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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Waltz/Ms. Bruce	(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
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	Latvia.....	Ms. Pavļuta-Deslandes
	Liberia	Mr. Brown II
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	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Somalia.....	Mr. Mohamed Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.....	Mr. Kariuki

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Algeria and Israel 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: Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator; and Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, High Representative for Gaza, Board of Peace.

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

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Alakbarov.

Mr. Alakbarov: Before turning to the Secretary-General's report, I would like to express my grave concern about the ongoing escalation across the Middle East. I convey my sincere condolences to the victims of the hostilities and express hope that diplomacy and peace will prevail.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of High Representative Mladenov and the progress made on the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025). The ceasefire must be upheld and consolidated through the full implementation of all elements of the resolution, including the deployment of the International Stabilization Force, the disarmament of Hamas and other armed factions in Gaza and the handover of governance responsibilities to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza.

The United Nations is engaged with all parties, maintains a strong field presence and stands ready to assist in moving forward from humanitarian assistance towards recovery, construction and a viable political horizon.

Today's briefing is devoted to the thirty-seventh report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). It covers the period from 3 December 2025 to 13 March 2026. Resolution 2334 (2016) calls on Israel to "immediately and completely cease all settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem" and to "fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard." Settlement activity has, nevertheless, continued at high levels.

During the reporting period, Israeli planning authorities advanced or approved over 6,000 housing units in the occupied West Bank, including approximately 3,160 housing units in Area C, and 2,850 housing units in East Jerusalem. The Israeli Housing Ministry published tenders for 5,375 housing units in Area C, out of which 3,401 are located in the area of E1.

On 8 February, the Israeli Cabinet approved a series of measures that would expand Israeli civil authority in the occupied West Bank and further consolidate Israeli planning, enforcement and administrative control, including in parts of Areas A and B. These measures include the transfer of Hebron municipal authorities, such

as construction permits in the Ibrahimi mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs, to Israeli authorities. The measures, which mostly require implementation via military orders, would also remove regulatory barriers on land acquisition and construction by Israelis and purport to shift certain authorities from the Palestinian Authority to the Israeli Civil Administration.

On 15 February, the Israeli Government approved a plan to resume land registration processes in Area C of the occupied West Bank and allocated some NIS 244 million — approximately \$78 million — for this purpose.

Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures also accelerated. Citing the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain, Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced people to demolish 429 structures in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 575 persons, including 290 children and 150 women. Twenty-eight of these structures were donor-funded.

Evictions of Palestinians from their homes in occupied East Jerusalem also continued. On 4 January, the Israeli police forcibly evicted two Palestinian families from their apartments in the Batn al-Hawa area of Silwan, in occupied East Jerusalem, displacing eight people. Settlers took over the building shortly thereafter. This is the sixth eviction incident in Batn al-Hawa since February 2024. On 10 February 2026, Israeli authorities issued eviction notices against 11 Palestinian families in the same neighbourhood, affecting approximately 80 individuals, including children.

Resolution 2334 (2016) calls for “immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and destruction”. Acts of violence against civilians continued, with high numbers of fatal incidents, too numerous to detail here.

The ceasefire in Gaza remained highly fragile, as Israel Defense Forces (IDF) military operations continued with air strikes, shelling and gunfire across the Strip, including in the vicinity of the so-called yellow line, while Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups engaged in armed exchanges with IDF personnel.

During the reporting period, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health, 292 Palestinians were killed in IDF air strikes, shelling and gunfire in Gaza, and 1,741 were injured. A total of 651 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire went into effect.

On 30 and 31 January, the IDF carried out a series of air strikes across Gaza, killing 33 Palestinians, including 7 women and 7 children. The IDF said it targeted Hamas and Islamic Jihad commanders and sites throughout Gaza after eight militants emerged from a tunnel in Rafah on 30 January, three of whom were killed and one captured.

Meanwhile, high levels of violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued at an alarming rate. Overall, in the occupied West Bank, 32 Palestinians, including seven children, were killed during large-scale Israeli security forces operations, armed exchanges, settler attacks and other incidents. In all, 833 Palestinians, including 138 children, were injured, including 172 by Israel security forces due to tear gas inhalation and 141 by live ammunition, as well as 322 by Israeli settlers and other civilians.

According to Israeli sources, two Israeli civilians, including one woman, were killed by armed Palestinians and another 49 Israelis, including five children and five women, and four Israeli security forces personnel were injured by Palestinians in shooting, stabbing and ramming attacks and other incidents.

The Israeli security forces arrested more than 1,600 Palestinians during raids and operations in the occupied West Bank. Israel currently holds at least 9,245 Palestinians, 3,358 of whom are in administrative detention.

On 1 February, Israeli forces extended a military order designating Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams refugee camps and surrounding areas closed military zones until 31 March, prohibiting access without military-issued permits, extending the ongoing displacement of some 33,000 of their residents, while continuing with the extensive destruction of homes and infrastructure in the camps.

Daily settler-related attacks escalated, often in the presence of Israeli forces, resulting in casualties, property damage and displacement in Palestinian communities across the occupied West Bank.

On 16 December, an Israeli settler reportedly shot and killed an 18-year-old Palestinian near Tuqu', Bethlehem, during the funeral procession for a 16-year-old Palestinian boy shot and killed by Israeli forces on 15 December.

On 26 January, following repeated attacks and threats by Israeli settlers from four surrounding settlement outposts, the remaining 100 residents of Ra's Ayn al-Awja Bedouin community were forced to leave their community. This follows the forced displacement of 98 Palestinian households comprising 485 people on 8 and 19 January.

On 27 January, approximately 100 Israeli settlers raided four communities in Masafer Yatta, south of Hebron, injuring six Palestinians, including two women and one child. Subsequently, on 7 March, an Israeli settler shot and killed a 27-year-old Palestinian man in Masafer Yatta, reportedly during an altercation after settlers trespassed near Palestinian homes in Area B. Including this incident, between 2 and 8 March, six Palestinians were killed in settler violence.

Palestinian attacks against Israelis continued both in the occupied West Bank and Israel. On 26 December, a Palestinian man killed two Israelis, including a woman, and injured another two, including one boy, in ramming and stabbing attacks near the Israeli cities of Bet She'an and Afula.

During the holy month of Ramadan, as in previous years, the Israeli authorities imposed restrictions on Palestinians from the West Bank visiting the Aqsa Mosque compound, limiting the number of additional permits issued for worshippers entering Jerusalem for Friday prayers and allowing access only for certain age and gender categories. From 28 February, as part of broader security measures and limits on gatherings imposed due to military escalation in the Middle East, Israeli authorities severely restricted access to Jerusalem's Old City, including to the holy sites.

The Security Council, in its resolution 2334 (2016), called upon both parties to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. Unfortunately, such acts continued.

Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad continued to praise terror attacks and to call for additional violence against Israelis. A senior Fatah official called Israel "neo-Nazis", while another said, "Israel is doomed to perish."

Israeli ministers and Members of the Knesset continued to call for the re-establishment of settlements in Gaza, the annexation of the West Bank, the "emigration" of Palestinians from the Occupied Palestinian Territory and for continuing to "kill the idea of a Palestinian State". On 20 February, an Israeli Knesset member alongside dozens of activists crossed into the Gaza Strip, stating "Gaza will always be ours". On 20 January, a Jerusalem municipal official expressed hope that Israel would "throw out and annihilate" all United Nations Relief and Works Agency

for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) personnel shortly after the UNRWA Shaykh Jarrah compound was seized and almost completely demolished by Israeli authorities in complete disregard for the legal framework applicable to these inviolable premises of the United Nations. On 25 January, the compound was set alight by unknown assailants. The Secretary-General brought this issue to the attention of the President of the General Assembly and of the President of the Security Council on 28 January.

Resolution 2334 (2016) reiterated calls by the Middle East Quartet for affirmative steps to be taken immediately to reverse negative trends on the ground that are imperiling the two-State solution.

On 24 January, President Abbas issued a decree amending the Local Elections Law to require candidates to commit to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and to its programme. On 2 February, he issued a decree authorizing direct elections to the Palestinian National Council on 1 November. On 13 February, the Palestinian Authority (PA) published the draft interim constitution of the State of Palestine for a 60-day public review period. Following a request from the Central Elections Commission, the United Nations deployed an electoral needs assessment mission from 16 to 24 February.

Israel continued its unilateral withholding of Palestinian clearance revenues. The PA estimates that Israel is currently withholding more than 8 billion NIS, deepening the PA's fiscal crisis. Correspondent banking agreements, essential for the Palestinian economy, continue to be renewed on a short-term basis, with the most recent extension set to expire on 28 March.

In Gaza, approximately 1.4 million people remain displaced across 1,200 sites, many in overcrowded and unsafe conditions. Since the start of the military escalation in the Middle East and as of mid-March, only limited fuel and humanitarian aid have entered Gaza through Kerem Shalom. On 30 December, Israel announced that it plans to suspend the operations of some international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Government also notified 37 NGOs that their registrations would expire at the end of 2025. On 27 February, Israel's High Court of Justice issued a temporary injunction blocking the deregistration.

In resolution 2334 (2016), the Security Council called upon all States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967. Resolution 2334 (2016) also called upon all parties to continue, inter alia, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process.

On 14 January, the United States of America announced the start of phase two of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, endorsed in resolution 2803 (2025). On 16 January, the United States announced the formation of a transitional Palestinian government for Gaza, the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, as well as the appointment of the High Representative for Gaza. The Committee convened in Cairo on 16 January and continues its preparations to assume transitional governance responsibilities. The Board of Peace held meetings on 22 January and 19 February, during which member States pledged some \$17 billion towards the reconstruction of Gaza. On 20 February, a Liaison Office was established between the Office of the High Representative and the Palestinian Authority.

On 1 February, Israel reopened the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt, allowing limited pedestrian movement in and out of the Strip. To date, 848 people have left Gaza through Rafah, while 844 have returned. Following the military

escalation in the Middle East on 28 February, the crossing was closed, reopening on 19 March.

In closing, allow me to share the Secretary-General's observations on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

First, Israeli settlement expansion continues at a rapid pace, alongside the proliferation of outposts and steps promoting the annexation of the West Bank. I condemn the relentless Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank, which continues to fuel tensions, impede access by Palestinians to their land, and threaten the viability of a fully independent and contiguous Palestinian State. The rapidly expanding settlement footprint, including the expansion of settlement outposts, is taking place in conjunction with a rise in settler-related attacks. These developments are in breach of international law, further entrenching the unlawful Israeli occupation and undermining the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. I reiterate that all Israeli settlements and related infrastructure have no legal validity and are in flagrant violation of international law, including the applicable United Nations resolutions, recalling in this regard the findings by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024 which affirmed, *inter alia*, that the State of Israel is under an obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible. The Government of Israel must abide by its obligations under international law.

These unilateral Israeli steps steadily transform the landscape. I am deeply concerned by the Government's decisions to deepen Israeli administrative and territorial control of the West Bank. These measures are likely to increase Israeli control over the land and contribute to settlement expansion and could lead to the dispossession of Palestinians of their property. They would also further undermine the Palestinian Authority, contravene existing agreements, breach relevant obligations under international law, and risk further destabilizing the situation on the ground, as well as seriously eroding the prospects for a negotiated two-State solution.

In addition to settlement activities, Palestinians face displacement, demolitions, evictions and crippling movement and access restrictions that stifle the economy and severely limit access to employment, hospitals, schools and agricultural land. Residents continue to be denied the right to return home. The demolition and seizure of Palestinian structures entail numerous human rights violations and raise concerns about the risk of forcible transfer. I call on Israel to cease the demolition of Palestinian-owned structures, in accordance with its international obligations. I also note with deep concern the recent report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, detailing Israel's discriminatory administration of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with evidence-based findings of entrenched racial discrimination.

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

I remain concerned about large numbers of Palestinians, including children, held by Israel, including in administrative detention without charge or trial. Reports of torture, ill-treatment, including sexual violence, and deaths in custody are deeply disturbing. Israel must use detention as a last resort, prevent ill-treatment and end

administrative detention of all children. All detainees must be treated humanely and those arbitrarily detained must be released.

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

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

I encourage continued reforms by the Palestinian Authority and urge international partners to provide the necessary support for these efforts. I welcome ongoing electoral preparations, which are key to the reform processes.

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

The launch of phase two of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, including the establishment of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, is an important step. It is critical that all parties fully abide by their commitments so that recovery can proceed in Gaza, while advancing a credible political horizon towards a two-State solution. In coordination with the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations stands ready to support the Committee's efforts to provide critical public services, facilitate humanitarian aid and lay the groundwork for reconstruction.

I welcome the recovery of the body of the last hostage in Gaza. I am deeply relieved that all hostages have been reunited with their families or brought home for burial. As released hostages continue to publicly share chilling details of their captivity, including accounts of sexual violence, I again strongly condemn the abhorrent terror attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October 2023, and their prolonged holding of hostages in inhumane conditions.

I condemn the continued killing and injury of civilians in Gaza, including women and children. Despite the ceasefire, Israeli air strikes, exchanges of gunfire between both sides and shelling, particularly near the so-called yellow line, and attacks on civilians attempting to return home or access land, have resulted in further loss of life. I condemn the continued destruction by the Israeli security forces of large areas in the Gaza Strip. Such incidents must immediately cease. The protection of civilians is paramount in any armed conflict. Parties to a conflict have an obligation to respect international humanitarian law.

I am deeply concerned by the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. While food security has improved, owing to increased aid and commercial deliveries, infrastructure damage is catastrophic, and there are severe shortages of clean water, medical care, and shelter. Humanitarian access remains restricted, with aid convoys facing logistical and security obstacles. I call on all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including to facilitate the full, rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance.

I strongly condemn the Israeli authorities' continued steps against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). These actions are inconsistent with Israel's clear obligations under international law. I again urge the Government of Israel to immediately return and restore the UNRWA Sheikh Jarrah compound and other UNRWA premises to the United Nations without delay, along with any assets seized from them. I welcome the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 22 October 2025, which reaffirmed several fundamental obligations of Israel under international law, such as the obligation to

cooperate with the United Nations, including UNRWA. I urge Member States to continue to politically support and financially sustain UNRWA.

I remain committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis in ending the unlawful occupation and resolving the conflict in line with international law, United Nations resolutions and bilateral agreements, pursuing a two-State vision, with Israel and a fully independent, democratic, contiguous, viable, sovereign Palestinian State, including both Gaza and the West Bank, living side by side in peace and security, based on pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

I thank Council members for their attention. This ends the presentation of the Secretary-General's report.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Mladenov.

Mr. Mladenov: I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Council today. Let me also begin by thanking Ramiz Alakbarov, the Deputy Special Coordinator in Jerusalem, for his excellent work and for his commitment to humanitarian principles. This is my first appearance in my capacity as High Representative for Gaza, and I want to begin by expressing my gratitude for the invitation and the opportunity to brief the Council today.

Resolution 2803 (2025) endorsed President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and authorized an institutional architecture for the transition in Gaza, including a Palestinian-led apolitical technocratic committee to administer the Gaza Strip. Without that resolution, nothing that I am about to report would have been possible.

I have had the privilege to brief the Council in different capacities, as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq and as the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. I know the weight of the decisions taken here and I know the credibility of every envoy before the Council rests on one thing: telling the truth, including when it is uncomfortable. This is what I intend to do today.

I want to speak very plainly about what brought us here because the transitional institutions we are building, the framework we are implementing and the choices we are asking the parties to make were precipitated by a catastrophe that the Council must never allow to be normalized.

On 7 October 2023, Hamas launched a premeditated and devastating attack on Israel. More than 1,200 people were killed — in their homes, at a music festival and in their communities along the Gaza border. More than 250 people were taken hostage. It was the deadliest day for the Jewish people after the Holocaust. I condemned it then without reservation, and I do so again now. The trauma that happened has affected every single Israeli family. There is no cause, no grievance, no political objective that justifies the deliberate targeting and intentional slaughter of civilians.

What followed was a military campaign in Gaza that has caused destruction and suffering on an immense scale. More than 2 million Palestinians have endured 17 months of war. Tens of thousands have been killed. Civilians have paid the price. From 60 to 70 per cent of infrastructure has been destroyed. The healthcare system has collapsed. The psychological wounds, particularly of children, will take a generation to heal, if they ever heal at all.

I say this not to assign equivalence, but because the Council must hold both tragedies in full view simultaneously. The horror of 7 October 2023 does not diminish the suffering of the Palestinian people, and the suffering of the Palestinian people

does not diminish the horror of 7 October 2023. The purpose of the framework that the Council authorized and the 20-point plan is to ensure that neither tragedy is repeated ever again.

The roots of the Gaza catastrophe extend beyond the lack of a political resolution to the Palestinian question or Hamas' two decades of militant control of the Gaza Strip. They have been exacerbated by years of systemic complacency — complacency towards extremism and complacency towards radicalization. This failure has resulted in immense human cost, affecting Palestinians, affecting Israelis and people across the Middle East.

The transition in Gaza must decisively address these underlying failures. Resolution 2803 (2025) speaks of decommissioning of weapons and of reconstruction. Both are essential, yet they remain insufficient without a concerted effort to challenge the ideologies that fuel violence and to establish a durable framework for sustainable peace and tolerance, rooted in justice and the recognition of the rights of both peoples.

Four months ago, when the Council adopted the resolution (see S/PV.10046), the ceasefire was basically five weeks old. The question of how armed groups in Gaza would be disarmed had no framework and no mechanism. Today, phase one of the Comprehensive Plan is largely complete. Despite challenges, the ceasefire has held, all hostages have been released and returned to their families, and initial humanitarian aid has been restored and scaled up alongside commercial goods. We should not take this for granted. This is the foundation on which everything else rests. I wish to thank the guarantors — Egypt, Qatar, Türkiye and the United States of America — for their tireless efforts to this end. The National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, ably led by Mr. Ali Shaath, has been constituted. Fifteen Palestinian technocrats, approved by consensus among Palestinian factions, now form the incoming transitional civilian authority for Gaza. Commissioners have been appointed across critical portfolios: social protection, health, education, infrastructure and security. The National Committee is currently preparing to enter Gaza, and my Office is supporting them in this process. The Committee is a competent and transparent transitional body, endorsed by the Security Council and called for by the League of Arab States, that is to provide the Palestinian people in Gaza with civilian administration while the broader question of Palestinian institutional reform is addressed. The National Committee will exercise its authority solely on an interim basis.

The end state is a reformed Palestinian Authority capable of governing Gaza and the West Bank and, ultimately, a pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood. The National Committee has taken the lead on preparing to secure the Gaza Strip. It has made strong progress in vetting tens of thousands of qualified candidates for the Palestinian civilian police, who will form the backbone of law and order in Gaza. The response to the open recruitment process has been remarkable, with tens of thousands of potential recruits stepping forward within days of its launch to help to rebuild Gaza's future. I want to express my gratitude to Egypt for agreeing to serve as the lead training partner for developing the core of this police force, which will be beginning in the coming weeks, as their training begins now.

Resolution 2803 (2025) also authorized the deployment of the International Stabilization Force. Today, five countries — Indonesia, Morocco, Kazakhstan, Kosovo and Albania — are bringing that mandate to life through the commitment of their troops, operating under the command of the United States through Major General Jasper Jeffers. I want to commend these countries and the leadership of the United States, and I call on all Member States of the United Nations to consider contributing to the International Stabilization Force. My Office has also presented to

the Palestinian factions a set of transitional principles that govern how the de facto authorities should transfer civilian ministries and civilian institutions in Gaza to the National Committee.

Perhaps the most significant development since November is one that, by its nature, has received the least public attention. My Office, together with the guarantor States — the United States, Egypt, Türkiye and Qatar — has developed a comprehensive framework for the decommissioning and reintegration of armed groups in Gaza. This framework is agreed by all guarantors and has been formally presented to all relevant parties. Serious discussions are under way as we speak. I want to be precise about what decommissioning means in the context of Gaza. The Comprehensive Plan agreed by the parties establishes the principle of one authority, one law and one weapon. That principle applies to all armed actors in the Gaza Strip, without exception. It applies to Hamas and its military wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. It applies to Palestinian Islamic Jihad and its Al-Quds Brigades. It applies to every other faction that maintains an armed capacity in Gaza, and it applies equally to the irregular armed formations that have emerged on the ground. It requires the complete decommissioning of weapons in the Gaza Strip and putting them under the control of the transitional Palestinian Authority. The framework that we have developed and presented rests on five principles.

The first is reciprocity. Decommissioning proceeds in parallel with a staged withdrawal. This is fundamental to the credibility of the entire process.

The second is sequencing. The most dangerous weapons — rockets, heavy munitions, explosive devices and assault rifles — owned by the armed groups are addressed first. Tunnels must be neutralized. Personal weapons are addressed later through a registration and collection process.

The third is verification. Compliance will need to be monitored and verified. Reconstruction can be unlocked only after the decommissioning stages are certified. This is the linkage that gives the framework its driving force. The people of Gaza want reconstruction, and reconstruction requires the decommissioning of weapons.

The fourth addresses the people, not just the weapons. The framework includes pathways for individuals currently affiliated with armed groups to re-enter civilian life with dignity through structured amnesty arrangements and reintegration programmes.

The fifth is the fact my Office has the authority to grant timeline extensions where parties are making good-faith efforts. This is a managed process, with built-in flexibility, because the reality on the ground does not always conform to timelines on paper. I will not go into the operational details of the timelines or the status of our discussions with the parties. Agreement on the implementation of the framework requires space, and I ask all to respect that space. What I can tell the Council is this: the framework exists; it has been endorsed by all mediators, presented to the parties, and engagement on it is very serious. In our most recent meeting with Palestinian factions, the representatives of Qatar, Türkiye and Egypt and I explained that the implementation of this framework is necessary for the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) and that this is the only way to ensure that reconstruction in Gaza and an Israeli military withdrawal happen.

As tensions in the region escalate, with Israeli and United States operations against the regime in Iran, Israel's operations against Hizbullah in Lebanon, continuing drone and rocket attacks by Iran on Gulf countries and global shipping and energy threatened by Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, we should not lose sight of the situation in Gaza. Allow me the opportunity of today's meeting to ask Security Council members to support us in two areas.

First, I ask Council members to reiterate publicly and consistently that the decommissioning of weapons in Gaza is not only a fundamental requirement of resolution 2803 (2025) but the only way forward that allows reconstruction to happen, an Israeli military withdrawal to take place and the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood to be pursued through meaningful negotiations.

Secondly, I ask Council members to use all means at their disposal to urge Hamas and all Palestinian factions to accept this framework without delay. Every hour and every day wasted carry a human cost and further erode the prospects for credible and lasting peace. If realized, this framework would mark a fundamental point. The laying down of arms by militant groups would represent a decisive break from the cycles of violence that have defined life in Gaza for decades. It would create the conditions for a unified and accountable Palestinian security structure, restore a single transitional authority and allow Gaza and the West Bank to be reunited under one reformed Palestinian national authority. For the people of Gaza, the implications are profound: Israeli military withdrawal and reconstruction at scale. It would open the door to sustained international investment, freedom of movement and the rebuilding of institutions capable of delivering governance, justice and opportunity for all.

The full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is also the only pathway that provides Israel with durable security. Israel has conducted multiple military operations in Gaza over the past two decades. The weapons have always returned. The tunnels have always been rebuilt. The cycle has been repeated over and over again. Only verified decommissioning, combined with a new professional police force exercising full control over the use of force and a civilian administration with a stake in stability and focused on reforms, eliminates that threat permanently. That is what this framework offers Israel.

I say this directly to those in Israel and elsewhere who argue that military control is the only option: the evidence of the past 20 years says the opposite. Verified decommissioning and accountable Palestinian governance do not trade away security. They can achieve what military action alone has not, provided they are given the space and the support to succeed.

Let me turn to several urgent matters that require attention from the parties. Despite significant improvements through the implementation of the first phase, the situation in Gaza remains extremely difficult. Essential services are operating at a fraction of pre-war capacity. The healthcare system is collapsing. There is no functioning economy. I have commissioned a comprehensive needs assessment of the gaps, and my humanitarian team will present that in the coming days. But I will not wait for that assessment to tell the Council what is already obvious.

First, the Rafah crossing must remain open and permit more people to cross in and out of Gaza. Any restriction on its operation directly impedes the implementation of the second phase of the ceasefire. Despite some setbacks due to regional escalation, my team and I are working hard with Israel and Egypt to ensure that the Rafah crossing reopens in the coming days — actually tomorrow — and that the number of people allowed to cross over the coming period should increase significantly.

Secondly, aid and goods entering Gaza must be at least up to the levels agreed in the ceasefire. The current flow is not adequate for the scale of need. We are engaging with the relevant Israeli authorities to ensure that the number of trucks allowed to bring goods into Gaza increases in the immediate future. The pipeline is ready, but access must be improved.

Thirdly, we must accelerate temporary housing solutions. More than 2 million people cannot continue to endure undignified living conditions. Our immediate priorities should be delivering prefabricated housing and transitional shelters,

clearing rubble and restoring access to basic services such as water, healthcare and sanitation to make existing areas habitable. This cannot wait for the full reconstruction programme to begin.

Fourthly — and I want to be very clear about this — all parties must fully respect the ceasefire. Every violation, from whatever quarter, risks unravelling what has been painstakingly built over the past five months. The ceasefire is the foundation of the entire transition. I call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and to honour the commitments they have made. The Council should accept nothing less.

If this process fails, if the current status quo is allowed to become permanent, the consequences will be devastating. A divided Gaza, with Hamas maintaining military and administrative control over 2 million people in roughly 50 per cent of Gaza's territory, means that those people will continue to live in rubble, dependent on humanitarian aid, with no prospect of reconstruction. It means a generation of children growing up in conditions that breed despair and radicalization. Ultimately, it means the end of any credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood.

Let me be explicit about that last point. There can be no credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood if Gaza remains under the control of Hamas and other armed groups. That is why everyone — every member of the Council, every State in the region, the Palestinian Authority and every Palestinian faction that cares about peace — has an interest in the implementation of the 20-point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, not because it is a perfect document — no plan is perfect — but because it is the only document that connects decommissioning, reconstruction, civilian transition and the reunification of Palestinian institutions into a single sequence. If we are serious about advancing peace between Israelis and Palestinians, then we must be equally serious about implementing this Plan.

However, I do not want to leave the Council only with the cost of failure. Let me describe what success looks like, because it is worth fighting for. If this transition succeeds, the Gaza Strip will not simply be rebuilt — it will be built anew, and it will be built by Palestinians, for Palestinians. Imagine a territory where goods flow freely through crossings, not trickling in under restrictions and closures; where a port handles commercial traffic; where young Palestinians are not queuing for humanitarian rations, but attending universities and having the freedom to pursue opportunities beyond Gaza and to return home with skills and investment that benefit their people; where electricity comes from a grid, not a generator; where a child born next year grows up in a house, not a tent, and is educated in a school, not a shelter.

None of this is fantasy. The resources exist. The pledges have been made. What stands between the Gaza of today and the Gaza that can be built is not money. It is a combination of unresolved security concerns, continued armed activity and restrictions that hold these developments back. It is the perpetuation of armed structures and strict closures that make reconstruction impossible and condemn more than 2 million people to live as they live now. That is the choice before the parties, and that is the choice before the Council too: a renewed war or a new beginning; the status quo or a better future. There is no third option.

The President: I thank Mr. Mladenov for his excellent briefing.

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

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): We thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov and Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, High Representative for Gaza, for their comprehensive briefings.

The situation in the Middle East is becoming increasingly volatile, marked by escalating conflicts and the risk of regional and global conflagration and spillover. While multiple crises have distinct drivers, it is the unresolved question of Palestine that remains at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, perpetuating instability, shaping dynamics, fuelling grievances and undermining prospects for a just and lasting peace.

The Palestinian people continue to endure illegal occupation, dispossession, systemic violence and the denial of their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination. Over the past two years, their suffering has reached unprecedented levels, particularly in Gaza, where more than 71,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have been killed. Violence has also intensified sharply in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, where more than 1,100 Palestinians have been killed in the past couple of years. And in recent weeks, settler violence has reached its highest level since the United Nations began systematic tracking of this issue.

What we are witnessing is no longer a matter of isolated incidents, but of organized and coordinated attacks against the Palestinian population. This is a direct consequence of an occupation system that has been allowed to operate with impunity. Let me underline that such measures violate international law, undermine ongoing peace efforts, run counter to the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and jeopardize the prospects of achieving a just and lasting peace.

Just days ago, on 15 March, fire was opened on a Palestinian family in the town of Tammun, where Ali Bani Odeh, his wife Waad and their two young sons — Othman, aged 7, and Mohammad, aged 5 — were killed. They were on their way to buy new clothes for Eid al-Fitr. Two of their other children were wounded. This was not a battlefield; it was a family car on a civilian road. Following this, a wave of settler attacks swept across the West Bank, where masked groups set fire to homes, burned mosques, destroyed vehicles and injured dozens of civilians. As the occupying Power, Israel bears a legal obligation under international law to protect Palestinian civilians. Unfortunately, that obligation is being violated with impunity.

Despite these grim realities, the international community has pursued a path to peace. The High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution in July and the General Assembly's endorsement last year of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution established a multilateral pathway to a Palestinian State.

Moreover, efforts by the United States, led by President Trump and supported by Arab countries and countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, advanced the peace plan and facilitated the Sharm el-Sheikh summit, mobilizing regional and international actors around some of the key and urgent priorities — namely, ending the bloodshed, achieving a permanent ceasefire, responding to the humanitarian catastrophe, reuniting families with detainees and hostages and reopening a credible political process towards Palestinian self-determination and statehood. These efforts culminated in resolution 2803 (2025), which Pakistan supported, as part of the group of eight Arab and Islamic countries that were engaged in this process and in full alignment with the position of the State of Palestine and the Arab countries. The formation of the Executive Board for Gaza under the Board of Peace and the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza and the appointment of the High Representative, who is with us today, are positive steps. What matters now is translating these developments into tangible implementation on the ground.

Looking ahead, Pakistan wishes to highlight the following points.

First, settlement expansion must halt immediately, in full compliance with resolution 2334 (2016). Any measure aimed at altering the demographic, legal or historical character of the occupied territories, including around Haram al-Sharif, is illegal and must be reversed. In the light of recent events, we further call for the immediate cessation of organized settler violence.

Secondly, resolution 2803 (2025) must be implemented in full and in good faith, including full implementation of the ceasefire and full, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access, in order to ensure humanitarian assistance at scale. Mr. Mladenov is right in saying that the achievements in phase one of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict should not be taken for granted, and we think that phase two of the Comprehensive Plan must now be implemented without delay. Here, let me emphasize the central and indispensable role of the Palestinian Authority in this process.

Thirdly, reconstruction should begin forthwith, with no annexation, forced displacement or fragmentation of the occupied Palestinian land.

Fourthly, there must be accountability. We should not forget this aspect. Accountability is indispensable. Without justice and respect for international law, there can be no durable peace. Perpetrators of violence against civilians, including those involved in settler attacks, must be brought to justice.

Fifthly, a time-bound and irreversible political process anchored in the relevant United Nations resolutions must lead to the establishment of a sovereign, independent and contiguous State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital. That is the best guarantee for durable peace and stability in the region. Pakistan's solidarity with the Palestinian people remains unwavering. We stand firmly with them in their legitimate struggle against occupation and for their dignity, justice and self-determination and the realization of an independent Palestinian State, in accordance with international legitimacy.

We are deeply concerned about the evolving situation in the broader Middle East. In fact, the region stands at a perilous crossroads, with the risk of a wider conflagration and far-reaching consequences. Against this already dire backdrop, further escalation must be avoided at all costs. We call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint, and the ultimate aim must be the cessation of all hostilities and movement towards the peaceful resolution of all issues. Together with other partners, Pakistan is actively engaged in promoting this objective.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov and Mr. Mladenov for their briefings.

At present, the conflict in the Middle East continues to expand, and tensions are escalating rapidly, causing serious consequences for regional stability and the global economy. At the same time, the Palestinian question is deteriorating at an accelerated pace. Shelling in Gaza continues, settlement activities in the West Bank are intensifying, and the foundation of the two-State solution is at risk of being eroded further. In the face of this grave situation, the international community must demonstrate strong political will and take decisive actions to advance a comprehensive, just and lasting resolution to the Palestinian question at the earliest possible date.

I will make three points.

First, we must prioritize human life and immediately end the suffering of the people of Gaza. Since the ceasefire agreement was reached, Israel has continued to

launch attacks, killing more than 600 Gazans. Recently, Israel has further tightened restrictions on humanitarian access and closed the Rafah crossing many times, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The situation in Gaza concerns the very foundation of international morality. China calls on all parties concerned, especially Israel, to comply fully with the ceasefire agreement and to achieve a genuine, comprehensive and lasting ceasefire. Israel must fulfil its obligations under international humanitarian law, fully open border crossings, lift restrictions on humanitarian access and cease attacks on humanitarian organizations, especially the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Secondly, we must uphold the rule of international law and resolutely end illegal activities in the West Bank. Recently, the occupying Power has accelerated its settlement policies and expanded settlement activities, leading to the displacement of more than 36,000 Palestinians in the West Bank over the past year. Violent incidents involving settlers have increased sharply, causing numerous Palestinian civilian casualties and significant property damage. On 15 March, four Palestinian civilians were fatally shot by Israeli security forces, which is deeply shocking. Settlement activities constitute a serious violation of international law and of resolution 2334 (2016). Any violence against civilians must be condemned. Israel must immediately stop settlement activities, curb settler violence, refrain from using excessive force against civilians, investigate and hold accountable those responsible for attacks on civilians and put an end to impunity.

Thirdly, we must uphold fairness and justice and accelerate efforts to advance the two-State solution. There is only one universally recognized and reasonable path to the question of Palestine, and that path is the two-State solution. Any other alternative arrangements or new mechanisms must uphold the principle of Palestinians governing Palestine, respect the will of the Palestinian people, and support rather than undermine the two-State solution. In accordance with the requirements of resolution 2803 (2025), the relevant country should brief the Security Council on the situation in a timely manner. Both Gaza and the West Bank are integral parts of the State of Palestine. The international community must firmly reject any attempt to annex Palestinian territory and oppose unilateral actions that erode the foundation of the two-State solution.

The international community cannot accept the Palestinian question being marginalized once again and must take irreversible steps to advance the two-State solution. China supports the establishment of an independent State of Palestine at an early date. The United Nations has the responsibility to play a leading role in this process. China will continue to work with the international community to promote a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire in Gaza, end the humanitarian catastrophe, implement the two-State solution and help to restore justice to the State of Palestine and peace to its population and to the Middle East region.

Mr. Mohamed Yusuf (Somalia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. We thank him for his briefing, which reflects the developments on the ground. We would also like to thank Mr. Mladenov, High Representative for Gaza and Director-General of the Board of Peace, for his briefing.

The latest report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) presents a very disturbing picture of the continued deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. This report once again affirms the growing gap between what the Council decides and the reality on the ground.

Resolution 2334 (2016) is clear and unambiguous. It affirms that the construction of settlements in Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including

East Jerusalem, has no legal legitimacy and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law. However, almost a decade after the adoption of this resolution, settlement activity continues at an accelerated pace. This systematically undermines the possibility of a viable and geographically contiguous Palestinian State. It weakens the prospects of a two-State solution.

The Republic of Somalia expresses its grave concern about the continued confiscation of lands, demolition of homes and forced displacement of Palestinians, including women and children. In this context, we follow with great concern the eviction orders issued against a number of Palestinian families in the Batn al-Hawa neighborhood in Silwan, East Jerusalem, which may lead to forced displacement and the creation of a new reality on the ground. Such measures are a clear violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. They deepen humanitarian suffering and undermine the prospects for peace. We are deeply concerned about the policies and actions that seek to entrench the reality of gradual annexation and the expansion of administrative control over land in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This includes land registration measures and settlement expansion. These practices undermine the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. They run counter to the norms of international law and weaken the international order, which is based on respect for international law in all circumstances.

The humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially in the Gaza Strip, remains a source for grave concern. Despite some efforts to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the scale of needs is far greater than the size of the current response. And we stress the need to ensure full, safe, sustainable and unhindered humanitarian access, using all available crossings, in a manner that would enable United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to carry out their vital mandates by providing life-saving support.

We also stress the need to protect civilians and to respect the principles of international humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction, proportionality and accountability. We affirm that targeting civilians or civilian infrastructure is completely unacceptable. We stress the importance of respecting the existing ceasefire. We call for the full implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) in a manner that would help alleviate human suffering and create the necessary conditions for a sustainable political process.

The continued lack of accountability for the violations perpetrated undermines the credibility of the Security Council. It sends a dangerous message that violating international law can go unpunished. In this spirit, we underscore the need for the international community to take concrete steps to ensure that illegal settlement activities are not supported or enabled, including through commercial or investment activities that seek to entrench the ongoing occupation. We stress the need to set clear legal and diplomatic red lines and to take appropriate measures to ensure respect for international law and to prevent any actions aimed at changing the demographic or geographic character of the occupied Palestinian territories.

Achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East requires genuine political will. It means refraining from taking unilateral steps that undermine the chances of peace. It requires a serious commitment to a credible political process that is based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the principle of the two-State solution. Here, we reaffirm the need to end the Israeli occupation as the only means to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

In closing, Somalia reaffirms its unwavering support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent and sovereign State on the borders of 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Somalia will continue to stand by the Palestinian people as they strive legitimately towards freedom, dignity and a just and lasting peace.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov and Mr. Mladenov, High Representative for Gaza, for briefing us today.

The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned about the conflict in the Middle East and its impact upon civilians. Together with partners, we continue to strive for a swift resolution to this crisis. We cannot let this current period of crisis in the region distract us from the need to make progress on the 20-point plan for Gaza, or from the deeply concerning trajectory in the West Bank.

I will therefore make three points in that regard.

First, the parties and the Council, through resolution 2803 (2025), have expressed their backing for President Trump's 20-point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. But Gaza today remains unacceptably divided. Repeated violations of the ceasefire are costing lives and undermining progress for peace. It is essential that swift progress is made to implement the second phase. Hamas has no future in the governance of Gaza. It and other militant groups must demilitarize. And I welcome and fully support High Representative Mladenov's remarks on the importance of full decommissioning. Swift progress also means the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza being given full support to lead the day-to-day administration of Gaza during the transition to Palestinian Authority governance, delivering for the Palestinian people's immediate needs and the crucial recovery efforts needed across the Gaza Strip.

Secondly, resolution 2803 (2025) is clear on the need for the full resumption of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Yet for weeks, Israel has restricted the delivery of humanitarian aid to one single crossing. Last week, 1,063 trucks were offloaded, just one quarter of the weekly target of 4,200 trucks. And Israel's closure of the Rafah crossing, on 28 February, for 18 days, delayed life-saving medical evacuations for thousands. This is wholly unacceptable. A lack of essential goods is driving up commercial prices, while shelter materials, critical medical supplies, fuel and repair equipment remain blocked by Israel under long-standing dual-use restrictions. At the same time, the Government of Israel's de-registration measures are shrinking the space for international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Palestine. The United Nations and its partners, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and international NGOs, must be able to operate unimpeded in Gaza, with access to all parts of the Strip and the supplies needed to deliver essential and life-saving services.

Finally, we cannot successfully implement the 20-point plan without resolving the situation in the West Bank. The United Kingdom has repeatedly and strongly condemned Israeli steps to expand control over the West Bank. We have been clear. Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law. And the severe economic restrictions imposed by Israel are significantly undermining peace efforts.

The United Kingdom is appalled by recent killings, reports of sexual assault, torture and degrading treatment of Palestinians at the hands of violent settlers. We strongly condemn settler violence and terror, including the spate of attacks on West Bank villages over the weekend. Since 28 February, we have seen six Palestinians shot dead by settlers, as well as the killing of Palestinian children by Israeli forces.

This is completely unacceptable, as is the apparent lack of accountability for countless reports of human rights violations at the Sde Teiman facility. The Israeli Government must take concrete steps to prevent any such egregious actions and ensure accountability. Impunity for such horrific actions is inconsistent with international law.

We still have the opportunity to end the cycle of violence and build a better future for the region, a better future for the next Israeli and Palestinian generations. A two-State solution is the only way to achieve this. There is no alternative. Together, and urgently, we must preserve the land and the people of Palestine so that a two-State solution remains viable. To promote peace, security and stability, the Israeli Government must reverse the Security Cabinet's decision to expand control over the West Bank and take urgent action to halt the escalating violence and hold perpetrators accountable.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the briefers, Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and Mr. Nikolay Mladenov, Director-General of the Board of Peace and High Representative for Gaza, for their important and valuable briefings.

In the light of the developments in the Middle East, in particular the Iranian attacks targeting several countries in the region, including the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and my country, the Kingdom of Bahrain, we reaffirm our condemnation of these attacks, which constitute a flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and a direct threat to regional security and stability. In this context, we refer to resolution 2817 (2026), which condemned these attacks and stressed the need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and rejected the use of force in contravention of international law and the United Nations Charter. We also stress the importance of safeguarding maritime security and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and all vital waterways, given their direct impact on the stability of international trade, energy supplies and the global economy.

On the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, we take this opportunity to express our hopes and prayers for peace, security and prosperity for all. We also express our best wishes for Easter, underscoring the importance of safeguarding the freedom of religion and belief and the freedom to practice religious rites in peace and security. However, celebrating these holidays has become impossible in Jerusalem, one of the most sacred and spiritual cities in the world. Aqsa Mosque was closed during Ramadan for the longest period since 1967, and Christian pilgrims were stopped for the third time this year owing to the closure of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other Christian holy sites. These acts are a blatant violation of international law, international humanitarian law, the historical and legal status quo, and the principle of unrestricted access to places of worship.

Meanwhile, extremist voices continue to emerge advocating hatred and calling for the demolition of Aqsa Mosque. We call for those voices to be condemned and immediately suppressed, as they run counter to international principles calling for coexistence, respect for freedom of worship and safeguarding holy sites, as well as human dignity and fundamental rights.

In the light of the aforementioned and in the context of the subject under consideration today, I would like to stress the following key points.

First, we note the developments regarding Israeli settlement activities and the worrisome escalation in the frequency of settler violence against the inhabitants of the West Bank, in addition to the Israeli decisions in February aimed at implementing

large-scale expansionist changes in the West Bank, including the reclassification of Palestinian lands to so-called State land and the acceleration of illegal settlement activity. We also express our grave concern regarding United Nations reports relating to settlement practices, which confirm the displacement of more than 36,000 Palestinians in a single year due to settlement activity. These violations must cease immediately, as they undermine efforts to achieve sustainable peace. In this regard, we recall resolution 2334 (2016), which affirms the illegal nature of settlement activities and calls for their immediate cessation.

Secondly, we commend the efforts undertaken within the framework of the Board of Peace, which were preceded by the adoption of resolution 2803 (2025). We note our contribution, as a member of the Board, in establishing a digital government and government services platform for the Gaza Strip, to support reconstruction efforts and improve the management of basic services for the people of Gaza. We also stress the importance of expediting the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, given the dire humanitarian conditions prevailing there.

Thirdly, we stress the need to fully support the Palestinian Government, to release Palestinian tax revenues and to lift restrictions on financial and banking transactions in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, thereby enabling the Palestinian Government to adopt the budget necessary to manage its affairs efficiently. We also support efforts aimed at strengthening the democratic process, including the holding of local elections followed by elections for the Palestinian National Council later this year, which demonstrates the Palestinian Government's ability to adopt the reforms needed to strengthen democratic practices to fulfil the aspirations of our brotherly Palestinian people.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms that, despite the blatant, cowardly and unjustified Iranian aggression against the Kingdom, which was condemned by the international community in resolution 2817 (2026), it has not wavered in its commitment to the Palestinian cause and to achieving durable stability in the Middle East, so that it could live in security, peace and prosperity. The Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms its unwavering commitment to achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the two-State solution, in line with the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant United Nations resolutions. We also refer to the provisions of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and emphasize that sustainable peace can only be achieved through the establishment of a sovereign, independent and democratic Palestinian State, living side by side with the State of Israel.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to acknowledge the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine and the representatives of Israel and Algeria, whose presence here today honours us. Panama is grateful for the briefings by Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, and Mr. Nikolay Mladenov, High Representative for Gaza of the Board of Peace, whose remarks provide us with a comprehensive overview of the situation in Gaza and the West Bank, which continues to evolve in a deeply worrisome direction.

In the West Bank, we are seeing a sustained rise in violence, the displacement of communities and the continuation of demolitions, particularly in Area C, in which restrictions continue to pose significant challenges for the Palestinian population. These practices are incompatible with the obligations set out in resolution 2334 (2016), in particular the requirement to refrain from taking measures that alter the demographic composition, character and status of the territory. If this trend continues,

there is a risk of further eroding the minimum conditions necessary to move towards a just, dignified and sustainable solution to this protracted conflict. In addition to this situation, there are now regional tensions, including the ongoing missile and drone attacks against Israeli territory by Hizbullah and Iran, which constitute a dangerous escalation and add to the instability. Panama reiterates its call for maximum restraint and for the avoidance of unilateral actions that could further aggravate the situation on the ground.

The situation in Gaza reminds us that, although the current ceasefire has led to a relative reduction in the intensity of hostilities, violent acts continue, demonstrating that current efforts remain insufficient to fully stabilize the situation and enable the people of Gaza to live in safety and dignity.

This situation is exacerbated by a protracted humanitarian crisis characterized by restricted access, shortages of essential supplies and thousands of people still awaiting medical evacuation. Given this complex situation, it is essential to ensure the full participation and support of the United Nations system. Panama reiterates its firm support for the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other humanitarian agencies that continue to operate under extremely difficult conditions to assist the civilian population. Their work is essential to meeting basic needs and preserving minimum standards of human dignity. In this regard, we stress the importance of ensuring full respect for humanitarian principles, as well as the protection of United Nations premises and personnel.

Panama welcomes the ongoing progress towards the stabilization and reconstruction of Gaza, in line with the framework endorsed by the Council through resolution 2803 (2025), including the efforts undertaken through the Board of Peace, with the active participation of the United Nations system and countries in the region.

For these advances to be sustainable, it will be essential that they be accompanied by conditions of security for both the Israeli and Palestinian people. This entails effectively addressing the security dimension in a broad sense, encompassing both arms control and provisions for basic needs, including the fight against hunger, the strengthening of the health system and access to education. These actions are essential to improve living conditions for the population and to lay a more solid foundation for lasting stability, while at the same time preventing conditions that could give rise to new manifestations of extremism and violence. In this regard, Panama reiterates that Hamas must disarm and cannot and must not play any role in the future of Gaza.

It will be equally important to make progress on a governance process that enables an orderly transition to a reformed and unified Palestinian leadership, capable of meeting the needs of its people and contributing to the security of both its own people and its neighbours. This process must also establish conditions that will strengthen the economic and financial sustainability of Palestinian institutions, as this is essential to achieving comprehensive stability.

Panama reiterates that the only viable, dignified and sustainable option remains one that, through credible negotiations demonstrating political will for peace on both sides, enables the peoples of Israel and Palestine to live side by side in peace, security and dignity within secure and internationally recognized borders, in accordance with international law and the relevant resolutions of the Council.

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): Let me also thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his briefing on the Secretary-General's report. I wish to thank High Representative Mladenov for his presence here today and for his detailed briefing on the way ahead. This is exactly what we need as a Council.

For decades, the Council has convened to bring a lasting and peaceful solution to the Palestinian question. Throughout this time, while the situation on the ground has evolved, one constant has remained — that the only viable solution to this decades-long conflict is the realization of a two-State solution. We are determined not to let it slip beyond reach, but it is unfortunately what is happening right in front of us.

We continue to support a full implementation of the ceasefire in Gaza. Resolution 2803 (2025) has charted a way forward. It provides a clear framework. Phase one has been completed, but we need to see tangible progress on the implementation of phase two. We need progress on lifting the restrictions on humanitarian aid, including entry of dual-use items, on the removal of rubble and unexploded ordnance, on rebuilding of homes and on reopening of schools. We also need progress on the disarmament of Hamas, Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a viable path towards Palestinian self-determination.

Sadly, progress is not happening fast enough. Devastation is still immense in Gaza. Parents lacking fuel are turning to burning plastic to cook food for their children. Injured and sick people are still awaiting evacuation and medicine, and the health system has collapsed, as we heard from the High Representative. There is a lack of all necessities.

The regional escalation has exacerbated the situation further. All border crossings except Kerem Shalom have been closed for humanitarian aid, and Rafah only reopened recently for a limited number of evacuations and returnees. The number of trucks with humanitarian aid entering Gaza has fallen to fewer than 100 per day at a time when humanitarian access should be safe, sustained and unhindered to meet the vast needs in Gaza. This is well below the target of 600 trucks per day envisioned in the peace plan. The ones who could deliver the much-needed aid are prevented from doing so. The United Nations-led humanitarian system, which includes the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has proven its ability to deliver aid at scale, efficiently and safely. It remains the best placed to carry out this enormous task, but it is prevented from doing so. We call on Israel to urgently re-register international NGOs and to remove all barriers for the effective delivery of humanitarian aid.

Progress on the 20-point plan is clearly linked to the situation in the West Bank. In the shadow of the regional escalation and after two years of war in Gaza following Hamas' brutal terror attack on 7 October 2023, the international community risks losing sight of the situation in the West Bank. We must not allow that to happen. Across the West Bank, Israeli control is being solidified, settlement expansion continues to increase, outposts are being legalized under Israeli law, and Palestinian land is being seized. Communities face demolition and displacement. We reiterate that Israel's settlements are a clear violation of international law, and we call on Israel to change course.

Since the beginning of the recent regional escalation, we have also seen a concerning uptick in settler violence. In just the first three months of 2026, eight Palestinians have been killed by extremist settlers, who continue to engage in violence with full impunity. This compares to eight in all of 2025. And as documented by the Israeli NGO Yesh Din, nearly 94 per cent of the cases concerning settler violence that were actually recorded by the Israeli police over 20 years have not been brought to trial.

The gap between the commitments of the Council and the reality on the ground is widening. This trajectory must be reversed. Settlement expansion must stop.

Actions that fragment Palestinian territory must be brought to an end, including the E1 settlement plan and the continued legalization of outposts. Withheld Palestinian tax revenues must be released. Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, must be reunified under the Palestinian Authority. Failing to achieve this would mean that a future Palestinian State will become an illusion before long.

Denmark will continue to call for a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question, for progress towards a two-State solution and for a future of peace and security for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Mr. Bonnafont (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov and the High Representative for Gaza of the Board of Peace for their briefings. We welcome Nickolay Mladenov; we listened with the utmost attention to his noteworthy briefing. It is crucial for the Security Council to be regularly informed of the activities of the Board of Peace, which arose out of resolution 2803 (2025) enshrining President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict.

While the Middle East has, for the past month, been held in the grip of a conflagration on an unprecedented scale, the situation in Palestine, be it in Gaza, the West Bank or East Jerusalem, must continue to command the Council's attention.

First, the situation in Gaza remains critical and requires the second phase of the peace plan to be implemented as soon as possible. The ceasefire is holding — a development that the Council must welcome — but it remains fragile, and the humanitarian emergency prevails. We call on Israel to allow free and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid, to lift restrictions on its delivery and to respect the privileges and immunities of United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

When it comes to phase two, we must do all we can to deploy the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza on the ground. The disarmament of Hamas is an urgent priority. In his statement, Mr. Mladenov referred to a sequenced plan, supported by the mediators. We call on Hamas to accept the plan. To decide otherwise would spell calamity for Palestine and the Palestinian people. We likewise call on Israel to accept its terms. That aside, future reconstruction is galvanizing our efforts in relation to its institutional, economic and financial dimensions alike.

Secondly, amid the alarming upsurge in Israel's settlement activities in the West Bank, which is undermining the territorial contiguity of the Palestinian State, the Council has a responsibility to take action. The unprecedented proliferation of criminal attacks by settlers against Palestinian civilians, with utter impunity, is unacceptable. Those attacks sow terror. We firmly condemn them. We call on Israel to protect the Palestinian population and to punish the perpetrators. The unchecked escalation of settlement activity is alarming. Israel's decisions aimed at extending its control over the West Bank constitute flagrant violations of international law. We reiterate our condemnation of settlement activity and our opposition to any form of annexation of the West Bank and any policy aimed at harming the prospects of a two-State solution.

Thirdly, the crippling of the Palestinian Authority, in particular through Israel's unjustifiable refusal to transfer tax revenues to it, is dangerous. It is detrimental to regional stability and Israel's own security. It adversely affects the Palestinian Authority's capacity to provide essential services to the population. It hampers the reform efforts that we support and the prospects for free elections.

Fourthly, France is taking concrete action in the humanitarian, security and political realms. As regards humanitarian action, in February, France once again

mustered its resources, delivering 80 tons of food aid to Gaza, in coordination with the World Food Programme. When it comes to security-related support, France is helping to bolster the Palestinian forces through the European Union's missions. In terms of financial support, France is providing ongoing support to the Palestinian Authority, including through its bilateral budgetary contributions.

The Council has a responsibility to act and must show unity. Without a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a regional security architecture cannot be established. Now more than ever, joining forces to preserve the two-State solution is a matter of urgency. Doing so is key to Israel's security, just as it is to the fulfilment of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, widely endorsed by the international community, must inform our endeavours.

Mrs. Kabengele Lukundula (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): The Democratic Republic of the Congo thanks Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Resident Coordinator, and Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, High Representative for Gaza, for their briefings in support of peace and stability in the Middle East.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains deeply concerned about recent developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the West Bank and Gaza, which continue to fuel tensions and undermine the prospects for lasting peace. Against that backdrop, we call upon all parties to exercise the utmost restraint, to avoid any action that might inflame tensions and to prioritize dialogue as an essential path towards sustainable de-escalation.

Almost one decade after the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), it must be noted that its provisions remain to a great extent unimplemented. In this regard, we point out that compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions underpins the credibility of our collective efforts. Accordingly, we call on the parties to eschew any unilateral measures that might adversely affect the situation on the ground and further frustrate efforts for peace and, instead, to take concrete steps to alleviate tensions and protect civilians. Trust can be restored only through tangible action and a genuine commitment to dialogue. In that connection, we reaffirm the importance of adhering to international law, including international humanitarian law.

In the same vein, the Democratic Republic of the Congo takes note of ongoing efforts within the ambit of resolution 2803 (2025) of 17 November 2025, aimed at ending the conflict in Gaza and encourages all parties to fully honour their commitments, in particular as regards maintaining the ceasefire and improving the living conditions of the civilian population. It is crucial to ensure safe, swift and unimpeded humanitarian access and the continuity of essential services.

My delegation also takes note of the initiatives aimed at supporting the transitional governance and reconstruction of Gaza, which is why it welcomes the appointment of Mr. Nickolay Mladenov as High Representative for Gaza of the Board of Peace. In that connection, we underscore the importance of those efforts being undertaken in transparent, inclusive and coordinated fashion so as to foster conditions conducive to lasting stability.

The humanitarian situation remains alarming. Given the situation, the Democratic Republic of the Congo wishes to emphasize the indispensable role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which remains a central pillar of the humanitarian response. Its work is essential in providing life-saving assistance, in particular in the areas of healthcare, education and emergency aid.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo reaffirms its commitment to a negotiated solution. To ensure the viability of this approach, my delegation wishes to highlight the two elements: first, the importance of progressive confidence-building measures between the parties, including in the humanitarian and economic spheres, to create an environment conducive to the resumption of dialogue; secondly, the need for the international community's renewed and coordinated commitment to de-escalation efforts, including through existing United Nations mechanisms.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the current period requires — beyond mere statements of principle — concrete action, as well as sustained and pragmatic efforts to restore trust and generate a new political dynamic aimed at achieving lasting peace for the benefit of all peoples of the region. The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains ready to support any initiative aimed at promoting constructive and inclusive dialogue to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Ms. Pavluta-Deslandes (Latvia): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov for his informative briefing. I welcome High Representative for Gaza Nickolay Mladenov to this meeting, and I thank him for his valuable and comprehensive contribution.

The escalation in the Middle East has an immediate impact on civilian populations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in the Gaza Strip, where civilians are experiencing increased violence, movement restrictions and a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation.

In the West Bank, rising settler violence and the military activity of the Israel Defense Forces continue to inflict suffering upon the Palestinian population. It has resulted in tens of thousands of Palestinians being forcibly displaced. According to reports by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, over the past two and a half years, 1,071 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank, including at least 273 children. More than 30 Palestinians have been killed by violent settlers, none of whom has been held accountable to date. Over the past two years, 42 Israeli civilians and 26 members of the security forces have been killed.

The deteriorating situation fuels tensions and perpetuates a cycle of violence, exposing both Palestinians and Israelis to ever-increasing security risks. We call on the Israeli authorities to take immediate and effective action to prevent further attacks against Palestinian civilians and to ensure accountability. We also call on the Palestinian Authority to implement its reform agenda, including the reform of the school curriculum, and to address concerns about the continuation of the policy of rewarding violent acts.

The ongoing settlement policy, including recent decisions to expand Israel's control over the West Bank and East Jerusalem, undermines the prospects for long-term peace. We therefore once again call for full respect for international law and the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016).

While the escalation in the West Bank is in focus, we also have to address the still tragic situation in Gaza. Unimpeded humanitarian access to the civilian population must be ensured in Gaza and the West Bank at scale, in accordance with international humanitarian law. A predictable and unimpeded flow of goods, in particular essential supplies, must be ensured in order to deliver the support that is so desperately needed.

We commend the vital work of United Nations agencies and international humanitarian partners and stress the importance of enabling them to work independently and impartially. We note the recent reopening of the Rafah crossing. It

is important to keep the crossing points open to alleviate severe medical shortages in Gaza and to allow people to acquire medical treatment abroad.

The reconstruction of Gaza is closely linked to security and governance, as we heard from High Representative Mladenov today. The rearming of Hamas must not take place in Gaza. We cannot allow Hamas to hijack the Palestinian cause or the implementation of the Gaza peace plan. Hamas must disarm and relinquish power. The people of Israel deserve to live in peace and security without the daily threat of terrorism. The tangible restoration of living conditions in Gaza is urgently needed to create a social and political environment conducive to the unified governance of the Palestinian Authority.

The Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, put forward by President Trump and endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025), remains at the core of ongoing international efforts to achieve peace and stability in Gaza. We look forward to its full implementation. We welcome the announcements by the Board of Peace in February on commitments to deploy troops to the United Nations-authorized International Stabilization Force, as well as indispensable financial pledges for early recovery and reconstruction in Gaza.

The National Committee for the Administration of Gaza should be empowered with the necessary means, tools and access to accomplish its mandate. The early involvement of the Palestinian Authority would lay the foundation for future self-sustaining governance in Gaza.

In conclusion, the security situation in the Middle East as a whole is highly concerning. Iran's brutal aggression against countries in the region and beyond, including the instrumentalization of proxies, such as Hizbullah, and its escalatory attacks, has drawn the entire region into a wave of violence. Iran's actions are severely undermining peace and maritime security and are causing a global trade and energy crisis. The Iranian attacks are directly enabled by Russia.

Despite the current turmoil in the region, it is important to prevent the resumption of hostilities in Gaza. The ongoing international efforts to achieve lasting peace and security in the Middle East must not lose sight of a political perspective that addresses the security concerns and legitimate aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians. A just and lasting peace requires treating Gaza and the West Bank as a unified entity. We reiterate that a negotiated two-State solution, in accordance with internationally agreed parameters, as defined by Security Council resolutions and the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, remains the only viable path to lasting peace.

Mr. Brown II (Liberia): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this briefing. We begin by appreciating the important updates provided by the Deputy Special Coordinator and the High Representative for Gaza of the Board of Peace. We also wish to acknowledge the efforts of those working, often under immense strain, as we heard, for peace and to respond to the human suffering on the ground.

Despite our best impulses not to do so, today, as we have been asked, especially by the High Representative for Gaza of the Board of Peace, we dare to look ahead with hope. We meet at a moment that calls not for repetition but for clarity. At its core, this situation is not only political. It is human. It is about dignity under pressure, survival under uncertainty and hope under strain.

The principles that must guide us do not seem to be — or should not be — complicated. Civilians must be protected. The two-State solution has to be regarded as, and must remain, the only enduring path to true and sustainable peace. Trust must

be rebuilt. Humanitarian access must be ensured. Armed factions and non-State actors must be disarmed. The expansion of settlements must end. Violence — and that part of the world has had and continues to see enough of it — must not and cannot be normalized. These are not positions of convenience. For all of us, in everything we have heard, they must represent obligations of conscience.

Today we speak from experience, informed by the painful memory of having endured conflict ourselves. We know that societies can collapse in an instant but take generations to rebuild. We know that agreements without trust cannot and will not endure. And we know that true recovery requires healing not just for institutions, but for people. These are not abstract reflections. They are lessons written into our own history and experiences. And yet, we have learned an even harder truth. Humanitarian relief can sustain life, but only genuine political settlement can restore it. Relief keeps people alive, but only peace — real, negotiated, inclusive peace — allows them to live with dignity. This is why the absence of violence, as we continue to now see, must never be mistaken for the presence of peace.

The responsibility before the Council is not only to respond — and we must respond to the asks put to us by the High Representative for Gaza — but we also have a duty to remain consistent in upholding international law, in protecting civilians and in keeping space open for dialogue, even when progress is slow, imperfect or, as we have heard, fragile. For what is imperfect today can and may become essential tomorrow if we do not abandon it. Liberia therefore supports efforts that reduce suffering, build confidence and create the conditions in which political solutions can begin to truly take root. We say this not because it is easy — as we have heard, it is not — but rather because those efforts are necessary for peace.

Allow me to conclude with three reflections drawn from Liberia's own journey. We sit around this table as proof that recovery is possible when the world refuses to look away. Peace is not the absence of struggle. It is the triumph of humanity over the impulses that once divided us, however difficult it may seem.

Finally, this has been a long, drawn-out conflict. We have refused today to take the path of recounting all the statistics, because they are available to each of us to see. We do not want to bore those present with talk of the tragedy that we see and know of that is unfolding in that prolonged conflict. Therefore, we will spare everyone such talk. However, we do have one ask. Our tenure here is only for two years. This conflict, hopefully, will not outlast us in its current state and form. May we be the generation that answered suffering with solidarity and despair with the discipline of hope. That is the responsibility before us today, and that is the standard by which each of us around this table must be and will be remembered. Let us try to end this.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his detailed report on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in the context of the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). We also thank Mr. Nikolay Mladenov, High Representative for Gaza of the Board of Peace, for his briefing.

While the whole world is horrified by the aggression against Iran unleashed by the United States and Israel, which provoked destabilization in the Middle East and global markets, what is being undeservedly obscured is the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular in the West Bank. Taking advantage of the regional escalation, the Israeli authorities and settlers have redoubled their efforts to infringe upon the rights of Palestinians in the West Bank.

Since the start of the war, the number of roadblocks and checkpoints has increased by 80 per cent, and additional military contingents have been deployed in Palestinian lands. Forty hectares of land have been confiscated from local residents

and municipalities for military purposes. Since the start of the year, settlers have forced 1,500 residents out of the West Bank. As a result of the actions of radicals and security forces, 29 Palestinians were killed. Of particular concern is the increase in the number of weapons issued and weapons permits granted to settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem under the pretext of ensuring security, leading to a further escalation of the situation.

Israel is stepping up the pace of settlement construction and expanding the practice of land expropriation as part of a policy aimed at creating irreversible facts on the ground. Unprecedented decisions have been taken regarding the development of the E1 area and the revision of the legal status of Area A and Area B, in violation of the Oslo Accords, which were signed and ratified by Israel. As a result of the Israeli Operation Iron Wall, more than 33,000 Palestinian refugees were evicted from the camps in Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams. Half of the buildings there were demolished, calling into question the return of the Palestinians there in the future.

Barring Muslims from entering the Aqsa Mosque compound during the last days of the month of Ramadan under the pretext of security concerns constitutes a flagrant provocation and a true ordeal for Muslims. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was also closed to worshippers. We demand that Israel maintain the historical and legal status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem.

Against this backdrop, hate speech is flourishing. Social media accounts related to radicals are urging people not to miss the opportunity while the international community's attention is focused on Iran. In a video message recorded amid the demolition of the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem directly calls for the killing of all Agency staff, using religious views as a pretext. We categorically condemn such a statement and call on the Israeli authorities to take all measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

Unfortunately, such statements are not an exception but merely one manifestation of an aggressive, targeted campaign deployed by Israel against UNRWA. Since 7 October 2023, 391 UNRWA staff members have been killed. Agency buildings are being demolished; legislation has been enacted aimed at closing United Nations-supported schools and hospitals, as well as forcibly cutting off electricity and water supplies. In addition, an Anti-UNRWA disinformation campaign has been launched in the media.

Despite all of this, UNRWA continues to serve as the only entity providing comprehensive assistance to Palestinians both in the occupied Palestinian territories and in neighbouring Arab countries. The Agency provides shelter to refugees, delivers medical care, offers educational services and assists with essential goods and food.

The mandate of the Agency is of particular significance within the universally recognized international legal framework of the Middle East settlement, primarily in terms of delivering assistance to Palestinians and ensuring their protection until they exercise their right of return. We note that many UNRWA staff members have paid the ultimate price during the years of war in the Gaza Strip. We commend the efforts of UNRWA's leadership, including outgoing Commissioner-General Lazzarini. We call on donors to continue providing all possible assistance to the Agency, whose representatives acknowledged during a recent briefing that even regional escalation affects UNRWA less severely than its deteriorating financial situation.

At the same time, the Gaza Strip has once again found itself on the brink of disaster. Since the conditional ceasefire in Gaza was announced — 10 October 2025 — more than 650 Palestinians have been killed and approximately 1,700 wounded; the yellow line is gradually shifting westward and the territory that is not under Israeli

control is shrinking. According to available data, the incoming humanitarian aid has been reduced by 80 to 90 per cent. Only one crossing point, Kerem Shalom, is fully operational. Activities at the Rafah crossing were recently partially resumed for the movement of people. We are also witnessing a shortage of drinking water, food and medicines; and there are no prospects for the imminent start of the restoration of civilian infrastructure, as Israel is blocking the supply of construction materials. We call on West Jerusalem to ensure safe and unimpeded access in accordance with the established guiding principles.

Overall, we must acknowledge that we do not see signs of the implementation of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, endorsed by the adoption of resolution 2803 (2025). We realize that regional escalation is not conducive to creating favourable conditions for further steps towards deploying transitional structures in the enclave and forming the International Stabilization Force (ISF) in Gaza. At the same time, the lack of progress in implementing the Plan, including the lack of clarity regarding the ISF, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and the transfer of control to the Palestinian Authority, could lead to another round of armed conflict.

It is disappointing and perplexing that Ramallah has been excluded from the political peace process, its representatives were not invited to join the Board of Peace. It is equally discouraging to see the steps that are being taken to undermine the Palestinian Authority's position, such as Israel's withholding of \$4.5 billion in Palestinian tax revenues. All of this undermines the peace efforts of the United States. We call on mediators to make every possible effort to find a negotiated solution that takes into account the interests of all parties.

Russia's stance on the Palestinian-Israeli settlement is a matter of principle and is not subject to short-term shifts based on trends. We advocate for the resumption of the peace process on the universally recognized basis of international law, including the two-State solution, with the aim of establishing an independent and viable State of Palestine within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, coexisting in peace, safety and security with Israel.

With regard to the regional tensions, we call on the parties to immediately cease hostilities. Russia stands ready to facilitate finding ways to resolve the current escalation through political and diplomatic means.

Mrs. Balta (Greece): I would like to thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his thorough briefing. I welcome the High Representative for Gaza of the Board of Peace, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, to today's meeting, and I thank him for his very clear messages on the way ahead.

Turmoil has once again engulfed the Middle East, with Lebanon and the Gulf States being the starkest examples of the current conflict's spillover. Our unwavering support and solidarity go towards Lebanon and the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. The severity of the situation notwithstanding, we cannot afford to divert our focus from the Palestinian question, which requires our continued vigilance and attention.

Greece was among the first to support the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025), because we believed that the 20-point plan was the only way to stop the catastrophe. We see that the implementation of the first phase of the Plan has already yielded significant results. It allowed for the release of the Israeli hostages; for a ceasefire, which must be consolidated and sustained; as well as for humanitarian aid to flow into Gaza once more. It is imperative now that we collectively follow through on its implementation.

Hamas and armed groups must urgently and fully disarm. In that regard, I welcome Mr. Mladenov's call for full decommissioning. Humanitarian aid at scale must increase, and the implementation of early recovery projects in the entire Gaza Strip must follow.

On this point, I wish to highlight the added value of initiatives such as the Cyprus maritime humanitarian corridor, as well as the indispensable role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Reconstruction projects, at a later stage, should be clearly embedded in a political horizon leading to a two-State solution. Governance arrangements in Gaza must be legitimate and durable, and they must ensure full Palestinian ownership.

Having welcomed the nomination of a Palestinian National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, we stress that any transitional framework must ultimately lead to a strengthening of the role of the Palestinian Authority (PA). The PA is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Authorizing the International Stabilization Force and defining its operational mandate is another milestone along our path.

Amid rising challenges and additional restraints imposed on the flow of humanitarian aid, we welcome the reopening of the Rafah crossing, even if only partly restored, and the deployment of the European Union Border Assistance Mission for Rafah. We encourage the full reopening of additional crossings, which could greatly facilitate humanitarian access. Greece will allocate a substantial financial contribution towards hospital units in East Jerusalem, though the Palestinian-European Mechanism for Management of Socio-Economic Aid.

Let me turn to the deteriorating situation in the West Bank, as it is cause for grave concern. We oppose any plans to increase control over and annex parts of the West Bank. These include the construction of new settler units, especially in the E1 area, land confiscation, the demolition of Palestinian homes and forcible displacement of civilian populations. Such actions run against international law, contravene resolution 2334 (2016) and undermine the prospects of a negotiated two-State solution.

We strongly condemn the increasing and unprecedented settler violence targeting the Palestinian population, including Christian communities. The damage provoked by settler violence is also recognized by senior Israeli security officials. Civilians must be protected at all times and in accordance with international humanitarian law. The fact that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Aqsa Mosque remain inaccessible is highly concerning, in particular in view of major religious festivities such as the recent Eid-al-Fitr and the upcoming Easter celebrations. The preservation and respect of the status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem is of paramount importance.

As our Foreign Minister has stressed, Gaza and the West Bank are a single, indivisible territorial unit for a future Palestinian State. An empowered and reformed Palestinian Authority (PA) would be a credible partner for peace. We acknowledge the PA's ongoing reform efforts, including the drafting of a Palestinian Constitution. A fiscal collapse of the Palestinian Authority would have dire consequences reaching well beyond the West Bank and must be avoided at all costs. We therefore repeat our call for the release of its withheld tax revenues.

In closing, the Middle East peace question can be resolved only through dialogue and diplomacy. Greece will remain committed to a negotiated, just and lasting peace, based on the two-State solution, the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and the relevant Security Council resolutions, towards realizing a

vision in which Israel and a viable and sovereign Palestine coexist side by side in peace, mutual recognition and security.

Mrs. Zalabata Torres (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Special Coordinator, Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, and the High Representative for Gaza of the Board of Peace, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, for their briefings. I also welcome the delegations participating in this meeting.

Amid the serious escalation in violence that the region has been experiencing for the past 24 days, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continues to deteriorate. In the Gaza Strip, the Israeli Defense Forces have killed 651 Palestinians since the start of the ceasefire agreed in October. The delivery of humanitarian aid remains limited, and restrictions on the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and more than 37 humanitarian organizations persist. Furthermore, hunger, the cold and disease — a direct result of the conditions imposed by Israel as collective punishment against the Palestinians — have claimed hundreds more lives in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Israel persists in deepening its illegal occupation of the West Bank through a systematic campaign of organized violence. With utter disregard for the rulings of the International Court of Justice and the decisions of the Council, including resolution 2334 (2016) whose implementation we are considering today, Israel continues to consolidate its de facto annexation. So far this year alone, more than 1,500 Palestinians have been displaced in the West Bank. Restrictions on the freedom of movement of the Palestinian population have intensified; demolitions and evictions have become a daily occurrence; the Palestinian economy is on the brink of collapse; and incitement to hatred and violence from the highest levels of the Israeli political establishment has become a recurring theme. That hate speech translates into the alarming escalation in pogroms we have witnessed over the past four days throughout the West Bank. These events are neither isolated nor spontaneous; they demonstrate a deliberate policy by the Israeli authorities aimed at displacement and ethnic cleansing, a pattern that has been substantiated in United Nations reports.

Colombia is closely monitoring developments regarding the implementation of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and resolution 2803 (2025). Although my delegation acknowledges that some progress has been made, the reality on the ground remains worrisome. After more than five months, the ceasefire is becoming increasingly fragile, aid is not reaching the area on the scale required, reconstruction has not begun, the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza is facing constraints and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination seems to be an increasingly distant prospect.

In this context, Colombia reiterates four fundamental principles that must guide the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025): first, the central importance of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination; secondly, the inadmissibility of any demographic or territorial change; thirdly, the rejection of any form of apartheid, protectorate or external governance; and fourthly, the need to begin reconstruction immediately without conditions.

The war unleashed by Israel in the Middle East is yet another stage in the genocide against the Palestinian people. While the international community watches with alarm the unfolding of a conflict that jeopardizes international peace and security, the Netanyahu regime continues its campaign of forced displacement and ethnic cleansing. It is unrealistic to think that a just and sustainable peace will be achieved while the expansionist and genocidal project that threatens the region's stability persists. A return to the law of the jungle will not make the world safer for anyone. On the contrary, it will perpetuate cycles of violence for decades to come.

The only possible way forward is an end to the occupation and the implementation of the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side within recognized borders, with full respect for the political independence and territorial integrity of the State of Palestine, Israel and all countries in the region. In this context, Colombia calls on the Council and the United Nations to promote without delay an inclusive dialogue process that will pave the way for a comprehensive, just and sustainable political solution in the Middle East.

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

In that regard, I want to thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov and High Representative Mladenov for their briefings today. We are genuinely very grateful for their partnership and for their candor before the Security Council.

President Trump's 20-point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict has charted the way forward for all of us who long for peace in the Middle East. And as we said as we were negotiating resolution 2803 (2025), we have two choices. Choice one: Hamas continues to rain its terror on the Palestinian people of Gaza and export its terror for more 7 Octobers as it repeatedly pledged to do. That is choice one. Choice two is the Israel Defense Forces continue to defend themselves and occupy Gaza. Or we chart a new way forward together.

Resolution 2803 (2025), which I will remind everyone was unopposed in the Council, that then set forth the Board of Peace, the international stabilization force, the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza and the funding mechanisms to pay for those operations and reconstruction, is the answer that the people of the members of the Council and the American people have hoped for: a stable, safe and prosperous region so that we do not pass this cycle of violence, the status quo that has led us nowhere, on to the next generation.

The United States and our partners have made substantial progress leading the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) since it was adopted in November. Over the past five months, humanitarian assistance has surged into Gaza, and every single Israeli hostage — both living and sadly deceased — has returned home. For the first time in many, many years, Hamas no longer holds hostages in its terror tunnels.

Together with Israel and our partner nations — and I will point out that we have more than 30 countries, plus the world's humanitarian implementers, coordinating with us in the Civil-Military Coordination Center — through coordination, we have enabled the entry of more than 4,000 trucks of humanitarian and other critical goods each week for the past 16 weeks. Yes, those numbers have reduced recently, but we should not ignore in the Council the incredible amount of assistance that has moved into Gaza. Food assistance reached 2.1 million people in January, which is 100 per cent of the population. The Rafah crossing reopened and the Allenby Bridge/Hussein Bridge also reopened. Important lifelines for medical evacuations restarted.

Absolutely more work is needed. We have a long way to go. Those who live in the region need cleaner, more durable housing and health services. We are working daily with our Israeli counterparts and other partners across this body to strengthen humanitarian access into and inside of Gaza.

I will remind the Council that the terror tunnels, Hamas' terror tunnels, miles and miles and miles of them, were built with the concrete, with the steel, with the other construction materials that could have and should have been used to improve the lives of Gazans. But instead, Hamas chose to use those then dual-use items to terrorize its own people and to conduct the 7 October 2023 attacks.

Nonetheless, last month, during the inaugural meeting of the Board of Peace, President Trump announced that Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Qatar pledged more than \$7 billion in support. That is an incredible sum. It eclipses almost anything else we have seen in the world for this effort. More than 40 delegations attended to offer their support to bring peace and prosperity to the people of Gaza.

This is real money, real effort towards a better life for Gazans, and on behalf of the United States, on behalf of the President, I want to thank these countries for their commitment. They are doing much more than issuing speeches or statements along the lines of what should be done. They are contributing real effort, real money, and it will enable the Board of Peace and the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG) to keep working hard on its objectives: a better future for Gaza and a lasting peace. Gaza's reconstruction and its future require our collective efforts and the Council's leadership. That illustrates a simple, hopeful truth. It should serve as a model for all Member States intent on peace. It should serve as a model for bold leadership that can play a meaningful role in forging peace and security.

A key leader now among us, Mr. Ali Shaath, at the NCAG, is laying the groundwork to restore Gaza's core public services and rebuild its civil institutions. His mandate is enormous. It is to make Gaza great. As the NCAG begins its work, including overseeing the recruitment and training of thousands and thousands of Gazan police officers, who are free of Hamas, we cannot understate the overwhelming response, as Mr. Mladenov briefed today, of Gazans who are willing to restore the rule of law for their own people. The response has been tremendous, and under the oversight of the Board of Peace, the NCAG will position Gaza's economy for long-term success.

We have to move Gaza beyond 100 per cent dependency on aid. We know that with this plan, if we can all come together to implement it, that Gaza can become a destination for investment and real growth and change this culture of dependency and this absolute dependency on humanitarian aid that it currently endures.

All of this is tremendous progress, compared to six months ago, when we were at the Council demanding a ceasefire, demanding the return of hostages, demanding access of humanitarian aid, demanding restoration of services. Have we made the progress as quickly as some have demanded here in their speeches today? No, but have we made tremendous progress compared to where we were just a few months ago? Absolutely, and I would hope that back in our capitals and here in this body, we could recognize this.

Here is another hard truth, the future of Gaza and Mr. Shaath's work and the NCAG's work is entirely dependent now on Hamas decommissioning its weapons. The Palestinians of Gaza must be freed from the butchers and barbarians that have long oppressed them with guns and drones and bombs and tunnels. We truly stand at an inflection point now. I have outlined the progress that we have made, but this is the obstacle. We are calling on the international community to unite, to recognize Hamas for the terrorist group that it is, to pressure Hamas and aid the Board of Peace and support these entities that we have now, as a body, endorsed to put in place and to become partners in disarming Hamas. It is now or never.

President Trump has said that Hamas will disarm, one way or another. They will do it the easy way, or they will do it the hard way. Let us work together collectively to push Hamas to do the right thing and take a step towards a brighter future.

High Representative Mladenov just laid out the principles and the framework for a decommissioning plan and for the demilitarization of Gaza. I hope we will hear public support for this plan, endorsed by the mediators from capitals and from

countries going forward. It is the only way forward. When we realize that future, when Hamas lays down its arms, we can see the people of Gaza pick up shovels and construction equipment and the things necessary to finally begin rebuilding and to build a future for Gaza that is unrivalled in history.

Council members, we must seize this moment for what it is and pressure Hamas to immediately disarm for the sake of lasting peace. Anything short of that mark — the full demilitarization of Gaza — undermines Gaza's recovery, undermines Israel's security and undermines stability for the region. And to that end, I would like to remind everyone in this Chamber that the American people care for stability and prosperity in Gaza and the West Bank alike. President Trump has been clear: the United States is opposed to the annexation of the West Bank, period.

Let us all give our full support to the institutions established by this Committee, to the Board of Peace, to the International Stabilization Force and to the NCAG so as to ensure the swift and successful triumph of President Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict for the sake of our children.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (State of Palestine): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council and to commend your personal engagement in addressing the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. Allow me also to express our appreciation to Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov for his relentless efforts, for the United Nations critical role on the ground and for delivering the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the key resolution, resolution 2334 (2016), which is the subject of our discussion today. Allow me also to thank Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, a person whom I have known for a long time, for his briefing and his efforts. We have worked together for a long time, as he said, in different capacities. And we, the State of Palestine, look forward to working closely with him in addressing the dramatic situation still prevailing in the Gaza Strip, including through the newly established Liaison Office between the Palestinian Authority and the Board of Peace. They are waiting for him to begin the practical steps for collaboration in this regard.

Palestinian lives are not expendable, and Palestinian land is not up for grabs. On Saturday 14 March, Waad Bani Odeh, a 35-year-old mother, made breakfast for Othman, a special-needs child, who was born blind. As the month of Ramadan was coming to an end, Khaled and his brothers, Mustafa and Mohammed, got up in the morning and played with a cell phone. Their father, Ali, had planned to spend time with his wife and children until after Eid al-Fitr, which was starting that weekend, before returning to work in Israel. The whole family gathered around to play with Lego in the afternoon. Waad prepared iftar. The father and sons went to the mosque for evening prayers. That night, they decided to head to Nablus, where they went to a shopping mall ahead of Eid to buy clothes for the children. They headed to Nablus from Tammum — some Council members have referred to that town close to Jenin. They ate some ice cream and headed home.

That was when the Eid preparations outing turned to tragedy. The car came under heavy fire, with 50 to 70 rounds of bullets from an undercover Israeli force with no warning or justification — just another episode in a relentless killing spree, sparing no one in cities and villages across the West Bank. Othman, the 7-year-old blind boy was sitting in his mother's lap in the front. They were both killed instantly. The father, Ali, would have the time to pronounce a prayer before dying. Mohammed, the five-year-old, would also be found dead in the car. Khaled, 11 years of age, stepped out of the car only to be grabbed and knocked down to the ground by the

Israeli occupation forces, who were celebrating and saying, “We killed the dogs.” Khaled asked the soldier, “Do you love your father and mother?” The soldier said, “Yes”. So, Khaled asked him, “Then why did you kill mine?” The soldier answered with a punch to his face. Khaled’s brother, Mustafa, 8 years old, survived with a wound from shrapnel that struck his face below his right eye.

A mother, a father and their two sons were killed, while their other two sons survived, traumatized for life, and not a single Israeli soldier was summoned for interrogation or held accountable — a pattern not of impunity, but of shielding, promoting and rewarding criminality. This past November, officers from the same unit were filmed executing two Palestinians in the West Bank city of Jenin after they had surrendered. The following day, the extremist National Security Minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, announced that he would promote the unit’s commander.

But Ben-Gvir is not the exception; this is a trend endorsed by the Israeli Government as a whole. Israel’s military has dropped the charges against five soldiers responsible for the violent rape of a Palestinian man in custody in Sde Teiman, in a notorious and nefarious case. The rape was filmed and the recording leaked by the chief military prosecutor. In Israel, there was considerable controversy about the leak, but far less about the horrific rape itself. In a statement, Israel’s Defence Minister, Israel Katz, welcomed a decision by the military’s top prosecutors to drop the charges, declaring, “Justice has been served”. Smotrich declared, “IDF fighters are the bravest and most moral warriors”. This was obvious to anyone who had seen the recording and the cowardly and vile act of raping a Palestinian prisoner. Netanyahu himself declared, “It is unacceptable that it took so long to close the criminally conducted case against IDF fighters, who are confronting the worst of our enemies”. And he added that the State of Israel must prosecute its enemies, not its heroic fighters. Indeed, what a display of heroism — State-condoned rape as a weapon of war.

Indiscriminate violence; the killing of entire families; a shoot-to-kill policy against innocent civilians, against children, who are shot in the head or in the chest; wanton destruction; rape and sexual assault — all these horrors that Gaza witnessed are more and more prevalent in Israeli prisons, where more than 350 Palestinian children are held, and in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. It is terrifying violence, unhinged and unleashed by Israeli occupation forces and Israeli settlers.

As we speak, settlers are spreading terror across communities throughout the West Bank, setting houses and trees ablaze and killing, wounding and beating Palestinians. They are terrorizing Palestinian communities in order to uproot them. Their attacks are a direct result of State-sponsored violence, incitement and impunity and would not be possible without the complicity of Israeli occupation forces and the Israeli Government. As many speakers have said, without accountability, these attacks will continue.

There is no distinction between the project of the Israeli Government and the project of Israeli settlers. They are one and the same: the annexation of Palestinian land and the displacement of the Palestinian people. Annexation is under way, despite worldwide condemnation by all Council members and by President Trump, and despite the clear opposition expressed, again, by President Trump. It has accelerated through the legislative and administrative measures adopted recently by Israel. It is evident on the ground.

We all agree here that annexation threatens all prospects and efforts for peace in our region. Annexation is a breach of the Charter of the United Nations, of Council resolutions and of the most fundamental rules of international law. Just outside this Chamber, more than 100 States and organizations have opposed these measures towards annexation. Council members have spoken out against it. And yet, it is under

way. Worldwide condemnation must translate into resolute action to stop it, and to stop it now.

Addressing the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza would take years if there were no blockade and no closure, given the mass indiscriminate bombardments that left so many killed, wounded, amputated, displaced and traumatized and that left the entire Gaza Strip in ruins. It cannot be addressed while the killing continues and severe restrictions on movement and access continue to be implemented, including measures against the United Nations and humanitarian organizations and their vital work. The Israeli blockade is compromising humanitarian and relief operations, the removal of debris and the provision of desperately needed shelters and aid. We must move in parallel and without delay towards relief, recovery and reconstruction in the Gaza Strip and towards reunifying the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the Palestinian Authority, with one Government, one law, one gun.

It is precisely to facilitate annexation and forced displacement and to destroy Palestinian presence and statehood that Israel is targeting both communities and the Palestinian Authority itself. Israel is attacking it militarily, politically and financially by stealing tax revenues, as many speakers have mentioned. Israeli Minister of Finance Smotrich, who is in charge of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, spelled it out in no unclear terms: “We are going to collapse the authority of evil and terror called the Palestinian Authority”.

Israel must abandon its plans to annex more than half of Gaza and more than half of the West Bank and to displace the Palestinian population. The Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, constitute a single territorial unit. It is Palestinian land. It is not for sale. It is not up for grabs by anyone. It is ours. At the heart of President Donald J. Trump’s Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, there were a number of cardinal principles: no bloodshed, no starvation, no occupation, no annexation and no forcible displacement. Those are great cardinal principles that all support and should support, and Israel should restrain itself from committing those acts and should respect the disposition by all of us, including President Trump. It is those principles that secured the very wide support from Palestine, the Arab countries and countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as the world for President Trump’s peace efforts and plan. They must be upheld. We will continue working with the United States Administration and with regional and international partners to chart a path towards liberation for Palestine and peace for the region.

For the first time this Ramadan and Eid, worshippers were kept away from Haram al-Sharif and from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in yet another blatant breach of the historic status quo that has preserved religious rights and coexistence in Jerusalem, a city that is holy for the three monotheistic religions. There is no monopoly that is acceptable over the city of Jerusalem, no exclusivity or exclusion that can be condoned. Billions of Christians, Muslims and Jews have the right to have a spiritual connection to Jerusalem, but those who own Jerusalem and its houses and properties are the people of Jerusalem — the Palestinian people. Christian and Muslim Palestinians, sons and daughters of the Holy Land, must see their rights recognized and respected, and East Jerusalem is an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and of the Palestinian State.

Under the fog of the current war, Israel is intensifying its assault on our people. If there is one lesson that must be understood in the Middle East, it is that violence, dispossession and displacement will never yield peace. Only freedom and justice will. Israel’s colonial expansionist policies, annexation and occupation, which we are witnessing in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, must be brought to an immediate end. The unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of our States must be respected.

Civilians must be protected. International law must be respected. And since I am speaking of the current war, let me state that the same principles apply to it. The Palestinian leadership has called for a peaceful settlement of the conflict and de-escalation and has condemned the attacks by Iran against Arab and Muslim brotherly nations. Those attacks are unjustified and unacceptable.

This is about oppression, not religion, and the religious narrative used by Israel to justify the perpetuation of its colonial occupation and its negation of Palestinian existence and rights will inflame the region. There is an urgent need for de-radicalization and for an end to the incitement and hate speech by Israeli officials that underlie the horrific attacks by Israeli occupation forces and settlers that I described.

The Palestinian people are entitled to freedom, like every country represented here, and all States should live side by side in peace and security, within their internationally recognized borders, based on the United Nations Charter, international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Arab States have made a proposal for regional peace — the Arab Peace Initiative — and it should be heeded by all to transform our region, moving away from perpetual war towards sustainable peace and shared prosperity. This is the only way forward for our region and for the world.

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

Mr. Danon (Israel): First, I would like to thank Mr. Alakbarov and Mr. Mladenov for their briefings and to wish Mr. Mladenov good luck in his important mission.

We have said it before, and we will continue to say it: in Gaza, Hamas must be disarmed. They have not done so yet. Israel fully supports President Trump's twenty-point peace plan — the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict — and resolution 2803 (2025), and we continue to meet our obligations under the second phase. But that process cannot move forward while Hamas remains armed.

And let me be clear, the fact that we are acting forcefully against Iran and Hizbullah does not mean that we are any less focused on Gaza. The opposite is true. In Gaza, we are confronting the same radical extremist ideology, one that hides behind civilians, uses them as human shields and turns homes, schools and hospitals into instruments of war. It is the same fight, the same tactics.

For too long, we have dealt with the symptoms. Now we are dealing with the real source, Iran. Let us, therefore, be clear. This conflict with the Islamic Republic of Iran did not start three weeks ago. It was built over decades. The Iranian regime armed proxies like Hamas, funded terror and prepared for this moment. And now we are dismantling it.

Together with our American allies, Israel has carried out over 8,500 strikes, targeting missile launchers, weapons production facilities, and command centres. We have destroyed key elements of the regime's command structure. We have eliminated the figures driving this aggression.

We tried diplomacy for years. The Council knows that. The Council invested in negotiations, dialogue, agreements and monitoring frameworks. And the regime exploited such efforts — delaying, deceiving and advancing its capabilities deep within underground mountains. It always claimed peaceful intent. It claimed it was not seeking nuclear weapons. Those claims have not matched its actions.

Just a few weeks ago, Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, was asked in an interview directly — not two years ago, a few weeks ago — whether Iran had missiles with a range beyond 2,000 kilometres. He answered,

“we do not have those. We have intentionally kept the range of our missiles below 2,000 kilometres, so we do not have that capability. And we do not want to do that because we do not harbour any hostility whatsoever against the people of the United States or Europe.”

That is what he told the world. And then, last weekend, Iran launched missiles nearly 4,000 kilometres towards Diego Garcia, a remote island in the Indian Ocean that hosts a major joint United States–United Kingdom military base — double the range they claimed. That range reaches Paris, London, Athens, Copenhagen and Riga. The capitals of Council members are within reach. And if the range has doubled once, it can double again — from 4,000 to 8,000 kilometres. That would make it capable of striking deep into the heart of the United States. The regime has the capability. It has demonstrated it, and it is prepared to use it. No one is immune. No one is out of reach.

Now the regime is trying to blackmail the international community. It will not work, and we cannot allow it to work. Today, these missiles carry conventional warheads. Imagine what they could do if they had nuclear ones.

There is a cost to this operation for Israelis, for our neighbours across the Gulf and for the Iranian people. It is not a cost we ignore, but it is a cost we cannot afford to avoid, because the threat we are facing is existential. For weeks, Israelis have lived in and out of bomb shelters, day after day, under Iranian missile fire. Just this weekend, Iranian missiles struck civilian areas in Arad and Dimona. This is the intent of the regime: to cause bloodshed, to kill and to destroy our people.

But Iran is not just targeting Jews. In Bayt Awwa, near Hebron, four Palestinian women were killed in a beauty salon, struck by falling shrapnel from an Iranian missile. This regime does not discriminate. Some today have mentioned the holy sites in Jerusalem, but we have imposed restrictions because it is dangerous. Just imagine having thousands of worshippers — Jews, Muslims and Christians — together in the Old City? Iran even fired toward- the holiest sites of the three religions in Jerusalem: the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Temple Mount. Thank God, no one was killed. But the intent was clear. They targeted the Old City of Jerusalem. This regime will stop at nothing.

Iranians themselves are paying the price. More than 30,000 protesters were killed in the course of two days in January. Executions are still happening. Just days ago, three young men were executed. Make no mistake, the regime is weakening. We are hollowing out its leadership structure. We are creating the conditions for the Iranian people to rise and reclaim their future.

When one deals with this kind of evil, this sort of radical extremist ideology, one can try to trim it. And we know this. We have tried it with Hamas in the past. One can try to trim it from above or one can uproot it. Uprooting is a great deal harder than simply trimming, but it is the only way to actually get rid of it because if one only cuts it back, like weeds, we know what happens: it grows back stronger, desperate and more dangerous.

That brings me to Lebanon. For decades we were told, even in this very Chamber: just trim the weeds from above, live with Hizbullah, contain it. Let us do another ceasefire. Let us give diplomacy a chance. In 1993, in 1996, in 2000, in 2006, in 2023 and again, in the ceasefire of November 2024, we were told the same thing: step back, let diplomacy work, let the Lebanese Government take control. Many in the international community warned against escalation. They called for immediate ceasefires and space for diplomacy. And we listened, we agreed and we came to the table.

And what happened? Hizbullah is still there. It filled the vacuum, rebuilt, rearmed and entrenched itself deeper. On 2 March, it attacked us again. We had a ceasefire as recently as November 2024, but nothing happened. Hizbullah decided that it wanted to avenge the death of the Iranian regime's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. It did not consult with the Lebanese Government or the Lebanese people. That was it. All it took was one phone call from Tehran and they fired rockets, unmanned aerial vehicles and missiles at our people.

Since 3 March, more than 920 launches have come from south of the Litani River alone. And I remind the Council that, under resolution 1701 (2006), that number should be 0. They should not be there. The Lebanese Government has failed. Despite its declarations, despite the fact that it expelled the Iranian Ambassador today and despite everything it says, Hizbullah continues to operate freely south of the Litani River, threatening our communities. Residents of northern Israel have been under constant attack. Just hours ago, before we started this debate, Hizbullah fired 38 rockets into northern Israel. One woman was killed; two others were wounded. Council members do not hear about it. This is happening now, as we speak. Lebanon is being dragged into a conflict it did not choose. We want a peaceful future for Lebanon but that cannot exist while Hizbullah holds it hostage.

Let me share with Council members the reality we are facing on the ground in Israel today. When Hizbullah launches one of their rockets — and it happens almost every day — this is what Israelis hear:

An audio recording was played in the Chamber.

When they hear this siren, they have 15 seconds to seek shelter. Think about what that means for one moment — 15 seconds. Imagine being at home with three children. Which one would Council members take with them first? Would they go back for the others? Would they carry their elderly parents? What if Council members were outside now? 15 seconds — that is it. That is our reality. On many occasions, it is not long enough. Yaron and Ilana Moshe, an elderly couple in their seventies, heard that siren last week. They followed the instructions. They rushed towards the bomb shelter, but the missile struck before they could get there. They were just metres away. Their bodies were found together, with a walker beside them.

Yet still we are told by some who have concerns about our operation in Lebanon to stop, to have a ceasefire, to give diplomacy another chance. We have, and every time it has failed, not because of escalation but because, even in times of calm, Hizbullah rebuilt. Where does that leave us today? We cannot return to temporary solutions that guarantee future wars. We have come too far. We will ensure that Iran's terrorist proxies stop firing at our people.

We do not seek endless conflict with Lebanon. We do not want to live under constant threat. We want a different future — a stable Middle East, a peaceful Middle East, one where countries build partnerships, not proxies, where people live without fear, where alliances replace terror. That is what we are working towards. But until we get there, this is the reality. Israel reaches forward with both hands: one extended to moderate, peace-seeking partners in our region and the other hammering the Iranian regime and its terrorist proxies.

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

Mr. Koudri (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is an honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The Security Council meets today not merely to take stock of the loss but also to heed the call for justice, which is being put to the test before the eyes of the world. We are discussing the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the

implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) at a critical juncture, in which geography and conscience intersect and international legitimacy hangs in the balance. The question arises as to whether the resolutions we draft are still capable of safeguarding what remains of hope. What we are witnessing is not merely an incidental breach of a resolution; it represents instead a systematic undermining of our collective will and blatant disregard for the credibility of the Council, in a flagrant challenge to our shared resolve. The Israeli occupying authorities persist in a policy that casts the provisions of international law aside and eviscerates resolution 2334 (2016) by entrenching the reality of the settlements, which expand relentlessly, and by forcibly uprooting Palestinians from their land, reducing them to mere witnesses to the gradual erasure of their memories and identity.

Hostile statements calling for the elimination of the Palestinian Authority are on the rise among officials of the occupying authorities — a state of affairs that lays bare a dangerous intent to undermine all political prospects for a just solution. For any assault upon the Palestinian Authority entails not only weakening an institution but also undermining the very foundation upon which an envisioned Palestinian State might be built. Amid this escalation, settlement activity proceeds apace, accompanied by a perilous upsurge in acts of settler terrorism, which is now being perpetrated on an almost daily basis in a climate of blatant impunity. In that daily spectacle of systematic intimidation, Palestinians have become strangers in their own land and witnesses to the daily attempts to extinguish their very existence on their own soil. These policies render the realization of the two-State solution — a goal that was endorsed by international legitimacy — remoter by the day and ever elusive. The Arab Group therefore underscores that it is paramount to preserve the Palestinian Authority and empower it with the necessary means to perform its duties, serve as the mainstay of any serious political process and guarantee a modicum of stability.

In Jerusalem, it is not merely gates that are being shut; hope itself is under lock and key. Worshipers and visitors remain barred from the blessed Aqsa Mosque — the noble sanctuary — and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre — a development unprecedented in history, even during the darkest of times. In that place, where worship was once a guaranteed right, faith is now being confined before it can even find expression. The Arab Group condemns in the strongest of terms the occupying authorities' continued closure of the gates to Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the prevention of worshippers from performing their religious rites. These measures constitute a flagrant violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, an unprecedented affront to Muslims and Christians worldwide and a curtailment of freedom of worship and unrestricted access to the holy sites. Accordingly, the Arab Group calls upon the international community, including the Security Council, to shoulder its responsibilities and take a firm stance so as to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to put an end to these violations. Furthermore, the Group emphasizes the need to respect the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem, safeguard the sanctity of Islamic and Christian holy sites and preserve their Arab, Islamic and Christian identity.

While the suffering in the West Bank takes the form of silent erosion, Gaza bleeds out loud despite the hope that emerged after the ceasefire was announced. That hope is fading by the day in the face of continued violations, as the occupying Power continues to breach its obligations in a pattern of blatant disregard for agreements concluded and international efforts. The death toll since 10 October has reached 687, while the number of injured stands at 1,849. These figures are not merely statistics but represent lives cut short and families devastated. This clear breach must not go unchallenged, nor should it be met with silence, which could be interpreted as acceptance of the status quo. There has recently been a sharp decline in the movement of humanitarian trucks, at a time when needs are mounting, livelihoods are dwindling,

and the return of displaced refugees to Gaza faces restrictions and measures that hinder it, in flagrant violation of the agreements. Conversely, despite international pledges, no significant progress has been made on reconstruction efforts, leaving the destruction untouched — a testament to the gap between words and deeds and a constant reminder of the impotence of our international Organization.

The Arab Group affirms that the West Bank, including Al Quds Al Sharif, and the Gaza Strip constitute a complete geographical and political entity and an integral part of the Palestinian body. The cause cannot be fragmented, and its elements cannot be torn asunder, for rights are indivisible, and justice cannot be divided. We therefore reiterate that a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian cause cannot be achieved without empowering the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and to the independence of their State within the borders of 4 June 1967, with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital.

Palestine remains more than a cause. It is an ongoing test of the world's conscience. As meeting after meeting is held and statements are drafted, the question remains unanswered: what will the Council do? And does it have the ability to change the course of events?

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.