL assisted in evacuating three families from Sarda in Sector East. On 10 March, at the request of the municipality of Alma al-Sha'b in Sector West, UNIFIL facilitated the safe movement of approximately 80 civilians who wished to leave the area.

Peacekeepers have largely been confined to their bases, with some spending significant periods of time in shelter, which seriously impedes UNIFIL's freedom of movement and limits the mission's monitoring and reporting ability. Troop rotations are currently suspended. This security environment has also presented challenges for the resupply of fuel, food and water for United Nations positions. Roadblocks, directed by the Israel Defense Forces, have restricted access to a number of our positions. The UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Abagnara, is coordinating closely with the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, who is the designated official for security for all United Nations personnel in Lebanon. Programme-essential UNIFIL civilian personnel have been moved to reside in UNIFIL headquarters at Naqurah. Other international civilian personnel are relocating out of the South Litani Sector and, in some cases, out of Lebanon. The mission is assisting our national colleagues who wish to relocate to the North Litani Sector.

The Lebanese Armed Forces have made significant efforts since the cessation of hostilities in November 2024, steadily reinforcing their presence in the south and progressively extending their deployment along the Blue Line. We commend these efforts, which represented an important step towards the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). However, in the face of the current hostilities, the Lebanese Armed Forces have had to temporarily relocate some 20 kilometres north of the Blue Line.

As noted by Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and as Council members will hear in more detail from Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher, the heavy exchanges of fire have, most tragically, had the greatest impact on civilians on both sides of the Blue Line, with many casualties and hundreds of thousands displaced in Lebanon. In southern Lebanon, the humanitarian situation continues to worsen, with internally displaced persons shelters reporting near-full occupancy and lacking the means to meet basic needs. UNIFIL's liaison and coordination team has continued its close engagement with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces, seeking to de-escalate and facilitate humanitarian missions. In the past week, UNIFIL facilitated dozens of missions by the Lebanese Red Cross. In the interests of the safety of both peacekeepers and civilians, we urge the parties to commit to active deconfliction through this channel.

To those Member States contributing troops to UNIFIL, we extend our most sincere gratitude. The continued, united commitment of the troop-contributing

countries and the support of the Council are crucial. I express solidarity with, and pride in, the men and women of UNIFIL, who, again, are on the front lines. Only a political solution will bring lasting stability to Lebanon and the region. We urge all parties to recommit to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and to engage constructively to that end.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fletcher.

**Mr. Fletcher:** This is a moment of grave peril for Lebanon, for the region and for all of us. Too many warning lights are flashing. Actions have consequences. Lebanon's particular place on the map and in history means that tremors in geopolitics ricochet through it like earthquakes. So, when the world turns away from international law and human solidarity, Lebanon shakes. When the world pulls apart, when the splintering of the international order is cheered by those who believe the rules do not apply to them or that they can take risks with the lives of others, when leaders feel unrestrained and the rules are in retreat, when the gains of decades are precarious, when technology and killing form an increasingly deadly alliance and when the scaffolding for coexistence is under sustained, deliberate attack, then Lebanon shakes.

As a result of the region's latest war and following months of violence, we have watched the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon intensify with alarming speed, with civilians on both sides of the Blue Line once again paying the heaviest price. Casualties continue to mount, with more than 570 people reported killed and more than 1,400 injured since 2 March. Mass displacement is accelerating, with more than 750,000 people now registered with the Government of Lebanon as being on the move. In addition, almost 84,000 Syrians and more than 8,000 Lebanese have crossed into the Syrian Arab Republic since 2 March. We are seeing large-scale movements into densely populated urban areas, where shelter capacity is already overstretched. More than 120,000 people, including thousands of children, are now in 580 collective centres. And as members heard earlier, these sites are overcrowded, with inadequate sanitation and insufficient essential supplies. These conditions heighten risks of harassment, sexual violence, exploitation, abuse and trafficking, particularly, of course, for women and girls.

The people of Lebanon have, of course, already endured extensive displacement and damage to homes, livelihoods, infrastructure and essential public services during the 2023–2024 escalation, compounding the impact of the financial and economic collapse experienced since 2019. At the same time, the escalation is pushing an already fragile education system deeper into crisis. Schools have been forced to close to serve as temporary shelters, disrupting learning for tens of thousands of children. Overcrowded shelters are also increasing the risk of disease, while psychosocial trauma — an acute aspect of this crisis since the 2024 escalation — is being compounded. As these health needs rise, hostilities have forced the closure of 49 primary healthcare centres and five hospitals in the south and in Beirut's southern suburbs. Since 28 February, the World Health Organization has recorded 25 attacks on healthcare facilities, resulting in 16 deaths and 29 injuries among health workers and patients. The protection of healthcare is paramount.

The United Nations and the broader humanitarian community are fully mobilized to complement Government-led efforts. Along with local organizations and women-led groups, we will do all we can to reach those most in need. We and our partners have provided more than 500,000 hot meals, distributed more than 270,000 litres of bottled water and provided hygiene items, household supplies and 123,000 litres of fuel to sustain critical services. Our rapid response teams are delivering life-saving supplies in shelters. A total of 125 health-sector-supported mobile primary

healthcare units are providing services too. Child protection and psychosocial support are also being expanded, alongside preparations for emergency cash assistance for vulnerable children and families. In close coordination with the Government of Lebanon, a three-month hyper-prioritized flash appeal will be launched in Beirut later this week. This emergency scale-up comes on top of existing humanitarian programmes under the 2026 Lebanon response plan. I will support these efforts with a rapid response allocation of \$15 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to help scale up life-saving work. Additional funds will be released through a reserve allocation from the Lebanon humanitarian fund.

However, our ability to reach people is tightening by the day. Large areas of South Lebanon, the Bekaa and Beirut's southern suburbs remain active conflict zones. Debris and unexploded ordnance are blocking roads to affected villages, and key transport routes, including those linking the Bekaa, have been repeatedly disrupted. Population movements are shifting quickly and increasingly difficult to track.

Of course, Lebanon's latest humanitarian crisis is just one more consequence of a regional war that is spiralling out of control. War does not stay neatly within borders. It tears through markets, supply chains and food prices. And when that happens, the most vulnerable people in Lebanon and across the region are hit first and hardest. When maritime corridors, such as the Strait of Hormuz, are disrupted, food, health and energy become more expensive and harder to access. The impact on food security is already evident in Gaza, where the price of flour is up by 270 per cent. Global shipping costs have increased 16 per cent compared to this time last year. We anticipate delays of six months in the delivery of supplies across multiple humanitarian responses. Airspace closures are also disrupting our humanitarian missions across the region.

Therefore, we are pre-positioning stocks and activating alternative supply routes to keep life-saving aid moving to Lebanon and, of course, across the region. And as the Secretary-General has insisted and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo underlined, we need the protection of civilians, de-escalation, an immediate cessation of hostilities and genuine dialogue and negotiations towards a peaceful settlement, in line with the Charter of the United Nations.

As ever, I close with three asks of the Security Council.

First, civilians — all civilians throughout the region — must be protected, and their access to life-saving help ensured. Constant care must be taken to spare civilians and civilian infrastructure — hospitals, water sources, schools, energy — at all times and by all parties. Humanitarians and humanitarian premises must be protected, and our movements to provide aid facilitated. Today has been another tragic day for our humanitarian family. We are seeing civilians, including humanitarian workers, under attack across the region: in Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israel, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Oman and beyond.

Secondly, we need generous funding for a principled, scaled-up humanitarian response. We must be supported to go wherever the needs are in the region. I have reaffirmed our readiness to help civilians in Lebanon, Iran, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israel or any other countries, as needed. Humanitarian action is always harder in times of war, but this is, of course, when it is most needed. Therefore, we count on Member States to help to ensure that this life-saving work continues in the Middle East and beyond, across the global humanitarian crisis. And yet, we are seeing staggering amounts of money — reportedly \$1 billion a day — spent on destruction, while some politicians boast of cutting aid to those in gravest danger globally. With a fraction of this money, we can save millions of lives globally.

Thirdly and finally, we need a revival of strategic, calm, rational, hopeful diplomacy. We need calmer heads to prevail. Peacemaking is hard. But it is always better — and it takes more courage — than the alternative. Every time you hear the powerful attack the United Nations, ask yourself what they gained by weakening it. And yet, we are seeing a sustained attack against the systems meant to restrain States from reckless warfare, a pattern of attrition against international law and humanitarian principles. We are seeing politicians flexing their muscles by sending others to die. As conflicts spread, the international system pulls further apart, and more resources flow towards weapons, not saving lives.

Here, then, is a simple test for your actions: if your opponent were doing this to you, what would you say? Let us have the courage to recommit instead to lasting peace, sustained stability, dependable governance and international law.

Lebanon is exhausted by other people's wars. It is not asking for help, but for oxygen. Its people can defy the history, the geography, even the politics. They can be stronger than the forces pulling them apart. But they can only do that if Iran and Israel stop fighting their wars in Lebanon.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Fletcher for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Harfoush.

**Ms. Harfoush:** I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Council today.

My name is Lynn Harfoush. I am a Lebanese political activist from the city of Baalbek. I grew up in the Bekaa Valley and spent much of my life in Beirut's southern suburbs. Today, like many families, mine too is displaced. In the early hours of last Monday morning, while Lebanese families slept in their homes, Hizbullah once again dragged our country into a war that the Lebanese people did not choose. This decision was not taken by the State; it was imposed by a militia that answers to interests beyond Lebanese borders.

For many Lebanese, this is the tragic cycle that we know all too well. I am 34 years old, and I have never known anything but Hizbullah's hegemony in my community. I myself grew up supporting them. In 2006, they entered a war by kidnapping Israeli soldiers at the border. My neighbourhood got razed by Israeli bombs. I was 14 then, and I saw Hizbullah as our protectors, even as I was displaced on a traumatizing night.

But coming back to our neighbourhood, I found our livelihood destroyed, suffocated by yellow flags claiming a divine victory, watching them celebrate over our collective ruin, while their grip on our streets only tightened. I felt that they were occupying our wreckage to secure their own dominance. The mask fell, and I saw the truth: that resistance was a mere facade to exploit an entire country for an expansionist project; that Hizbullah sought to break us away from other communities through its ideological and social project; and that, under the dominance of Hizbullah, Iran's arm in Lebanon, war becomes a recurring reality, fear our constant companion and our lives merely expendable for the sake of the Supreme Leader.

The terrible part in all this is that the very same scenario repeated itself in 2023, when Hizbullah decided to open what it called a support front against Israel, right after 7 October 2023, and again in 2026, after it had promised the Lebanese Government that it would not commit suicide once more. And Israel's military response to Hizbullah, on the other hand, has resulted in mass displacement and destruction. Hundreds of Lebanese have been killed in the past week. As I speak, thousands of Israeli soldiers are massed at our southern border, and we Lebanese fear that the conflict can only spread further.

We are trapped in this unending war of axes. Who pays the price? It is not the men who deliver speeches about resistance from protected bunkers. Rather, it is the mother carrying two sleeping children down the stairs at 1 a.m., the elderly in Baalbek, the families in Nabatiyah and all the displaced now sleeping in cars, on sidewalks or in overcrowded shelters.

According to the most recent figures, the number of internally displaced people has reached almost 1 million, including nearly 200,000 now living in collective shelters across hundreds of sites. For a country already battered by economic collapse, this is a disaster; one that needs to be addressed urgently by helping the Lebanese Government. Yet the answer to this humanitarian crisis cannot only be humanitarian; it needs to be political. At its core, Lebanon's crisis is one of sovereignty, accountability and a weakened State. No society can rebuild, no economy can recover and no youth can build a future when a country's fate is controlled by a suicidal faction.

I was raised in the very environment from which Hizbullah claims its legitimacy. I know its language. I know its threats. I know the fear it creates when people are told that silence is loyalty and obedience is dignity. But there is no dignity in radicalizing entire communities to serve Iran's theocratic regime through its doctrine: *wilayat al-faqih*. There is no honour in making Lebanese children pay the higher price. There is no resistance in holding an entire nation hostage.

I am here to tell members that millions of Lebanese, including many Shiites, want a different future. I also speak to members today as the mother of two boys: Hady, who is 11, and Ray, who is 9 years old. On the night the Israeli bombing intensified, Ray woke up trembling and asked me a question that many children are asking: "Mom, why do we keep going to wars when more people will die? Why can we not live in peace?" I did not have an easy answer, but I will tell members this: Governments that normalized Hizbullah were all accomplices in getting to where we are today. For years, the world looked the other way, prioritizing their dealings with Iran. For years, they treated an illegal non-State actor as a political reality to be managed rather than a violation to be ended. For years, the world asked us to tolerate intolerance.

Simultaneously, the Lebanese feel helpless and alone in the face of Israel's aggression. Dismissing international law, the global community has validated the rule of the strongest. This double standard has turned Lebanon into a graveyard for the very principles the Council was built to uphold. We were told that accepting this parallel reality was the price of stability, but look at where that fragile stability has led us and the whole region. Today I speak in the name of most Lebanese when I say: we do not want this stability; we want a solution.

What are common sense and minimum norms of living in members' countries are still a matter of discussion and disagreement in mine. Although, for decades, the international community has outlined the framework needed to address this problem. Resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006) clearly affirm that there must be no weapons outside the authority of the Lebanese State and that armed militias must be disarmed. These resolutions are not abstract principles; they are the internationally recognized road map for restoring stability and State authority in Lebanon, but they failed, and they failed because of the recklessness of some and the false promises of others.

Today the Lebanese Government has begun to take important steps in this direction. Decisions have been made to outlaw the unauthorized military and security activities of Hizbullah. Today there is growing recognition within Lebanese institutions of the need to reclaim the monopoly of arms and, with it, national

decision-making. At the centre of this effort stand the Lebanese Armed Forces. The Lebanese Armed Forces are the sole legitimate defender of the country. Their success is not only a Lebanese priority; it is the only viable path to preventing Lebanon from becoming a permanent grey zone of proxy warfare in the region. They must be helped to disarm Hizbullah, prevent Iranian interference and dominance and protect our Lebanese borders from Israeli invasion. Supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces should therefore not be viewed as charity or assistance; it is an investment in regional stability.

A couple of days ago, our President and Prime minister launched a diplomatic initiative aimed at Israel. They laid the ground for the only solution to this war: ending Israel's daily aggressions, obtaining its total withdrawal from our land and allowing our people to return to their homes, while guaranteeing Hizbullah's disarmament. They even went further by suggesting ending the 80-year state of war between Lebanon and Israel, because we Lebanese want to live in peace, and because we Lebanese deserve a sustainable peace based on justice that would allow us to have a future and a simple life without fear, in which we can aim for our prosperity and well-being, like other peoples — a life to live and not only survive.

Lebanon is not a mere geographic entity for the Council to manage; it is a founding Member of the United Nations that contributed to drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is an idea of liberty and diversity that should not fail, that cannot fail.

I wish I could be with members in person today, so that I could look in the eyes of those who played a role in this turmoil and tell them what our Ambassador Ghassan Tueini once said in the same Chamber in 1978: let my people live.

**The President:** I thank Ms. Harfoush for her courage and for that important briefing.

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

**Mr. Bonnafont** (France) (*spoke in French*): France requested this meeting together with Bahrain, Denmark, Greece, Latvia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Kingdom owing to the dramatic and urgent situation. I thank you, Mr. President, for convening it. I also thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo; the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix; and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Tom Fletcher; as well as Ms. Lynn Harfoush, representing Lebanese civil society, for their briefings. We also welcome the participation in our debate of the representatives of Lebanon, Israel, Syria and Cyprus.

War is once again spreading into Lebanon. Hizbullah has made the unacceptable and irresponsible decision to join the Iranian attacks against Israel, dragging Lebanon for more than 10 days now into a conflict in which both the Lebanese authorities and the Lebanese people refuse to be involved. The people are paying a heavy price. On the Lebanese side, more than 500 people have been killed, hundreds injured and at least 750,000 displaced as a result of Israeli military operations and evacuation orders. On the Israeli side, multiple individuals have been injured, and people have been forced to seek shelter several times a day. This situation is unacceptable.

France fully supports the Lebanese authorities and the courageous decision that they took on 2 March to strictly prohibit all Hizbullah military and security activities. We call on them to implement this essential decision without further delay. Hizbullah must immediately put an end to its attacks against Israel, lay down its arms and stop holding the Lebanese people hostage for a war led by Tehran against Israel. For its

part, Israel must respect Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and refrain from any large-scale ground intervention and any long-term occupation of Lebanese territory. History shows that such intervention and occupation would only create a breeding ground for further instability rather than lasting peace.

Civilians, whether Lebanese or Israeli, must never be targeted. Compliance with the rules of international humanitarian law governing the conduct of hostilities, in particular the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, is essential in order to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure under all circumstances. Deliberate attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon are unacceptable. France condemns in the strongest terms the attack on 6 March, in which three Ghanaian peacekeepers were injured, and we express our full solidarity with Ghana. The protection of peacekeepers must be guaranteed in all circumstances and by all parties. In this difficult context, France commends the courage, professionalism and commitment of the Force's personnel and of all troop-contributing countries.

The continuation of the war is not inevitable, and a diplomatic solution is possible. We are continuing our exchanges, including at the level of the President of the French Republic, with the Lebanese and Israeli authorities to achieve de-escalation. We support the United Nations mediation efforts. The path to follow is clear: we must fully implement the ceasefire agreement of 26 November 2024 and resolution 1701 (2006), while continuing to be guided by the mechanism established in November 2024. This framework, recognized by the parties, can help to stabilize the situation along the Blue Line, provide security guarantees to both countries and restore Lebanon's territorial integrity. In this regard, we support the President Aoun's proposal to relaunch direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel.

At the same time, we must collectively aid the Lebanese people, to whom we express our full solidarity. France is fully mobilized to achieve this goal. We have already provided emergency aid of €6 million to humanitarian organizations on the ground, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and we support the humanitarian commitment of the United Nations. France will soon facilitate the delivery of several dozen tons of humanitarian cargo, including medicines. In addition, France is financing the implementation of projects on the ground aimed at meeting the essential needs of displaced persons. These projects are part of the efforts undertaken by the Lebanese Government to respond to the crisis.

Lastly, it is crucial to step up support for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), whose mission in this difficult context is to continue disarming Hizbullah. France has announced the delivery of armoured vehicles to the LAF to support them in this mission. France remains firmly committed to Lebanon's sovereignty and stability and will be holding in Paris, as soon as the situation allows, an international conference aimed at strengthening the Lebanese Armed Forces.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank Under-Secretaries-General DiCarlo, Lacroix and Fletcher for briefing us today and Ms. Harfoush for her powerful testimony. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of Lebanon and other countries of the region in our meeting.

The United Kingdom joined the call for this meeting, alongside European and other partners, to address the serious escalation of violence across the Blue Line and in Lebanon. We strongly condemn Lebanese Hizbullah's ongoing attacks against Israel and the region, which must cease. These actions, on behalf of the Iranian regime, have cost lives and have once again drawn Lebanese civilians into a conflict they do not want.

As we heard from the briefers today, the escalating violence has already had a devastating impact on civilians on both sides of the Blue Line. We do not want to see a widening conflict in Lebanon. We are concerned by the civilian impact of Israeli military action in Lebanon, including large-scale displacement. Access to essential and life-saving medical services is also becoming much more difficult, as we heard, with five hospitals reportedly closed owing to the fighting. We call upon Israel to uphold its obligations under international law, including with regard to the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. The United Kingdom is working closely with the Lebanese Government and humanitarian partners to support those affected by the current escalation.

The United Kingdom expresses its strong support to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and calls for respect for the mission's freedom of movement as it implements its mandate. We are deeply concerned by the 6 March strike on UNIFIL, which seriously injured several Ghanaian peacekeepers. I take this opportunity to express our hopes for their swift and full recovery from their injuries. We once again underscore that attacks on peacekeepers are completely unacceptable, and we urge all parties to ensure the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel, in accordance with international law.

In closing, the United Kingdom welcomes President Aoun's call for direct negotiations between the Governments of Israel and Lebanon. We encourage both Governments to engage diplomatically and to work towards de-escalation and the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). We also commend the decision by the Lebanese Government to ban all Hizbullah's military activities. We continue to support the Lebanese Armed Forces as the sole legitimate armed force in Lebanon. An expansion of the conflict across the Blue Line is in no one's interest and risks further destabilizing Lebanon and exacerbating the regional crisis. We are committed to playing a full diplomatic role in efforts to secure lasting peace and security for the people of Lebanon and the people of Israel.

**Ms. Lassen** (Denmark): Let me also thank the three Under-Secretaries-General for their sobering updates and Ms. Harfoush for her important messages.

The situation in the Middle East is extremely fragile. At this time of heightened tension, any escalation carries serious risks for regional peace and security. That is why Denmark was part of the call for this emergency meeting, together with France, Greece, Latvia and the United Kingdom.

Our message today is simple: there is an urgent need to de-escalate and resume the cessation of hostilities agreement. Hizbullah's actions risk dragging Lebanon into a broader regional war against the will and interests of the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese people. We strongly condemn Hizbullah's decision to attack Israel and its support for Iran, and we call for all those attacks to cease immediately.

For its part, Israel must exercise its right to self-defence in accordance with international law and abstain from further escalating the situation. We urge Israel to withdraw its forces from occupied areas in Lebanon, in line with the November 2024 cessation of hostilities agreement. We call for respect for Lebanese sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, in line with resolution 1701 (2006). This will also allow for a gradual establishment of control by the Lebanese Armed Forces in southern Lebanon, paving the way for exclusive State control over arms in the country.

As a result of the recent outbreak of hostilities, in the past week alone, more than 550 Lebanese civilians have been killed. Denmark underlines that all parties must respect international law, including international humanitarian law, and that the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure must be ensured. More than 700,000

civilians have been forced to evacuate, creating large waves of internally displaced persons within Lebanon. Thousands more have crossed into Syria. All that places additional strain on Lebanon, whose people have already suffered from large-scale economic and humanitarian challenges as a result of decades of conflict, mismanagement, external interference and regional instability. A strong, stable and secure Lebanon would contribute to Israel's safety. This can only materialize, however, if the parties focus on de-escalation and dialogue, and it requires Hizbullah to stop its attacks.

Lebanese society has historically been, and remains to this day, a mosaic of diversity. This diversity is a distinct strength. However, it must remain so. In the past decade, Lebanon has shown immense generosity and resilience in housing more than 1 million refugees from neighbouring Syria. New massive waves of internal displacement carry the risk of sectarian strife. This must be avoided at all costs. We urge the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese people to prioritize national unity and social cohesion in the face of the current conflict.

The Lebanese Government has also shown courage and the will to take on historic challenges. And even if much remains to be done, progress has been made in disarming Hizbullah and implementing economic reforms. The current conflict risks rolling back these positive steps.

Against this backdrop, the presence of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in southern Lebanon is more important than ever. We fully support UNIFIL in exercising the tasks mandated by the Council and recall that peacekeepers are protected by international law. Reports of attacks on UNIFIL personnel are deeply worrisome, and our thoughts go to the wounded Ghanaian peacekeepers. Any deliberate targeting of peacekeepers is unacceptable.

The current, volatile situation only underscores the need for UNIFIL and for a strong and continuous United Nations presence in Lebanon, including after UNIFIL's drawdown by December.

In conclusion, Lebanon must not become another front in an already dangerous and volatile regional landscape. Its people, who have already suffered so much and for so long, must not be dragged into another man-made humanitarian emergency. We call on all actors to step back from the brink and return to negotiations and peaceful dialogue.

**Ms. Pavluta-Deslandes** (Latvia): Allow me to begin by thanking the United States, as the President of the Council, for convening this meeting on such a short notice. Latvia also joined the call for this meeting to take place. I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for their briefings. I also thank Ms. Lynn Harfoush for her insights.

The current escalation in Lebanon has serious consequences for the civilian population and for the security of United Nations peacekeepers, as well as the stability of the region and global security. We commend the exceptional service of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), as it continues to carry out its mandate under resolution 1701 (2006), monitoring this conflict even in the direst circumstances. All essential personnel, including those from my country, remain in place amid the hostilities.

Hizbullah has chosen to attack Israel in support of Iran and has dragged the people of Lebanon into a conflict they have no part in. It brings more suffering to the civilian population and endangers the fragile progress of the Lebanese Government in attempting to assert State control over its territory.

Hizbullah's escalation is part of a pattern, as Iran consistently uses proxy networks to destabilize the Middle East, attacks countries in the region and enables aggression in Europe. That must stop now. Hizbullah must immediately disarm and stop all actions against Israel.

We commend the Lebanese Government's decision, of 2 March, to declare all Hizbullah military and security activities illegal throughout the territory of Lebanon.

As Lebanon's Prime Minister Nawaf Salam has warned of a looming humanitarian crisis, which we also heard about from our briefers, with more than 700,000 persons forcibly displaced and more than 870,000 people lacking basic supplies, we strongly reiterate the vital need for all sides to respect international humanitarian law.

With more than 500 people killed, we call on all parties to ensure adherence to the principles of proportionality and distinction with regard to civilian objects.

While we recognize Israel's right to self-defence, our concern lies with the human cost that is already piling high with Israel's operations against Hizbollah, including in densely populated areas. We urge the cessation of all hostilities and a return to the ceasefire. We call for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon to be respected, as reflected in resolution 1701 (2006) and the Charter of the United Nations.

The safety and security of United Nations personnel and property must be respected by all sides and at all times. We call upon all members of the Council to continue stressing the crucial importance of upholding commitments agreed in resolutions 2518 (2020) and 2730 (2024). Latvia, as a UNIFIL troop-contributing country, is especially distressed by the fact that, amid heavy firing, three UNIFIL peacekeepers from Ghana were injured inside their base in south Lebanon. Our thoughts are with the injured, and we wish them a speedy recovery.

The current escalation only reiterates the need for a long-term solution to the conflict. It is essential that the withdrawal of UNIFIL does not result in a security vacuum. We welcome the political commitment of the Lebanese Government to extend its authority throughout the country and the implementation of the disarmament plan. The continued international support in these efforts remains essential. We continue to stand by Lebanon and its people. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report in June and the Council's continued work on solutions for providing security support to Lebanon.

We commend all mediation efforts. It is important that the Security Council supports these processes in any way possible. We cannot allow the progress that Lebanon has achieved over the past 20 years to vanish.

**Mrs. Balta** (Greece): I wish to thank today's briefers — Under-Secretaries-General DiCarlo, Lacroix and Fletcher — for their thorough remarks. I also wish to thank Ms. Lynn Harfoush for her compelling message. I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representatives of Lebanon, Israel, the Syrian Arab Republic and Cyprus in today's meeting.

Greece, alongside France, Denmark, Latvia and the United Kingdom, called for today's briefing owing to the dangerous escalation in Lebanon, an escalation which bears serious consequences for the civilian population and for UNIFIL peacekeepers.

Lebanon is the victim of a war it did not choose. We strongly condemn the attacks of Hizbollah, acting in support of Iran, against Israel, which triggered this round of escalation. Hizbollah constitutes a threat to regional stability. Hizbullah had no right to unilaterally drag the Lebanese people into misery and despair. The

Lebanese State is the sole legitimate authority that can conduct military operations and define Lebanon's foreign relations. Hizbullah must disarm immediately and stop all actions against Israel.

Amid these developments, we welcome and commend the decision of the Lebanese Council of Ministers to ban Hizbollah's military activities. The resolve of the Lebanese leadership to extend its exclusive control over arms is clear. It should be given a chance to bring security and prosperity to Lebanon. We should all be standing by their side. Its steadfast commitment did not falter in the face of developments; instead, it seems to have been strengthened.

We reaffirm our support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon. Lebanese sovereignty must be fully respected, and civilians must be protected, in accordance with international law.

As the spiral of escalation accelerates, we call for maximum restraint and the protection of civilians and infrastructure. Restraint can be a virtue in times of crisis and indicative of strength and resolve, not weakness.

As the Greek Prime Minister said in his telephone conversations with the leaders of Israel and Lebanon, Greece recognizes the right of Israel to defend itself according to international law. However, further escalation must be avoided and so must the undertaking of prolonged, large-scale military operations in the south of Lebanon, which risks plunging the region in more instability and conflict. Full respect for resolution 1701 (2006) and the ceasefire agreement of 2024 is a prerequisite for stability.

As our briefers described, Lebanon is faced with a profound humanitarian challenge. More than 700,000 civilians have been displaced, while dozens are dead and injured. And children are caught in the midst of this chaos.

The risk of instability spilling over to the broader region, in the form of extensive refugee flows, is all too real. According to the International Organization for Migration, approximately 50,000 Syrians left Lebanon for Syria this past week alone.

Greece is participating in international humanitarian efforts in support of Lebanon and its reconstruction. We stand ready to participate in the conference in support of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), to be held in Paris, spearheaded by France and Saudi Arabia, when it takes place.

We also continue to assist Lebanon in its efforts to forge strong State institutions, including the LAF. It is a pledge made by the Greek Prime Minister to President Aoun, which has already produced concrete results. These include the recently procured defence material to the Lebanese Armed Forces to enhance their capabilities. We are committed to continuing our support to the Lebanese Armed Forces.

At the same time, in line with the latest communication between our Prime Minister and President Aoun, we remain in constant contact with the competent Lebanese authorities.

We are finalizing our contribution to address the grave humanitarian crisis on the ground.

Greece condemns the incident resulting in the injury of three Ghanaian peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon amid heavy fire. The safety and security of United Nations personnel and property must be respected at all times. We call on all parties to engage constructively through dialogue and diplomacy, potentially turning a crisis into an opportunity for long-term peaceful coexistence in

the region. In this context, we welcome the Lebanese leadership's openness to engage diplomatically with Israel towards a peaceful settlement.

In conclusion, as the Greek Prime Minister stated alongside the French and Cypriot Presidents in the Republic of Cyprus yesterday, Lebanon, which we fully support, merits a better future — certainly one beyond the plans and purposes of other, outside forces.

**Ms. Evstigneeva** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We wish to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for their detailed briefings on the situation in Lebanon. We also listened to civil society representatives.

Today's emergency meeting of the Security Council following the latest round of confrontation in Lebanon is taking place amid and in direct connection with the unprecedented escalation of the overall situation in the Middle East caused by the continued aggression of the United States and Israel against Iran. Whatever our Western partners might do in an attempt to turn things on their head and distort the essence of what is happening, it is precisely the American-Israeli military misadventure that is plunging the vast region deeper and deeper into chaos, claiming an ever-growing number of human lives and causing irreversible damage to civilian infrastructure. Many of our friendly countries in the Middle East are already suffering serious consequences. Unfortunately, Lebanon is no exception: the country has once again become the target of large-scale attacks by Israel.

It is telling that Israeli leaders repeatedly and openly threatened Lebanon with the resumption of large-scale military action well before the current escalation. Judging by public statements by representatives of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) General Staff, plans to clear Lebanese territory had long been in the making. At the same time, the Israelis have been repeatedly violating the 2024 agreements, which were brokered by the United States and France, in terms of both withdrawing their contingents south of the Blue Line and ceasing arbitrary attacks and strikes on Lebanese territory.

We would like to emphasize that we have always shared and continue to understand the legitimate concerns of our Israeli partners regarding the security of their country. We also understand the motivations that prompted West Jerusalem to launch their military operation against Lebanon. The military action against Israel on 2 March and the subsequent rocket and drone attacks on the central part of the country could only cause alarm and extreme concern.

At the same time, we believe that the IDF's response over the past 10 days have been disproportionate and excessive. As regular reports by the Secretariat show, the Israelis are ignoring norms of international humanitarian law, carrying out strikes, inter alia, on civilian targets, which have led to numerous casualties among the civilian population. In the past four days alone, the Israeli armed forces have attacked more than 60 towns. The disproportionate nature of West Jerusalem's response is clearly attested to by the statistics on the casualties of the creeping Israeli invasion. According to the Lebanese Ministry of Health, since 2 March, approximately 500 people have been killed, including 80 children, and the number of wounded is in the hundreds.

At the same time, almost every day, the Israeli command issues evacuation alerts for densely populated areas of Lebanon, including the southern regions and capital suburbs, which has led to mass panic among local residents. Hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to flee their homes in search of shelter. The number of

internally displaced persons is estimated at 800,000 people, who, given Lebanon's acute socioeconomic situation, will inevitably face problems accessing basic necessities, including food.

On top of grave humanitarian consequences, the ongoing escalation is jeopardizing the protection and preservation of cultural heritage in Lebanon. During the previous Israeli military campaign, we witnessed serious damage done to historical monuments in the Arab Republic, including sites in Baalbek and Tyre, which are listed as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites. The current Israeli operation has directly affected the House of Russian Culture in Nabatiyah, which operates in coordination with the Russian federal agency for international humanitarian cooperation. On 8 March, a targeted missile strike destroyed the five-storey building that contained the House of Russian Culture on the first floor. We strongly condemn this attack. We view it as an act of military aggression against an institution operating exclusively for humanitarian and educational purposes. Lebanese children and others have long attended classes in that House. No military activities have ever been carried out there.

We once again warn that indiscriminate attacks against civilian targets and diplomatic missions in the Republic of Lebanon are unacceptable. On 8 March, four employees of the Iranian Embassy in Beirut were killed. And yesterday, the Consulate General of Russia in Isfahan was struck. We condemn all attacks on diplomatic missions, regardless of where they take place. We also deem the attack on the personnel of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), deployed in the south of the country, to be unacceptable. In this context, we align ourselves with the Secretary-General who, on 6 March, condemned an incident involving the UNIFIL contingent, as a result of which three Ghanaian peacekeepers were wounded. We wish them a speedy recovery and call for unconditional security guarantees for the Blue Helmets.

In the current highly charged environment, we call on West Jerusalem to refrain from using force when interacting with Lebanon and to return to upholding its international legal obligations, including those under resolution 1701 (2006). Instead of pursuing its destructive confrontation-oriented policy, it is high time for the Israeli leadership to listen to Beirut's position in favour of immediate de-escalation and direct negotiations with Israel. What is also of great significance in this context is the commitment of the Lebanese authorities to consolidate State institutions and establish control over all parts of the country.

For our part, we reaffirm our unwavering position in support of Lebanon's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, as well as the mandate of UNIFIL, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We are convinced that there is no alternative to an immediate cessation of hostilities, a resumption of political and humanitarian efforts and genuine steps to end the major war in the Middle East. We trust that diplomatic options have yet to be exhausted and that the parties will show the necessary political will and refrain from further violence. It was precisely those objectives that guided Russia in preparing the draft resolution on the escalation in the Middle East (S/2026/159), which will be considered by the Council today. Unlike the text proposed by our Bahraini colleagues, our document is non-confrontational in nature and takes into account the regional dimension of current events, including the suffering of the Lebanese people.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Ms. Harfoush for their briefings.

The current escalation of fighting in the Middle East is spreading, and the situation between Lebanon and Israel has also sharply intensified. The continuation of hostilities serves the interests of no party. The international community should pool efforts to promote peace and de-escalate tensions without delay so as to restore peace and stability in the region.

First, an immediate ceasefire must be promoted to end the fighting. Recently, Hizbullah and Israel have continued to exchange fire. Israel has launched intense attacks on towns in southern Lebanon and on Beirut, expanding its military control over southern Lebanon. These attacks have already resulted in the deaths of more than 570 people, including a large number of women and children. We have taken note of Iran's letter to the Security Council stating that four Iranian diplomats were killed in the attacks. The protection of civilians in armed conflict is a red line under international law. China condemns any attacks against civilians and diplomatic personnel. We call on all parties to cease hostilities, promote de-escalation and fulfil their obligations under international law, in particular international humanitarian law. Israel should immediately withdraw its troops from Lebanon. We welcome the positive statement by the Lebanese Government, expressing its commitment to ending the conflict and its support for the preservation of Lebanon's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

Secondly, Lebanon should be supported in stabilizing its domestic situation. The heavy shelling has dealt a severe blow to Lebanon's security and stability. More than 700,000 people have been forcibly displaced, and the already difficult humanitarian situation has further deteriorated. The international community should increase assistance to Lebanon and support Lebanon's Government in stabilizing the domestic situation and ensuring basic livelihoods for the people. We have taken note of the decision by the Lebanese Parliament to extend its term. We welcome the Lebanese Government's efforts to strengthen governance throughout the country, and we hope that all parties in Lebanon will actively engage in political dialogue and properly resolve their differences.

Thirdly, the safety of personnel of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) must be effectively ensured. On 6 March, an attack against UNIFIL injured three peacekeepers. China strongly condemns the attack and expresses its sympathies to the injured. Any deliberate attack on United Nations peacekeepers constitutes a serious violation of international humanitarian law and resolution 1701 (2006). Such acts must be resolutely opposed and those responsible must be held accountable. Current tensions once again highlight the important role of UNIFIL. China urges all parties to effectively ensure the safety and freedom of movement of UNIFIL personnel so that the mission can actively carry out its mandate.

China stands ready to work with the international community to make unremitting efforts to calm the situation between Lebanon and Israel and to restore peace and stability in Lebanon and the Middle East region.

**Mr. Alrowaiei** (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking the French Republic for requesting the convening of this important meeting — a request joined by the Kingdom of Bahrain, Denmark, Greece, Latvia and the United Kingdom. I would also like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; and Ms. Lynn Harfoush for their important and valuable briefings. I welcome all the Permanent Representatives present here today.

The Kingdom of Bahrain expresses its deep regret at the perilous military escalation that the region has recently witnessed as a result of Iran's unjustified attacks, which have targeted my country, the Kingdom of Bahrain and a number of sister Arab countries, in clear violation of the principles of good neighbourliness and respect for State sovereignty and in flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The Kingdom of Bahrain calls on the Islamic Republic of Iran to immediately cease these hostile acts and to refrain from using its proxies and armed militias in the region and beyond. We warn that a continuation of these blatantly aggressive practices will lead to further escalation and inflame existing tensions, with grave repercussions for regional security and stability.

The Kingdom of Bahrain affirms its support for the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Lebanese Republic and supports efforts to extend the authority of the Lebanese State throughout its territory, thereby strengthening its constitutional institutions, preserving security and stability and fulfilling the aspirations of its brotherly people to a life of freedom, dignity, development and prosperity. Bahrain also underscores the importance of sparing Lebanon from the repercussions of regional escalation and rejects any attempts to embroil it in ongoing regional conflicts.

The Kingdom welcomes the Lebanese Cabinet's decision of 2 March 2026 imposing an immediate ban on all security and military activities by Hizbullah and limiting its activities to the political and legal spheres. This decision coincides with the commencement of the second phase of the plan to confine authority over arms to the Lebanese State and its legitimate institutions, in particular the Lebanese Army and the official security forces. We affirm that this step represents a significant development and a sine qua non for consolidating the sovereignty of the Lebanese State and strengthening its institutions, in line with the Lebanese Constitution, the relevant international resolutions — foremost among them resolution 1701 (2006) — and the Taif Agreement. Furthermore, this measure contributes to bolstering internal stability and enhancing the Lebanese State's capacity to fulfil its national responsibilities and safeguard Lebanon's security and stability. The Kingdom of Bahrain also welcomes the call by His Excellency the Lebanese President, Joseph Aoun, for direct negotiations with Israel to be held under international auspices, with a view to an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is following with concern the violations of the ceasefire agreement concluded between Lebanon and Israel in November 2024, which have been documented by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). These violations stem from attacks by Hizbullah against Israel, which have triggered the military escalation currently unfolding across Lebanese territory. This escalation has resulted in the displacement of civilians and a deterioration in the humanitarian situation, with possible repercussions that could extend to neighbouring countries, thereby putting increased strain on their resources and stability. In this context, we underscore the imperative for all parties to adhere to the ceasefire agreement and to refrain from any actions that could undermine it. We further underscore that the protection of civilians and the alleviation of humanitarian suffering must remain at the heart of all joint efforts. We also emphasize that all parties have a legal and moral obligation to guarantee the security and safety of United Nations peacekeeping forces and that any attack on them constitutes a clear violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. At the same time, we emphasize the importance of ensuring that any gradual withdrawal of UNIFIL is carried out in a coordinated and responsible manner, so as to prevent a security vacuum from emerging in southern Lebanon and to preserve stability, given the delicate circumstances that the region is currently facing.

Empowering the Lebanese Army and strengthening its capabilities fundamentally underpin Lebanon's stability and the preservation of its security. We therefore emphasize the importance of providing the Lebanese Army with the necessary support to enhance its ability to effectively deploy in southern Lebanon and carry out its duties in preserving Lebanon's sovereignty, security and stability. We also welcome the initiative of the French Republic to convene an international conference in support of the Lebanese Army and the Internal Security Forces in April, and we commend the efforts being made by the countries of the Quintet Committee on Lebanon — namely, the United States of America, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, the Arab Republic of Egypt and the French Republic — in supporting Lebanon politically, economically and in terms of security during this phase.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms that Lebanon's stability and sovereignty constitute a shared regional and international interest. It calls on all parties to adhere to the relevant international resolutions, respect the ceasefire agreement and work to spare Lebanon and the region any further escalation.

**Mr. Alfaro de Alba** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama appreciates the convening of this briefing and the information provided by the briefers on the evolving situation in Lebanon. We welcome the representatives of the countries that honour us with their participation.

While a cessation of hostilities was indeed achieved in November 2024, incidents and violations along the Blue Line have continued to occur since then, indicating the persistent lack of political will to create the conditions conducive to peace. Leaders that prop themselves up by relying on a mindset of never-ending confrontation end up dragging their populations into cycles of destruction that leave in their wake devastated cities, displaced families and generations scarred by war.

Panama condemns the attacks carried out by Hizbullah against Israel from Lebanese territory, which have forced communities to evacuate and seek refuge elsewhere. These irresponsible actions are severely damaging to both the Lebanese civilian population and the refugee communities in the country, as they have helped to set in motion a dangerous cycle of escalation, which has, in turn, led to a high-intensity military response and an even greater deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

According to recent figures from the Lebanese authorities and humanitarian organizations, more than 700,000 people have been displaced within Lebanon in recent days, while nearly 600 people have died, including dozens of children, women and humanitarian and rescue workers. Many of these families are now seeking refuge in schools and makeshift shelters, attesting to the magnitude of the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

Panama calls for maximum restraint and for an immediate cessation of hostilities. We urge the parties to fully uphold their obligations under international law, in particular international humanitarian law, and to take all necessary steps to protect the population and civilian infrastructure. Panama reiterates its support for the State and Government of Lebanon, whose efforts to preserve internal stability and strengthen State authority throughout its territory are essential, including the role of the Lebanese Armed Forces in ensuring that the State has the exclusive monopoly of and full control over weapons.

We take note of the recent statements by Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, reiterating his country's willingness to resume negotiations with Israel with a view to ending the current escalation, and of the measures announced by Lebanese authorities to rein in Hizbullah's military activity. We affirm our full recognition of the

sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Lebanon, within its internationally recognized borders. A secure and stable Lebanon with institutions capable of fully exercising their authority through the actions that the current Lebanese Administration has been taking is vital to the security of the entire region.

The support of the United Nations in preserving relative stability along the Blue Line in recent decades has been and remains indispensable to preventing greater escalations of violence. Nevertheless, in recent months, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon has been subjected to attacks on repeated occasions, thereby increasing the risks to its staff and facilities. We categorically reject these attacks. Last week, three Blue Helmets from the Ghanaian contingent were wounded while deployed at a Force position in the south of Lebanon. Attacks and actions that compromise the security and integrity of United Nations staff, installations and property are unacceptable. The Blue Helmets, who are fulfilling Council mandates, and the mission's positions and infrastructure must be respected and protected at all times, in line with international law.

Panama reiterates its firm support and backing for the work of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. We must also remember that that Force is in the final stage of its mandate before the planned drawdown process. Therefore, it is all the more important to preserve conditions of stability in the field, ensure the mission's freedom of movement and enable it to perform all the tasks conferred upon it by the Council. We reiterate our urgent call for maximum restraint and for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

The current situation once again demonstrates the importance of the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). This resolution remains the key framework for guaranteeing stability along the Blue Line and moving towards a lasting solution.

**Mr. Jadoon** (Pakistan): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Ms. Harfoush for the comprehensive and valuable briefings.

Lebanon is a country of remarkable diversity, shaped by layers of civilization and a rich cultural and historical legacy. Its people have long shown resilience in the face of adversity, preserving a vibrant social fabric rooted in coexistence among communities and traditions.

Lebanon needs a period of calm to pursue its objectives of peace and stability. The renewed escalation and hostilities are a matter of grave concern. They threaten far more than infrastructure; they endanger civilian life and risk reversing the fragile political and security progress Lebanon had begun to make before the current crisis. In this context, allow me to make four points.

First, Pakistan reiterates its full support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon. We condemn in the strongest terms Israel's continued military aggression in southern Lebanon, which has resulted in the death of more than 400 civilians, including at least 83 children and 42 women, with more than 600,000 people displaced. Sweeping illegal evacuation orders across large parts of southern Lebanon have deepened civilian suffering. The large-scale destruction of civilian infrastructure and the blatant disregard for international humanitarian law must cease immediately.

Secondly, the use of force must remain the exclusive prerogative of the Lebanese State through its legitimate institutions. In this regard, the Lebanese Armed Forces play a central role, and Pakistan supports efforts to strengthen their capacity and operational effectiveness. Pakistan welcomes the efforts of the Government of Lebanon to restore stability and strengthen State authority, including the Cabinet decision of 2 March to reinforce national security structures. We also note Lebanon's

de-escalation initiatives, including the four-point plan advanced by its leadership to restore calm and stability.

Thirdly, Pakistan strongly condemns attacks on United Nations peacekeepers serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, who have been injured in Israeli strikes. Peacekeepers operating under the United Nations flag carry out a vital mandate authorized by the Council. Their safety and security must be guaranteed at all times.

Fourthly, Israeli military activities in southern Lebanon, including the continued presence of forces and the establishment of positions inside Lebanese territory, are illegal and unacceptable. These Israeli actions, which are in contravention of international law, are also undermining the efforts of the Government of Lebanon to ensure peace and stability in the country. We call for Israel's immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal from all occupied Lebanese territories. Sustainable calm requires the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and unwavering respect for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity along the Blue Line.

We echo the Secretary-General's deep concern regarding the regional military escalation since 28 February which has gravely undermined the November 2024 cessation of hostilities agreement. The situation in Lebanon cannot be viewed in isolation from this broader escalation across the Middle East. Heightened confrontation and unjustified attacks on several brotherly countries, which Pakistan has condemned, have gravely aggravated regional security and instability.

At this critical juncture, dialogue and diplomacy must prevail over confrontation. De-escalation, restraint and renewed diplomatic engagement are urgently required to prevent further deterioration of the regional security environment. Only through sustained political dialogue and respect for international law can the region move towards stability and peace.

To conclude, Pakistan stands firmly with the Government and people of Lebanon. The international community must take urgent action to prevent further escalation, alleviate human suffering and support Lebanon's efforts to restore peace and stability across its territory.

**Mrs. Zalabata Torres** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the United States, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for this month, for organizing this meeting. I would also like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. We would also like to thank the briefer for her information.

Official reports and recent news indicate that the humanitarian situation in Lebanon is precarious. As at 7 March, more than 100,000 people were in shelters. Since 2 March, nearly 1 million people have been displaced within the country. Hundreds of thousands more have been affected by widespread evacuation orders. There has been a high number of civilian casualties, including women and children. Attacks on healthcare facilities have also been reported. Furthermore, the safety and lives of peacekeeping personnel have been compromised.

These facts reveal a rapidly escalating crisis that demands an urgent international response. Over the past two years, we have seen how, in this very region, the use of force and disregard for international law can affect the lives of millions of people.

Colombia expresses its deep concern at the serious escalation witnessed in recent days in the region and, in the context of this meeting, at the deterioration of the situation in Lebanon. We urge all parties to respect and fully implement resolution 1701 (2006), to exercise the utmost restraint and to ensure the protection of both the civilian population and United Nations personnel. My country is convinced that it is essential to insist on a return to peaceful means. Dialogue, mediation and existing dispute resolution mechanisms must be urgently deployed to facilitate a sustained de-escalation and create conditions conducive to the protection of communities on both sides of the Blue Line.

Furthermore, Colombia wishes to express its solidarity with the Lebanese people and with all the victims affected by the events of recent weeks.

Respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity is non-negotiable. We reaffirm that full compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council resolutions is crucial.

We also acknowledge the Government's efforts to maintain effective control over its territory and the steps it has taken to prevent hostilities from escalating and to ensure that the country is not drawn into a wider conflict. The Lebanese Government's recent decisions, including the four-point proposal announced by its President, reflect its efforts to bring about a rapid de-escalation of the situation and to protect its population.

As regards the humanitarian aspect, the situation calls for immediate and practical measures. It is essential to establish safe access routes and corridors for aid, ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel and restore essential services in areas affected by hostilities. These actions are a prerequisite for the effective protection of civilians and the stabilization of the situation on the ground.

We would remind the parties that they are obliged to respect the relevant principles of international humanitarian law. Strict compliance with these obligations is essential to halting the deterioration of the situation and to preserving human life and dignity.

Colombia condemns any attack on United Nations personnel and emphasizes that the protection of its staff and the inviolability of its premises are essential. All parties have a legal and moral obligation to ensure their safety, in accordance with international law and the decisions of the Security Council. Any threat or attack undermines the United Nations' ability to maintain international peace and security, verify facts and provide humanitarian assistance. We wish to condemn the attack that took place on 6 March and express our solidarity with the members of the Mission who were affected. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon continues to play an indispensable role, working assiduously to prevent the escalation of tensions and protect civilian communities. Colombia reiterates its support for and recognition of the members of the Mission, recognizing that their work in such a complex context is fundamental.

**Mr. Mohamed Yusuf** (Somalia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African members of the Security Council (A3), namely the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and my own country, Somalia.

We thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for their comprehensive briefings. We also thank Ms. Lynn Harfoush for her valuable contribution. We welcome the participation of the representative of Lebanon in today's meeting.

The A3 views the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon since the beginning of March with the utmost gravity and concern. We are deeply alarmed by the mounting

toll on human life and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, including densely populated residential areas. Furthermore, as reported by UNICEF, nearly 700,000 people, including 200,000 children, have been forced from their homes, adding to the tens of thousands already uprooted from previous attacks. In that regard, we call for the protection of civilians and full adherence to international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The A3 is also gravely concerned about the 6 March incident against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which resulted in injuries to three Ghanaian peacekeepers at their position in Qawzah. This is a stark reminder of the perils faced by peacekeepers in Lebanon. The safety and security of United Nations personnel and property are not negotiable; they must be respected at all times and without exception. We wish a swift and complete recovery to all the injured peacekeepers.

The A3 reaffirms its unwavering commitment to Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence. Lebanon must not become a theatre for proxy confrontations or unilateral territorial expansions. Respect for the Blue Line and the cessation of hostilities by all actors are essential for stability and the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). We acknowledge the critical role UNIFIL continues to play in maintaining stability along the Blue Line. Its presence remains a critical element of the collective efforts to achieve peace in Lebanon and contribute to de-escalation. At the same time, the A3 underscores the importance of enhancing the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces to assume full responsibility for the defence of Lebanese territory. We urge the international community to intensify its support, including equipment, materials and financial assistance, to ensure their effective and sustainable deployment south of the Litani River.

To conclude, the A3 calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities and an urgent return to the parameters of the 2024 ceasefire agreement. We emphasize that a renewed commitment to resolution 1701 (2006) remains the primary framework for long-term stability. It is imperative that all parties prioritize dialogue and diplomacy over kinetic action to prevent a full-scale regional conflagration. Achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East is only viable through genuine commitment to diplomacy, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We stand in solidarity with the people of Lebanon, and we urge the Council to act with unity and resolve to restore peace and uphold international law.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States of America.

I add my thanks and appreciation to all our briefers today.

The United States condemns the attacks that Hizbullah — a long-time proxy of the Iranian regime — has launched against Israel. Hizbullah has yet again made it clear that it does not represent or defend the people of Lebanon. It defends the interests of the Iranian regime. It is nothing more than a proxy and frankly an obstacle to Lebanon becoming a peaceful, stable and functioning State — something I think we would all like to see and encourage. We recognize Israel's legitimate security needs and its right to defend itself from the Iranian regime and Hizbullah, which are two sides of the same coin.

We ask all members, we ask our colleagues: how long will the world continue to tolerate the Iranian regime as the world's largest State sponsor of terrorism, causing havoc around the world as it seeks to export its so-called revolution? I ask members: what country can legitimately say it is better off or more stable because of Iranian influence over the decades? Yemen cannot. Lebanon cannot. Syria absolutely cannot.

Iraq cannot. They are all trying to rid themselves of this cancer that has spread over the decades, this disease of instability and chaos.

Thankfully, the United States and this Administration are taking bold action to do just that. But with a view to Lebanon ridding itself of this violence, death and destruction, the United States welcomes the absolutely historic — and we should recognize it for what it is — 2 March decision of the Lebanese Council of Ministers to immediately prohibit Hizbullah's military and security activities. We applaud it. As the Government of Lebanon said in its letter to the Council on 2 March (S/2026/113), these activities — the activities of Hizbullah — disregard the will of the majority of the Lebanese people. In fact, they are endangering them.

That statement is an absolutely historic milestone on the road to ending Hizbullah's long and destructive influence in Lebanon. The next milestone is implementation, and Lebanon's security services must enforce this policy and prosecute those who violate it. Now is the time for the Government of Lebanon to take back control of the entirety of its country. The United States absolutely supports that endeavour and that mission. We urge our friends in Lebanon to not let this moment slip away. Our message is clear: take the country back. We are all too happy to apply the time and treasure necessary to do that. The United States also commends the actions of the Lebanese Government to expel Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which has undermined Lebanese sovereignty for decades and provides oxygen, money and weapons to Hizbullah's terrorist plots in Lebanon and across the globe.

The world must now come together in supporting Lebanon's efforts to exercise its sovereignty across every inch of Lebanese territory. The United States stands with the Lebanese people, who were dragged into yet another war by Hizbullah at the behest of Iran. We are responding to the civilian consequences of this recklessness by providing immediate, life-saving humanitarian assistance to hundreds of thousands of now-displaced Lebanese. Since 2012, the United States has provided more than \$4.4 billion in humanitarian assistance to support Lebanon. We commend the many humanitarians on the ground who are aiding in this effort. We also express our hopes for the full recovery of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon peacekeepers who were recently injured. Peacekeepers take on exceptional risks in these conflict zones in order to advance peace and security. We recognize that, and we call on all parties to respect the safety and security of these men and women as they assume this important role.

The international community must unite in supporting the Lebanese Government and our Israeli partners in the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). I think we have seen real progress in that regard. The Council must condemn all acts that undermine resolution 1701 (2006). The way forward involves the international community standing firmly in support of Lebanon's efforts to exercise its territorial sovereignty and restore State authority. We will continue to work alongside partners to create lasting peace and security in Lebanon.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

**Mr. Arafa** (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this emergency meeting at the request of the French Republic and with the support of the United Kingdom, Greece, Denmark, Latvia and the Kingdom of Bahrain. I also thank Ms. DiCarlo, Mr. Lacroix, Mr. Fletcher and Ms. Harfoush for their briefings.

We meet at a time when Lebanon finds itself trapped in a war it did not choose — a conflict between Israel and Hizbullah. The former is a party that shows no respect

for the laws of war and persists in its attacks against Lebanon, and the latter is a party whose military and security activities have been banned by the Council of Ministers of Lebanon and is considered illegal.

Once again, we are confronted with a painful reality that serves neither Lebanon nor the Lebanese people, who are now facing death, destruction and displacement. The number of displaced Lebanese people has reached nearly 1 million, some of whom lack shelter that meets basic human needs. Every morning, we wake up to news of new casualties among innocent victims, including women and children, warnings to evacuate entire areas and widespread destruction of both private and public property. This situation creates extremely difficult conditions for the Lebanese Government, which is working tirelessly to place Lebanon back on the path of recovery and reform and to rebuild State institutions.

The Lebanese Government has clearly expressed its full rejection and condemnation of the rocket launches claimed by Hizbullah on 2 March, as we informed the Council in our letter of the same date. Our Government confirmed that this act contradicts its own decisions to vest the exclusive authority to declare war or peace solely in the Lebanese State, as well the principle of refusing to drag Lebanon into the ongoing regional war. Furthermore, this act violates the decisions of the Council of Ministers and seeks to undermine the credibility of the Lebanese State.

In our recent history, no Lebanese Government has shown such courage and determination to restore the authority of the State, restrict weapons exclusively to legitimate institutions and reassert State control over all Lebanese territory through its own national forces.

This effort is undertaken in implementation of the Taif Accords, which stipulate the dissolution of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias and the transfer of their weapons to the Lebanese State, as well as the extension of State authority over the entire territory, in accordance with relevant international resolutions, including resolution 1701 (2006), and in line with the Government's ministerial statement and related decisions — notably the decision adopted on 5 August 2025.

We recall that on 2 March, the Government decided to impose an immediate ban on all Hizbullah security and military activities, deem them illegal, require the group to surrender its weapons to the Lebanese State and limit its activities to the political sphere within the constitutional and legal frameworks. On 5 March, the Government adopted an additional decision instructing the security institutions to verify the presence of members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps in Lebanon and deport them immediately upon identification. Another decision also required prior approval for the issuance of entry visas to Iranian nationals wishing to visit Lebanon.

We will not accept a return to the past. The Lebanese people do not want war, and the Government of Lebanon is determined to implement its decisions and will not back down. Nevertheless, our priority remains to stop this war, protect our country and ensure the safety and security of our people. It is our right to live in peace and security in our homeland and in our region.

To this end, the Lebanese Government has expressed its readiness to enter into negotiations with Israel under international auspices, with the participation of civilian representatives, in order to resolve all outstanding issues. Two days ago, the President of the Republic also called on the international community to support and implement the initiative he proposed, which includes the following elements: first, to establish a comprehensive truce with the immediate cessation of all Israeli attacks — by land, sea and air — against Lebanon; secondly, to promptly provide the logistical support necessary to the Lebanese Armed Forces; thirdly, to deploy the Lebanese Armed Forces to take control of areas of tension and confiscate all weapons found there,

including Hizbullah's weapons, stockpiles and depots, based on available information; fourthly, to begin direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel under international auspices in order to implement all the measures mentioned above.

In support of the efforts of the Lebanese Government, the Council is called upon to compel Israel to implement resolution 1701 (2006), respect the cessation of hostilities, withdraw fully to the internationally recognized borders, end its violations and repeated breaches of Lebanese sovereignty, release Lebanese detainees and cease its threats to Lebanon's territorial integrity and political independence within its internationally recognized borders.

We reaffirm Lebanon's commitment to the follow-up mechanisms established under the cessation of hostilities arrangement, as provided for in resolution 2790 (2025). We further stress that Lebanon's adherence to the General Armistice Agreement between Lebanon and Israel, of 23 March 1949, serves the interests of both parties.

We also renew our condemnation of Iran's deliberate and unjustified attacks targeting the States of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, as well as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Iraq and Syria, and we reaffirm our full solidarity with them. We also condemn the attacks targeting Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Cyprus and reiterate our strong denunciation of these acts, which Lebanon rejects unequivocally and without reservation.

Furthermore, we condemn the attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) from any source. We reaffirm our gratitude to the Force, to the troop-contributing countries and to the sacrifices made by its personnel, in particular those who lost their lives in Lebanon in the service of international peace and security. We condemn in the strongest terms the targeting of the Ghanaian battalion's headquarters and express our full solidarity with Ghana and with the leadership of UNIFIL, while wishing a speedy recovery to those injured.

Finally, Lebanon is facing a moment of extreme gravity and a genuine humanitarian catastrophe. While we are working tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our people and meet their humanitarian needs, any support or assistance aimed at easing the impact of this crisis will be welcomed and appreciated. We reiterate that Lebanon will not accept being turned into an arena for settling scores, and we will continue our efforts to emerge from this ordeal stronger and more resilient.

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

**Mr. Danon** (Israel): First, I would like to congratulate the United States on assuming the presidency for the month of March, and I would also like to thank the briefers.

Since 2 March, Hizbullah has launched wave after wave of attacks against Israel — more than 880 rockets and missiles, more than 60 uncrewed aerial vehicles and more than 15 anti-tank guided missiles. Hizbullah itself has been clear about the reason for the attacks: to avenge the death of Ayatollah Khamenei. It is not to defend Lebanon or to protect Lebanese citizens, but to serve the agenda of the Iranian regime. Just days ago, they vowed to fight to the last breath. As we sit here today, Israeli families are running to bomb shelters as Hizbullah launches new attacks towards our communities. That is the reality that we face. That is why Israel is now operating in Lebanon: to stop this threat.

To understand where we are today, we must look at what has happened since 7 October 2023. For years, Hizbullah grew into one of the most powerful non-State armed organizations in the world. It began way back in the 1980s, when Lebanon was in the middle of a civil war. But over time, it became something more dangerous: a

proxy army built by Iran, funded by Iran, trained by Iran and armed by Iran. By 2024, Hizbullah had between 150,000 and 200,000 rockets and missiles. Think about that. It is the largest arsenal ever held by a non-State actor. Most of the countries represented in the Chamber do not have a capacity of 200 missiles and rockets. This war machine was built over decades with one purpose: Israel's destruction.

After Hamas' 7 October attacks, Hizbullah opened a second front from Lebanon. For months, Israel's northern communities came under fire. Rockets, drones and missiles were being launched across the border. We responded. Israel responded with targeted operations against Hizbullah's command networks and military infrastructure. I want to remind the Council that during that operation, Hizbullah's senior leadership was eliminated, including Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah, a terrorist with blood on his hands. Command structures were disrupted. Approximately 3,000 fighters from the Radwan forces were taken off the battlefield. They lost roughly 80 per cent of their rocket capability. We broke the army that Iran spent decades building.

But Hizbullah was not fully eliminated. We have to admit it. Instead of stepping back after the ceasefire, it rearmed, restocked and rebuilt, and it did so with the help of the Iranian regime. During the first year after the ceasefire, Iran funnelled more than \$1 billion to Hizbullah. It continues to receive more than \$50 million every month to rebuild its military machine. Tehran funds it, Tehran arms it, and Tehran directs it. Hizbullah pulls the trigger, but the ayatollahs in Tehran pull the strings. All of this is in direct violation of resolution 1701 (2006). That resolution required the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River to be free of Hizbullah weapons and terrorists. Council members all voted to adopt this resolution.

I want to show the Council this map, which shows launch sites used by Hizbullah to fire rockets, missiles and drones toward Israel. All the dots on the map indicate where Hizbullah is, south of the Litani River. Hizbullah should not be there. And from these locations, on the first day of these attacks, Hizbullah launched missiles towards Israel. We have intelligence about one of the villages here, the village of Barghaz. When Hizbullah fires a missile from those areas south of the Litani, it takes 30 seconds for the missile to land in the northern part of Israel. I ask Council members to imagine for a minute that they are driving with their families in their cars. Upon hearing the sirens, they have 30 seconds in which to stop the car, look for a shelter and decide which child to take to the shelter first if unable to carry all of them. Thirty seconds is how long it takes.

Since the ceasefire came into effect, Israel has submitted 929 enforcement requests asking the Lebanese Armed Forces to dismantle Hizbullah's infrastructure: launch sites, weapons depots and underground bunkers. However, the efforts of the Lebanese Armed Forces were not sufficient. Sites that were identified were not dismantled. Sometimes they went to the sites and took pictures, and that was it. And today, Hizbullah continues to fire rockets at Israel from those same areas. Last August, the Lebanese Government instructed its military to prepare a plan to disarm armed militias in the country. We welcomed that decision. It was a momentous step. We also commend the recent statements by Prime Minister Salam declaring Hizbullah's current military activity against Israel illegal.

Those are the right words. But the reality on the ground tells a different story. Therefore, I ask the Lebanese Government: if Hizbullah is being dismantled, where is the evidence? Where are the operations against the launch sites? Where are the seizures of their weapons? Where is the Lebanese military? Lebanon now stands at a pivotal moment in its history. The time has come to decide. Will Lebanon stick to making declarations, or will it actually act? For the question before Lebanon is very simple. Who controls Lebanon? Is it the Lebanese Government or Hizbullah acting

on behalf of the Ayatollahs in Tehran? Lebanon has a national army of more than 72,000 soldiers. They must be mobilized, trained and empowered with the authority and resources to assert the sovereignty of the Lebanese State.

We support peaceful negotiations. Lebanese representatives know that. We spoke before the previous operation. But today, as we speak, there are only two options on the table. Either the Lebanese Government takes real action to restrain Hizbullah, or Israel will use its strength to dismantle this terrorist organization. There are no other options. We can meet and talk in Naqurah or wherever Lebanese Government representatives want to, but not while Hizbullah is sending missiles into Israel. Therefore, Israel is acting. In recent days, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has struck Hizbullah command centres and military infrastructure across southern Lebanon. The IDF has also carried out strikes against assets of the Al-Qard al-Hassan network, Hizbullah's financial system, which is used to fund its terrorist activity and rebuild its military capabilities. We have issued evacuation notices to protect Lebanese civilians, because we face an enemy that deliberately places them in harm's way. Hizbullah hides behind civilians in Lebanon and fires at civilians in Israel.

Believe me — Israel does not want to be operating inside Lebanon. But Israel will not accept the firing of rockets at its people. As we speak, the Iranian regime is losing. And like many failing regimes, it is lashing out at its neighbours across the region, indiscriminately attacking civilians. The Council will meet at 3 p.m. to discuss that. And its proxy Hizbullah is doing the exact same thing to Israel. Many countries in our region have drawn the right conclusion. They are distancing themselves from Tehran, strengthening their defences and protecting their sovereignty. Lebanon now faces that same choice. Israel will continue confronting the terror network built by Tehran, and we will do whatever is necessary to ensure that rockets and terror can no longer threaten our people.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Mr. Olabi** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. My thanks also extend to the Permanent Mission of France for taking the initiative, alongside several other nations, to request this emergency meeting. I also wish to thank the briefers.

The Syrian Arab Republic expresses its deep concern about the dangerous escalation unfolding in the region, whose grave and far-reaching political, security-related and economic repercussions, including those being endured by the sisterly nation of Lebanon, its people and its infrastructure. Syria reaffirms its support for Lebanon's safety and security, and it condemns the escalation and bombardment to which Lebanon is being subjected — actions that are threatening to undermine the Lebanese State's ability to fulfil its duties and responsibilities, including its efforts to disarm Hizbullah.

Furthermore, we warn against the repercussions of the ongoing conflict, which, should it continue, risks expanding in a manner detrimental to the interests of both Lebanon and the wider region. This concern is particularly acute given the fact that it coincides with Israel's repeated violations of the sovereignty of Syria in the form of violations of air space, ground incursions and the occupation of new territory since 8 December 2024. Such actions constitute a flagrant breach of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces — an Agreement that the Security Council has repeatedly upheld and affirmed in its resolutions.

In this regard, we welcome and commend the efforts of the United States, under the leadership of President Trump, for its mediating role to resolve this issue.

Syria categorically rejects policies entailing the displacement of civilians through bombardment and destruction. Such actions entail grave humanitarian consequences for both Lebanon and Syria that will be difficult to contain. In a related context, Syria welcomes the Lebanese Government's decision to reject any military or security operations launched from Lebanese territory that fall outside the purview of the legitimate State institutions. This decision effectively prohibits Hizbullah from engaging in security and military activities and mandates the surrender of its weaponry to the Lebanese State, thereby affirming the principle that the monopoly on the use of force rests exclusively with the State and consolidating the State's full sovereignty throughout its territory.

Since the fall of the former regime to this day, Syria and Lebanon have been charting a new course in their bilateral relations that is grounded in mutual respect and common interests. These relations are reflected in numerous reciprocal official visits for the purposes of discussing political and technical matters. Furthermore, the Syrian President, His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Al-Sharaa, held a telephone conversation yesterday with the Lebanese President, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Aoun, during which they discussed current regional developments and their repercussions for the security and stability of the region. Both sides emphasized the critical importance of safeguarding the security and stability of both nations. President Al-Sharaa also expressed his support for President Aoun's efforts to disarm Hizbullah and to spare the region the repercussions of the current conflict. Both sides underscored the need for coordination and cooperation between Syria and Lebanon so as to preserve the security and safety of both countries and their peoples and to counter any attempts to sow discord and destabilize the region.

President Al-Sharaa further expressed his support for the serious and decisive measures being undertaken by the Governments of Iraq and Lebanon to protect their respective nations and to prevent them from descending into conflict. Our firm belief that Syria is facing direct and grave repercussions from this escalation and that Syria's stability is the bedrock of stability in the Levant and the wider region has prompted us to reinforce our defensive forces along our borders with Lebanon and Iraq. These precautionary measures are intended to prevent the spillover of this conflict's repercussions onto Syrian territory, to combat transnational organizations and to prevent them from utilizing Syrian territory to pursue foreign agendas antithetical to the interests of the Syrian people and the peoples of neighbouring nations.

Syria condemns in the strongest of terms all forms of the ongoing Iranian aggression, which is threatening the security and stability of the Arab Gulf States and Jordan and Iraq. We stand in complete solidarity with these sister nations, which are currently being subjected to such wanton acts of Iranian aggression, and we call for their sovereignty and territorial integrity to be respected. Furthermore, my country condemns all Iranian statements and measures regarding the closure of the Strait of Hormuz given the threat that closure poses to freedom of navigation, international trade and energy supplies, which is affecting most nations in the world. Syria calls for de-escalation and support for the diplomatic path, recognizing that the current escalation represents an existential threat to the entire region and is jeopardizing global economic stability. Syria reaffirms its full and unwavering support for all efforts aimed at stabilizing the region, fostering dialogue and pursuing peaceful solutions to resolve regional issues and ensure security and stability for all its peoples.

We also call upon the Security Council to exert pressure on Israel to halt its attacks against Lebanon and its brotherly people. We reiterate our support for Lebanon's unity and territorial integrity and the vital role of the Lebanese Armed Forces as the guarantor of Lebanon's security and stability. We emphasize the importance of ensuring the safety and security of the personnel of the United Nations

Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) operating in Lebanon and those of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in Syria. We condemn the attack perpetrated against UNIFIL on Friday, in which three peacekeepers were injured.

In conclusion, out of solidarity for our brethren in the Arab Gulf States and Jordan, Syria co-sponsored the draft resolution S/2026/155, presented to the Security Council by the sisterly Kingdom of Bahrain on their behalf — a text that condemns the unjustified Iranian aggression against them and calls for its immediate cessation. We call upon all Members of the Council to vote in favour of this draft resolution.

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

**Ms. Michail (Cyprus):** At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council and to thank the briefers for their updates.

Cyprus is a United Nations and European Union member State that is closely connected to the region, and Lebanon is not a distant issue for us. As Cyprus also holds the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, President Christodoulides has been in constant touch with President Aoun as regards the escalating situation. We call on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint. Civilians must always be protected, and international humanitarian law must always be respected.

We condemn the attacks carried out by Hizbullah against Israel, following the former's decision to align with the Iranian attacks. At the same time, while Israel has the right to self-defence in line with international law, we are concerned about the intensification of military operations, which have caused mass displacement. Cyprus is steadfast in its support for Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We therefore welcome the recent decision of the Lebanese Government to prohibit the military and security activities of, and to disarm, Hizbullah. We also welcome the public statements of the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Raggi, who conveyed his strong condemnation of the reported drone attacks that may have originated from Lebanese territory and were directed towards the island of Cyprus.

Strengthening State authority across the entire territory of Lebanon is essential. The monopoly on legitimate force must rest solely with the Lebanese Armed Forces. Cyprus has long supported the Lebanese Armed Forces and will continue to do so as a strategic priority. We will continue providing training and financial assistance, including through our participation in the Military Technical Committee for Lebanon. The full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) remains essential for restoring stability along the Blue Line. Cyprus condemns the attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and reiterates its strong support for the Force and its mandate. Allow me also to express our solidarity with the Ghanaian Government, whose contingent was attacked. UNIFIL peacekeepers' safety and security must be ensured at all times. Diplomacy remains the best path forward to lasting de-escalation.

*The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.*