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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Waltz/Ms. Bruce.....	(United States of America)
<i>Members:</i>	Bahrain	Ms. Nancy Abdulla
	China	Mr. Sun Lei
	Colombia	Ms. Solano Ramirez
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mrs. Kabengele Lukundula
	Denmark	Ms. Lassen
	France	Mr. Bonnafont
	Greece.....	Mrs. Balta
	Latvia.....	Ms. Pavļuta-Deslandes
	Liberia	Mr. Jappah
	Pakistan.....	Mr. Ahmad
	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

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Indonesia, Israel, Lebanon and Poland 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. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations; and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix: The situation has dangerously deteriorated with the ongoing escalation between Hizbullah and Israel, across the Blue Line and beyond; ongoing ground advances by the Israel Defense Forces, extending up to 11 kilometres, amid fierce clashes with Hizbullah; and unprecedented levels of airborne exchanges. The Israel Defense Forces are in control of substantial areas immediately north of the Blue Line. The civilian suffering from the hostilities continues to mount.

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), on the ground carrying out its mission given by the Council, has now also suffered fatalities. The Secretary-General has strongly condemned the two abhorrent incidents that led to the deaths of three of our peacekeepers in 24 hours and the serious injury of several others. Yesterday morning, two Indonesian peacekeepers lost their lives in an explosion that destroyed their vehicle, near Bani Hayyan in Sector East. Two more peacekeepers were injured, one seriously. Initial findings point to a roadside explosion striking the convoy. The previous day, that is 29 March, a peacekeeper, also of the Indonesian contingent, was killed in an explosion inside a UNIFIL base in Taybah in Sector East. Another peacekeeper was critically wounded and was evacuated to a hospital in Beirut. According to an initial assessment, the explosion was caused by a projectile that hit the base.

These tragic developments should not have happened. I express my deepest condolences to the families of the fallen peacekeepers and the Government of Indonesia. I also wish a full recovery to those injured. UNIFIL is conducting investigations to determine the circumstances of these reprehensible developments.

These are sadly not the only dangerous incidents faced by UNIFIL's courageous peacekeepers. There has been a worrisome increase in denials of freedom of movement and aggressive behaviour.

On 28 March, the Israel Defense Forces, at a newly established checkpoint on the coastal road, 4 kilometres north of UNIFIL's Naqurah headquarters, fired warning shots at a UNIFIL patrol. The rear UNIFIL vehicle was struck by one round. On the patrol's return, an Israel Defense Forces tank at the same checkpoint fired a main armament round, which struck 15 metres from the UNIFIL vehicle, causing a puncture.

On 30 March, a UNIFIL patrol near Dayr Qanun al-Nahr in Sector West was subjected to heavy small arms fire from a group of approximately 20 individuals

blocking the road. An explosion next to the patrol vehicles was also reported. The patrol returned fire and disengaged, returning to Naqurah headquarters.

Thankfully, these attacks did not lead to injuries.

We say it clearly, and there has been a need to say it far too often: peacekeepers must never be a target. All acts that endanger peacekeepers must immediately stop. All actors must adhere to their obligations to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers at all times. The inviolability of United Nations installations must be respected.

I wish to acknowledge and applaud the extraordinary commitment and courage of the women and men of UNIFIL implementing Security Council mandate tasks in these extremely dangerous conditions, as far as the security circumstances allow. I express my deepest gratitude to them.

Since Hizbullah on 2 March claimed an attack on Israel, the group has conducted daily strikes, including with rockets, missiles and drones, on targets in Israel and the occupied Syrian Golan. UNIFIL continues to report hundreds of launches from the mission's area of operations, which demonstrates the presence of unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons south of the Litani River, in clear violation of resolution 1701 (2006).

As reported earlier, the Israel Defense Forces have issued displacement orders for the entire UNIFIL area of operations and continue to conduct intensified daily strikes, also in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Politicians in Israel now openly speak of the intention of an extended so-called security or buffer zone, with the destruction of villages along the Blue Line and several bridges across the Litani River.

In the past week only, thousands of trajectories were observed in both directions, as well as attacks by fighter aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles.

The Israel Defense Forces are advancing deeper into Lebanon and clashes have been observed, including in very close proximity to UNIFIL headquarters in Naqurah, which has been the object of multiple impacts.

The Lebanese Armed Forces, despite staying out of the conflict, have suffered casualties. On Monday, one Lebanese Armed Forces soldier was killed and several others injured at their checkpoint on the road between Naqurah and Tyre.

Faced with immense pressure, including intensified exchanges of fire, direct attacks, obstructions of movement and resupply, UNIFIL continuously reassesses the Force's posture to mitigate risks, strengthening force protection, reducing footprint and adjusting operational activities.

UNIFIL continues constant contact with the parties to avoid misunderstandings, de-conflict and de-escalate where possible. UNIFIL's current focus includes ensuring the safety of its personnel and helping facilitate humanitarian access to affected communities in the area. Peacekeepers, in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, have delivered essential supplies — including food, medicine and hygiene kits — to civilians who remain living in precarious conditions in hard-to-reach areas near the Blue Line.

As UNIFIL continues to face these extreme challenges amid continuing intensified hostilities, our efforts to support the parties to fully implement resolution 1701 (2006) are critical. In this exceptionally dangerous period, the Council's strong and unified backing for UNIFIL and its peacekeepers is not merely important, it is indispensable. The women and men serving under this mandate, the mandate established by the Security Council, must know that the Council stands firmly behind them. We are sincerely grateful to the troop-contributing countries that remain united and committed to UNIFIL and the implementation of its mandate.

Only the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) by both parties will enable a long-term solution to the conflict. We urge all parties to recommit to the resolution and work meaningfully towards that end.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Khiari.

Mr. Khiari: Amid the wider escalation across the Middle East, the situation in Lebanon continues to deteriorate drastically. Since the most recent emergency meeting of the Security Council on Lebanon (see S/PV.10118) on 11 March and the closed consultations held on 17 March, Hizbullah and Israel have both expanded the scale and scope of their military operations, with heavy exchanges of fire across the Blue Line, strikes across Lebanon and intensified clashes, amid an increased deployment of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) deeper inside Lebanon. This is taking a devastating toll on civilians and civilian infrastructure, particularly in Lebanon.

As of 30 March, the Lebanese authorities report that more than 1,240 people have been killed and 3,680 wounded. More than 1.1 million people have been displaced. The World Health Organization has also documented numerous attacks on healthcare since early March, resulting in deaths and injuries among medical personnel. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator will provide further details. Schools have been heavily affected, and three journalists were reportedly killed in a recent strike. Several bridges over the Litani River have been destroyed, which the IDF alleges were used by Hizbullah for transporting weapons and fighters.

In northern Israel, fatalities, destruction, displacement and widespread panic have returned.

On 29 March, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu announced, “the expansion of the security buffer zone in order to permanently neutralize the threat of invasion and to push anti-tank missile fire away from northern Israel”. This follows the 24 March announcement by Israeli Defense Minister Katz declaring Israel’s intention to control a so-called “security zone” in southern Lebanon up to the Litani River until the threat of Hizbullah is removed.

The Lebanese Government has repeatedly condemned Israel’s continued violations of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity. President Aoun has reaffirmed Lebanon’s readiness to engage in direct negotiations with Israel under international auspices. While the Lebanese Government has taken commendable steps to address non-State arms, two things are true at once: the Government needs time and space not under fire to implement its decisions. And, more assertive actions, extending beyond the military realm, are needed to bring a State monopoly on arms into being.

But Hizbullah not only blatantly rejects the decisions by the Lebanese Government, but also actively defies them. As well as rejecting the Government’s decision to outlaw its activities, Hizbullah has made its capacity to undermine civil coexistence abundantly clear. This is dangerous rhetoric when civil tensions are on the rise in Lebanon. Nonetheless, Lebanese authorities have asserted that, while they are not calling for a confrontation with Hizbullah, they intend to persevere with their plans to extend State authority across the country and have urged the group to respect government decisions.

The United Nations continues to call on all sides to avail themselves of diplomatic channels, stop the hostilities and recommit to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

The United Nations has been exercising its good offices at all levels, including through the Special Coordinator for Lebanon, calling for de-escalation, respect for international law, the protection of civilians and an immediate cessation of hostilities.

There is no military solution. Only diplomacy, dialogue and the full implementation of the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions can lead to sustainable peace for all. This is a pathway to spare communities on both sides of the Blue Line more needless suffering.

The President: I thank Mr. Khiari for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fletcher.

Mr. Fletcher: I appreciate the opportunity to brief the Council from Beirut, where I arrived last night to find anxiety, tension and despondency at levels I have not witnessed in many years working in and on Lebanon.

The gravity of this moment, as described by my colleagues, was forefront in my meetings today with President Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, and I will discuss the moment further with Speaker Berri tomorrow. I have heard again in my meetings the courageous call for dialogue with Israel, for the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), and for full State authority over arms.

Yet, even now, the sounds of the airstrikes in the Beirut suburbs, not far from here, can be heard, and the hum of drones has been constant.

As Council members heard from Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Assistant Secretary-General Khiari, today's discussion is therefore urgent. The situation on both sides of the Blue Line demands not only the Council's closest attention, but also its collective action to avert an even worse crisis. I join my colleagues in mourning the recent deaths of three United Nations peacekeepers.

Since I most recently briefed the Council on 11 March (see S/PV.10118), the humanitarian consequences of this most recent regional escalation have grown even more acute across Lebanon. Over the past four weeks, more than 1,240 people have been killed, including 87 women and 124 children. Approximately 52 first responders are among those killed. Another 3,500 people have been injured.

Hostilities continue across southern Lebanon; Beirut's southern suburbs, Dahiyah; and parts of Biqa'. Hundreds of thousands of civilians remain in harm's way, especially with military advances flattening entire villages. Meanwhile, rockets continue to be fired indiscriminately by Hizbullah over the Blue Line into northern Israel, causing harm and fear among civilians there.

In Lebanon, more than 1.1 million people have been displaced over the past four weeks, including more than 370,000 children. More than 200,000 people have crossed into Syria over the past month. A cycle of coercive displacement is unfolding.

Displacement on this scale heightens exposure to additional dangers, particularly for women and girls living in overcrowded and unfamiliar settings.

I saw the impact of that myself this morning. The Lebanese and Syrian families I spoke to talked of deep uncertainty, their resilience stretched thin and growing frustration at being unable to return home safely. Many Lebanese families described fleeing fighting in 2024, only to do again in 2026. I met Syrians displaced many times since 2013, recounting their latest upheaval.

People told me consistently that displacement is not a solution but a painful last resort for them, a temporary way to preserve dignity while they wait for conditions that allow them to go back to their villages and neighbourhoods. Above all, they asked us

not to reduce their suffering to numbers. They want their lives, their losses and their hopes to be seen and heard.

Even before this latest violence, tens of thousands remained displaced, and entire communities were surviving with only partial access to healthcare, water, electricity and education. The current escalation is compounding a situation that is already critical. Fifty-one primary healthcare centres and four hospitals are currently closed due to hostilities, with others damaged or operating at reduced capacity. Schools and public universities are being used as shelters, leaving thousands of children without access to learning.

Six of the eight bridges south of the Litani River have now been destroyed, and more vital infrastructure is under attack. Essential access routes have been damaged. Growing constraints hinder civilians' ability to move to safety and humanitarian partners' ability to reach those most in need. Entire communities are becoming increasingly isolated.

International humanitarian law is clear: civilians, wherever they are, in Israel or in Lebanon, must be protected. This includes allowing them to move away from the dangers of hostilities to safer areas. Essential infrastructure and basic services — healthcare, water, electricity — on which civilians depend must also and always be spared. This is what the fundamental principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution demand of all parties. And, of course, the work of medical personnel, first responders and humanitarians must always be facilitated, not impeded.

We are making a concerted attempt to meet this moment. On 13 March, together with the Government of Lebanon, we launched a \$308 million flash appeal to provide life-saving support to up to 1 million people over the next three months. I thank all the donors who have responded with support, especially in such a difficult moment for global funding. We have received \$94 million thus far, including a third of that from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the appeal continues rallying funds for life-saving support, even as so much more is still needed.

In the past four weeks, we have scaled up our humanitarian operations, delivering 2.8 million hot and cold meals to help ensure adequate sustenance. This morning, I personally saw 3,000 of those meals ready for distribution. Non-food support has also grown to keep pace with large populations on the move. More than 122,000 thermal blankets, 99,000 mattresses and nearly 50,000 sleeping mats have been provided. In addition, 58,000 hygiene kits and 26,000 menstrual hygiene kits have also been distributed. Humanitarian partners have delivered more than 875,000 litres of bottled drinking water and 15,000 cubic metres of trucked water. Fuel has been supplied to sustain water services for 412,000 people.

In my short time back in Lebanon, the message from communities here is painfully clear: they want safety and dignity; they want this to stop; they want to escape this cycle of crises. And they look to the members of the Council to heed these calls.

We have often said that we cannot let Lebanon fail. Now is a real test of that promise. Lebanon is often said to be at a breaking point yet so often finds the resilience, somehow, to pull through. Now it is once again at a breaking point.

I therefore have three messages for the Lebanese people. First, they must continue to respond with generosity to their fellow Lebanese. They are the humanitarian front lines right now. I know that they will meet this moment. Secondly, they must retain a commitment to their national identity. They must rise above the forces that seek to divide them. Thirdly, they must not give up on the idea of Lebanon. If coexistence fails here, it stands to fail everywhere.

Finally, I will conclude with three questions for the Council.

First, given the trajectory that some Israeli ministers have described and given what we have seen in plain sight in Gaza, how will the Council protect civilians?

Secondly, given the intensity of the coercive displacement that we are seeing, how should we prepare, collectively, as the international community, for a new addition to the list of occupied territories?

Thirdly, given the political tension here in Lebanon and the fragility of political structures, how should we prepare for the potential terror of a fresh round of internal targeting and political strife?

These questions are daunting. They are not easy. They are challenging. But they are precisely the kind of questions that the Security Council and the United Nations must confront if we too are to meet this moment.

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

Mr. Bonnafont (France) (*spoke in French*): Together with Indonesia, France called for this emergency meeting in the wake of the extremely serious, unacceptable and unjustifiable attacks on United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) Blue Helmets over the past few days. These attacks follow on from a series of similar attacks and incidents observed in recent months, which France has strongly condemned on several occasions. This situation cannot continue.

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this morning meeting, and I thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, for their briefings, remarks, observations and requests of the Council.

Three Indonesian Blue Helmets died in the past 48 hours. Three peacekeepers, serving the international community, were killed while carrying out their mission in Lebanon. France pays tribute to them. It extends its deepest sympathy and most sincere condolences to the victims' families and to Indonesia. We are grateful to the United Nations and to the soldiers who keep the peace alongside the Blue Helmets. We wish the injured personnel a speedy recovery. We also commend the professionalism, courage and commitment of all United Nations personnel in southern Lebanon and throughout the world. Lastly, France renews its support for the mandate of UNIFIL, which must be able to carry out its duties fully and without hindrance until the end of its mandate, as provided for in resolution 2790 (2025).

Serious actions have also been taken by Israel against the French contingent in Naqurah, in particular against the Force's Chief of Staff. Israeli soldiers have displayed an aggressive attitude, resorted to intimidation and compromised the safety of the French contingent's personnel, even though deconfliction procedures had been duly followed. France strongly condemns these direct threats against its personnel serving with UNIFIL. It has made that clear to the Israeli authorities. These acts must be fully investigated without delay.

The Council cannot simply condemn such actions. It must take action to ensure that they do not recur. The protection of Blue Helmets is an obligation under international law that applies to all, as the briefers reminded us today. We expect concrete and immediate assurances from Israel. Deconfliction procedures exist and must be respected by all parties, without exception.

Every day, UNIFIL peacekeepers face the risk of gunfire, landmines and improvised explosive devices as they carry out the mandate entrusted to them. Such acts are unacceptable and unjustifiable. France once again calls on Israel and Hizbullah to

respect the safety of the Blue Helmets. Anyone who endangers United Nations personnel bears responsibility before the Council and before the entire international community.

These deaths cannot be separated from the escalation of the war in Lebanon. The civilian population is paying an unbearable price: in Lebanon, there are more than 1,200 dead and 3,500 wounded in less than a month, including children, healthcare workers and journalists; one in four Lebanese are displaced, living in extremely difficult conditions despite the efforts of the Lebanese authorities, with the resolute support of the international community, including that of France; in Israel, a population has been forced to take shelter several times a day, with barely more than 15 seconds' warning.

The way out of the war is clear. It lies in the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and a return to the November 2024 ceasefire agreement, with the support of the United States-French monitoring mechanism established under it. This requires, on the one hand, Israel to desist from any large-scale ground incursion and any occupation of Lebanese territory, which would only render lasting peace a remote prospect, and, on the other, Hizbullah to end its attacks and surrender its weapons to the Lebanese State in accordance with the Lebanese Government's decision courageously taken on 2 March. Hizbullah must cease holding the Lebanese people hostage to a war that Iran is waging against Israel — a war that we wholly condemn. Likewise, Iran must abide by the sovereign decisions taken by the Lebanese authorities, including the requirement for the Ambassador of Iran to leave Lebanon as of 29 March.

A diplomatic solution is possible with a view to embarking on the path of peace. France is striving to that end, and we are continuing our conversations with the Lebanese and the Israeli authorities to arrive at a de-escalation that could usher in direct negotiations. In that context, we commend and support the brave decisions taken by the Lebanese executive to bolster Lebanon's sovereignty and its unprecedented openness to direct talks with Israel — a historic opportunity, which France advocates, must be promptly seized for a lasting settlement of the conflict in the interests of all parties. France stands ready to broker those discussions in close cooperation with its partners. With that in mind, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs travelled to Beirut and Jerusalem a few days ago. However, there are a number of prerequisites to achieving that solution: respect for the United Nations, respect for UNIFIL personnel, respect for international law, including international humanitarian law and the civilian population, and a swift end to hostilities.

Mrs. Balta (Greece): I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for their briefings.

We gather today at a moment of profound sorrow and grave concern as the ongoing conflagration in Lebanon has not spared the Blue Helmets of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Fully echoing the Secretary-General's latest statement, Greece strongly condemns the recent killing of three Indonesian UNIFIL peacekeepers amid heavy fire. We express our condolences to the families of the fallen peacekeepers and to our Indonesian colleagues.

The incident is a tragic addition to a series of violent attacks against United Nations personnel, including the injuring of Ghanaian Blue Helmets earlier this month and a Polish peacekeeper a couple of days ago. Attacks against United Nations personnel are unacceptable. They constitute grave violations of international humanitarian law and resolution 1701 (2006) and must immediately stop. The safety and security of peacekeepers is non-negotiable. We call for a thorough investigation of, and accountability for, this incident.

Lebanon continues to pay the price of a conflict it neither chose nor can afford. We strongly condemn, once again, Hizbullah's attacks, in support of the Iranian regime, against Israel, which triggered a dangerous round of regional escalation. These attacks

severely undermine the Lebanese Government's efforts to restore its exclusive control over arms across the country. Restoring the State's monopoly over arms throughout the country is an essential prerequisite for sustainable peace and security for Lebanon, Israel and the region. In this regard, we commend the historic and courageous decision of the Lebanese Council of Ministers to ban Hizbullah's military activities. This is a step in the right direction, demonstrating the Lebanese Government's willingness to deal with outstanding issues, and it deserves the full support of the international community.

Lebanon should not stand alone. Greece fully supports the efforts of President Aoun and the Lebanese Government to forge strong State institutions. Empowering the Lebanese Armed Forces is essential for ensuring Lebanese sovereignty. Greece already assists Lebanon, including the Lebanese Armed Forces, bilaterally. We stand ready to participate in the international conference in Paris as soon as conditions allow.

We also recognize Israel's right to self-defence. Communities in northern Israel have suffered terribly owing to Hizbullah's attacks since October 2023. However, any further escalation must be avoided. We call for maximum restraint, and we are opposed to protracted ground operations. The expansion of Israel's military operations into Beirut and across Lebanon's territory aggravates the already fragile security situation. Greece reaffirms its support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon. Full respect for resolution 1701 (2006) and the November 2024 ceasefire agreement is essential in this regard.

Civilians are bearing the heaviest burden of this crisis. More than 1.2 million people have been displaced, many have perished, and thousands have been severely injured. The risk of broader regional destabilization, including through additional refugee flows, is growing. Civilian infrastructure, including airports, ports and bridges across the country, does not constitute a legitimate target. Journalists and humanitarian and healthcare workers must be protected at all times and in all circumstances. We also express our condolences to the families of the victims and our solidarity with those affected by this war. International humanitarian law must be upheld by all parties everywhere and at all times. Standing in full solidarity with the Lebanese people, Greece immediately responded to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs flash appeal by allocating a substantial financial contribution. We are also finalizing our contribution to strengthening Lebanon's health sector. At the same time, the tireless efforts of humanitarian actors on the ground, including United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, cannot be overlooked. Their work under extremely difficult and dangerous conditions is as indispensable as it is commendable.

Any further escalation risks the lives of civilians, who have not opted for this conflict. It endangers United Nations personnel, who are striving to uphold peace at the risk of their own safety, and it severely undermines Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, which we strive to preserve. We commend the willingness of the Lebanese leadership to pursue direct political negotiations with Israel. This is a moment for responsibility and de-escalation. Lebanon deserves a future of peace, security and dignity, free from external interference and internal division. Greece will stand by its side in that effort.

Ms. Pavluta-Deslandes (Latvia): Allow me to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting at such short notice, and I also thank France and Indonesia for requesting this meeting in the light of the casualties sustained by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the grave and escalatory situation in Lebanon. I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for their briefings.

Latvia strongly condemns the attacks on UNIFIL, which resulted in the deaths of three Indonesian peacekeepers and injuries to several other peacekeepers. We express our deepest condolences to the Republic of Indonesia. Our thoughts are with the injured and the loved ones of the deceased. We call for a robust and timely investigation to determine the perpetrators of the attacks. We call for accountability for these blatant violations of international humanitarian law. The safety and security of United Nations personnel and property is not optional; it must be respected by all sides at all times. Deliberate attacks on peacekeepers are grave violations of international humanitarian law and may constitute war crimes. We call upon all members of the Council to continue stressing the crucial importance of upholding commitments agreed in resolutions 2518 (2020) and 2730 (2024).

We commend the exceptional service of UNIFIL, as it continues to implement its mandate under resolution 1701 (2006) and provide assistance to the local population, even in the direst of circumstances. All essential personnel, including those from my own country, are still on duty in the midst of hostilities. The threats to the safety and security of UNIFIL peacekeepers have clearly reached a threshold. This demands further reflection by the United Nations and the mission's leadership on how to prevent further casualties while continuing to implement its mandate.

The latest incidents demonstrate that the current military escalation in Lebanon has serious consequences for all: civilian populations, humanitarian personnel and United Nations peacekeepers. Even clearly recognizable United Nations peacekeepers become targets when the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution are discarded.

The ongoing conflict undermines stability in the region and global security. We express concern about the humanitarian crisis caused by mass displacement in Lebanon and the influx into Syria. More than 1 million people — 370,000 of them children — have been forcibly displaced, 3,700 people have been injured, and more than 1,200 people have died.

Hizbullah has dragged the people of Lebanon into a war that they have no part in. Iran must stop enabling Hizbullah's military activities and armed hostilities. Hizbullah must immediately stop all aggressive actions against Israel and disarm. The Lebanese Government has clearly taken a stand against the malign influence of Hizbullah and Iran in its country. We commend the Lebanese Government's decision of 2 March to declare all Hizbullah military and security activities illegal throughout the entire territory of Lebanon. We also welcome the political commitment of the Lebanese Government to extend its authority throughout the country and the implementation of the disarmament plan. Continued international support for these efforts remains essential.

We call upon Israel to abstain from attacks against civilian infrastructure and heavily populated areas and to respect Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity. All parties must respect international law, including international humanitarian law, and ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Hostilities around the Blue Line continues to escalate, claiming the lives of civilians and UNIFIL peacekeepers with increasing frequency. International humanitarian law is being ignored. We call on all parties to the conflict to fully respect resolution 1701 (2006), de-escalate and work towards peace. For generations, the Lebanese people have suffered from armed conflict. Lebanon, yet again, finds itself on the brink, and we continue to stand by Lebanon and its people.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for their briefings, which shed light on various dimensions of this situation.

Pakistan condemns in the strongest possible terms the killing of three Indonesian peacekeepers serving under the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in separate attacks. This tragic and deeply disturbing incident strikes at the very heart of international law, United Nations peacekeeping and the international community's collective commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security. However, we know that these are not isolated incidents, but part of a disturbing pattern of attacks on UNIFIL. As Under-Secretary-General Lacroix also noted, UNIFIL has been subjected to persistent aggressive behaviour and restrictions on freedom of operation. The Council must not allow such violence against peacekeepers to become normalized. These missions are mandated by the Security Council, and their protection is the Council's foremost responsibility.

As one of the largest troop-contributing countries and one that has lost 182 peacekeepers in the line of duty, Pakistan shares this profound sense of loss. We stand in full solidarity with the Government and the people of Indonesia and with the families of the fallen peacekeepers, whose sacrifice reflects the immense risks undertaken in the service of international peace and security. We wish a full and speedy recovery to the injured peacekeepers.

Attacks against peacekeepers are unacceptable and may constitute war crimes under international law. United Nations personnel are impartial agents of peace. Targeting them is a grave violation that undermines international humanitarian law. Failure to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel undermines the credibility of the Council and that of peacekeeping, international law and the collective commitment of the international community to maintain peace and protect civilians. In this regard, accountability is essential, and those responsible must be brought to justice. Pakistan calls for a prompt, thorough, transparent and impartial investigation to establish the facts. The safety and security of peacekeepers and United Nations premises must be fully ensured at all times, in full accordance with international law.

Pakistan deeply appreciates the vital role of UNIFIL in carrying out its mandate in a complex and high-risk environment while maintaining peace and stability along the Blue Line. UNIFIL personnel must be guaranteed full freedom of movement. Recent artillery shelling, air strikes and drone attacks have increased hostile incidents against UNIFIL peacekeepers, in clear violation of international law.

This incident must also be viewed within the broader context. Israel's continued military actions in southern Lebanon have resulted in the death of more than 600 civilians, the displacement of more than 1 million people and the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure. Ongoing fighting and hostilities are further exacerbating the humanitarian situation and heightening the risk to both civilians and peacekeepers. These developments are undermining the Lebanese Government's bold steps, policy decisions and serious commitment to peace and stability. We must not allow this.

The Council must extend its full support to Lebanon. We urge all parties to adhere to their obligations under resolution 1701 (2006) and the cessation of hostilities agreement of November 2024. Full compliance with these commitments is essential to prevent further escalation and restore stability in the region. In this context, we also call for full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. Pakistan stands firmly with the Government and the people of Lebanon.

In the light of the evolving and deeply concerning situation in the region, we stress that further escalation must be avoided at all costs. We call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint. The ultimate objective must be urgent de-escalation, restraint, the complete cessation of all hostilities and the peaceful resolution of all issues in order to prevent further deterioration of the regional security environment. The Council, we believe, must fully espouse and advance that objective.

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): Let me thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for their informative and alarming briefings. We also thank France and Indonesia for calling this urgent meeting, which we agree is both necessary and timely.

The events of recent days illustrate how fragile and dangerous the situation in Lebanon has become and how crucial it is, for the civilians of Lebanon and Israel alike, to prevent further escalation.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms the attacks on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which in the past two days have caused the deaths of three peacekeepers and the serious injuries of others. We look forward to the results of UNIFIL's full and thorough investigation into these incidents. Peacekeepers are clearly protected under international humanitarian law, and any deliberate targeting of peacekeepers is unacceptable. Denmark extends its deepest condolences to the families of those killed and to the Government and the people of Indonesia. We wish a speedy recovery for those who were injured.

The brave women and men of UNIFIL serve under the United Nations flag in the pursuit of peace. They are the embodiment of multilateral solidarity and cooperation in action, and these incidents represent a direct attack on these principles. We commend UNIFIL for its continuous work, despite the extremely challenging circumstances, and stress our unwavering support for the mission.

As we have said before, we strongly condemn Hizbullah's continued attacks against Israel, which have dragged Lebanon into yet another unwanted war and must stop immediately.

Denmark is concerned about the significant humanitarian and civilian consequences of Israel's military operations in Lebanon and underlines that all military actions must be conducted with full respect for international humanitarian law, including the principles of proportionality, distinction and precaution. The protection of civilians must be ensured and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief must be facilitated.

Recent statements by, for instance, the Israeli Finance Minister, about the intention to move the Lebanese-Israeli border to the Litani River, are deeply concerning. This area makes up one tenth of Lebanon's territory, is home to hundreds of thousands of Lebanese and includes cities with a rich and diverse cultural heritage. We strongly urge Israel to refrain from any large-scale ground invasion or long-term occupation of Lebanese territory that risks escalating the hostilities beyond control. This includes withdrawing its forces from occupied areas in Lebanon, in line with the November 2024 cessation of hostilities agreement. Denmark calls for respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, in line with resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004).

Hizbullah must cease all attacks on Israel and respect the Lebanese State's exclusive authority over all arms and military activity. The Lebanese Government has taken unprecedented steps in its efforts to disarm Hizbullah. We fully support the Government's efforts in this regard.

With reports of 1.1 million people displaced in Lebanon, including more than 350,000 children, and more than 1,200 killed, including many civilians, the humanitarian situation is quickly reaching unmanageable levels. The majority of the displaced lack formal shelter, protection, food and medical services. Humanitarian access to the south is significantly restricted for an estimated 150,000 people.

Denmark condemns all attacks directed at civilians and civilian infrastructure, including first responders and healthcare personnel. Since 2 March, we have seen 87

attacks on healthcare in Lebanon, resulting in more than 50 deaths among healthcare personnel, and many more wounded. This must stop.

Denmark recalls resolutions 2286 (2026) and 2730 (2024) on the protection of medical staff and facilities and the protection of humanitarian workers. We urge all parties to fully respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, uphold these resolutions and ensure that all civilians, including medical staff and humanitarian workers, are protected and do not become the target of attacks. Denmark also express our deep concern over the reported attacks on journalists and recalls that civilians must be protected under international humanitarian law.

In closing, as the situation in the region continues to escalate, the path to stability cannot be selective, but must be comprehensive. We must not allow developments in Lebanon to be overshadowed by other events. We must collectively and strongly insist on de-escalation.

Around this table, we must do all within our power to this urgent end.

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

We thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for their comprehensive briefings.

The A3 expresses its great concern regarding the recent escalations of hostilities in southern Lebanon and joins the Secretary-General in condemning the attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which have resulted in the killing of and injuries to Indonesian peacekeepers. We extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims, to Indonesia and the troop-contributing countries of the United Nations. We pay tribute to all peacekeepers who risk their lives in the service of international peace and security.

Targeting United Nations peacekeepers is unacceptable and constitutes a serious violation of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1701 (2006). The safety and security of United Nations personnel and premises are not negotiable and must be respected at all times. Under no circumstances should peacekeepers be subject to any hostile acts and those responsible for these attacks must be held accountable.

The A3 is deeply concerned by the continued deterioration of the security situation along the Blue Line and the increasing toll on civilian populations, including civilian casualties, destruction of infrastructure and large-scale displacement. We reiterate the urgent need to ensure the protection of civilians and full respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The A3 reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and political unity of Lebanon. Lebanon must not become an arena for proxy confrontations or broader geopolitical tensions. Respect for the sovereignty of States and the principle of non-interference remain essential to preserving regional stability.

The A3 calls on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and to refrain from actions that could further inflame tensions or destabilize the situation. We stress the importance of returning to the cessation of hostilities arrangements of 26 November 2024 and ensuring the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) as the primary framework for maintaining stability and preventing renewed conflict.

Dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable path to preventing further deterioration of the situation. We acknowledge the critical role played by UNIFIL in

supporting stability, facilitating dialogue and contributing to de-escalation along the Blue Line. The mission remains an essential instrument for confidence-building and conflict prevention. We reiterate our full support for UNIFIL and express appreciation to the troop-contributing countries for their continued commitment.

We also emphasize the importance of continued support to the Lebanese State institutions, including the Lebanese Armed Forces, to enable them to effectively assume their responsibilities in maintaining security and stability throughout Lebanese territory.

In conclusion, the A3 stands in solidarity with the people of Lebanon and reiterates its support for all efforts aimed at preserving stability, preventing regional spillover and achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama would like to express its gratitude for the convening of this briefing, as well as for the information shared by the briefers, Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari and Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher, which demonstrates that the situation in Lebanon continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. We acknowledge the presence of the representatives of Lebanon, Israel, Indonesia and Poland, whose participation we greatly appreciate.

It has now been 20 days since the Council's previous meeting on this subject (see S/PV.10118) and, far from showing any signs of de-escalation, the situation in Lebanon, including ongoing shelling and fighting, has deteriorated significantly, with a rise in the humanitarian impact.

Panama reiterates its condemnation of Hizbullah for the attacks and irresponsible actions that have triggered the current spiral of violence. According to the most recent information from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, since 2 March there have been more than 3,900 incidents of hostilities, resulting in at least 1,100 deaths, including dozens of women and children, and more than 3,200 injuries. More than 1 million people have been displaced, of whom more than 136,000 are in collective shelters, while more than 189,000 have crossed into Syria, highlighting the regional scale of this crisis.

Panama categorically rejects attacks against the civilian population and civilian infrastructure, including health centres and medical personnel, which continue to claim lives and exacerbate the suffering of the population.

Panama condemns in the strongest possible terms the deaths of peacekeepers from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), following the recent attacks, including the explosion of a projectile at a mission position in southern Lebanon and the serious injuries sustained by other members of the contingent, which reflect the deterioration of security conditions on the ground.

Panama expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the peacekeepers who lost their lives, in particular to the Indonesian contingent, as well as to the State to which they belong, and extends its full solidarity to the UNIFIL personnel.

This tragic incident comes on top of other recent incidents, including the one in which three peacekeepers from the Ghanaian contingent were injured, highlighting a worrisome pattern of increasing risks to peacekeeping personnel. They constitute serious violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, resolution 1701 (2006) and the fundamental norms protecting United Nations personnel and their inviolability.

It is imperative that these incidents be investigated and that there be accountability so that impunity does not serve as a cover for such actions now or in the future. As

UNIFIL itself has pointed out, no one should lose their life while serving the cause of peace.

Panama reaffirms its full support for the work of UNIFIL, whose presence remains essential for reducing tensions, supporting the deployment of the Lebanese Army and preserving stability along the Blue Line.

Panama reiterates its firm support for and recognition of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of the Lebanese State and of its Government and institutions, in particular the Lebanese Armed Forces, to strengthen the State's authority throughout its territory and to advance towards the principle that the monopoly on the legitimate use of force and arms rests exclusively with the State, in line with resolution 1701 (2006).

In the light of this serious situation, we reiterate our call on the parties to return to the ceasefire agreement of 26 November 2024 and to fully comply with their obligations under international law. We call for seizing this opportunity to return to dialogue and negotiations offered by the Lebanese Government to Israel.

There is no military solution to this crisis. The full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) remains the fundamental framework for ensuring stability along the Blue Line and moving towards a lasting solution.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for their briefings. I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this emergency meeting at the request of France and Indonesia. I welcome the representative of Lebanon to today's meeting.

Tensions in the Middle East are escalating, and the impact of the spillover is spreading. The rights and wrongs of the conflict in the Middle East are abundantly clear. The top priority is to actively promote peace talks, seize the opportunity for peace and bring the conflict to an end. Since the situation in Lebanon and Israel escalated, hostilities have intensified, resulting in serious casualties and the destruction of infrastructure. The international community must take urgent action to put the brakes on the conflict before it spirals further out of control and restore peace and stability in the region as soon as possible.

I would like to make three points.

First, achieving a ceasefire and a cessation of hostilities is the most urgent task. The ongoing exchanges of fire between Israel and Hizbullah have plunged the people of the region into the suffering of war. Israel's continuous escalation of military offensives has already claimed the lives of more than 1,200 people. Israel's recent announcement that it would expand its ground operations in Lebanon and extend the so-called buffer zone risks further prolonging and escalating the conflict, which is a cause for concern. Lebanon must not become another Gaza, and the international community must not allow the tragedy of Gaza to be repeated. China calls on the parties concerned to immediately cease hostilities and work to de-escalate the situation. Israel should immediately withdraw its troops from Lebanon and respect its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

Secondly, supporting Lebanon's domestic stability is a top priority. The current situation has had a serious impact on Lebanon's domestic political, economic and humanitarian situation. We welcome the Lebanese Government's efforts to strengthen State control and support all parties in Lebanon to actively engage in political dialogue to properly resolve differences. Under Israel's heavy artillery fire and large-scale forced evacuation orders, the humanitarian situation in Lebanon has rapidly deteriorated, and more than 1.2 million people have been forced to flee their homes and become displaced.

The international community should increase emergency assistance to Lebanon and support the Lebanese Government in stabilizing the domestic situation, ensuring basic livelihoods and alleviating humanitarian challenges.

Thirdly, the safety and security of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) troops is a red line that must not be crossed. Recently, the safety of UNIFIL troops has been repeatedly endangered by artillery fire, with two deadly attacks resulting in the deaths of three peacekeepers and injuries to many others. China strongly condemns the attacks against UNIFIL. We express deep condolences for the deaths of the Indonesian peacekeepers who were killed in the attacks and heartfelt sympathies to the injured. Any deliberate attack on United Nations peacekeepers is a serious violation of international humanitarian law and resolution 1701 (2006). Such attacks are absolutely unacceptable and must cease immediately. We highly commend the UNIFIL troops for remaining at their posts amid the hostilities and urge the parties concerned to take concrete measures to ensure the safety and freedom of movement of UNIFIL troops and to conduct serious investigations into all attacks on peacekeepers and hold those responsible to account.

China respects the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Lebanon and stands ready to work with the international community to make unremitting efforts to de-escalate the tensions between Lebanon and Israel and restore peace and stability in Lebanon and the Middle East.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher and Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for their comprehensive but very disquieting briefings on the situation in Lebanon.

The ongoing escalation of hostilities for nearly a month along the Blue Line and beyond is affecting not only our friendly Lebanese people but also the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) peacekeepers stationed in the south of the country. The death of three UNIFIL personnel and the injury of several others over the past 48 hours is a clear and tragic example of this. We express our sincere condolences to the families of the deceased and wish a speedy recovery to the injured peacekeepers.

Judging from the comments of the United Nations and UNIFIL leadership, the investigation into the circumstances of the incident in southern Lebanon is ongoing. We look forward to promptly receiving full information from the Secretariat, including information on the perpetrators of these outrageous attacks.

Russia strongly condemns all attacks on UNIFIL personnel, regardless of who carries them out. We support the Secretary-General's calls for the parties to the conflict to comply with the norms of international law and ensure the safety of the Blue Helmets. We firmly believe in the need for a swift ceasefire in the Lebanese-Israeli border area. Otherwise, the high-profile outbreaks of violence in southern Lebanon will not be the last fatal incidents affecting United Nations personnel.

Another dangerous trend in recent days has been the deliberate targeting by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) of media representatives covering events on the ground in the Lebanese-Israeli conflict zone. According to reports, on 28 March, an Israeli drone strike near Jazzin killed Ali Shoaib, a prominent journalist for Al-Manar TV, and his colleagues Fatima and Mohammed Ftouni from Al-Mayadeen TV.

Earlier, on 19 March, in southern Lebanon, a Russia Today television crew was injured in an Israeli Air Force missile attack. The strike occurred in close proximity to the filming location, where there were no military installations, as clearly demonstrated by the detonation footage captured by the camera operator. We view these actions by Israel and its military as a grave violation of international law and a deliberate hindrance

of the work of the media. We demand a thorough investigation by Israeli authorities into this incident, the prosecution of those responsible and the prevention of similar attacks in the future.

Like most of those present in the Chamber, we are extremely concerned by the intensification of Israeli military operations in Lebanon, including daily exchanges of strikes, and their consequences for both sides in the conflict, including the destruction of critical civilian infrastructure.

Even as we discuss the UNIFIL incident, Israel has launched another powerful air strike on Beirut. I would like to reiterate that the root cause of the current escalation of the Lebanese-Israeli confrontation is the aggression of Washington and West Jerusalem against Iran, which triggered the general collapse of the fragile stability in the Middle East. Unfortunately, many members of the Security Council remain stubbornly silent on this issue and continue to attempt to place the blame solely on the Lebanese resistance, portraying it as the main culprit behind the surge in violence along the Blue Line. At the same time, they remain quiet about Israel's numerous ceasefire violations over the past year and a half.

This one-sided approach by a host of States, including those directly involved in the current major regional war, clearly does nothing to normalize the situation in the region and, on the contrary, encourages the warring parties to escalate the confrontation. As a result, we are witnessing a continued rise in civilian casualties and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure.

In Lebanon alone, IDF actions have killed nearly 1,500 people since March 2, wounded nearly 4,000 and displaced more than 1 million Lebanese. Israeli strikes against medical facilities in the Arab Republic are becoming commonplace. Against this backdrop, bellicose rhetoric is increasingly heard from West Jerusalem, including orders from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to expand the so-called buffer zone in southern Lebanon, illegally under IDF control.

We reaffirm our country's commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. We call on the Israeli leadership to abandon the use of force alone to address its legitimate security concerns, withdraw its military units from the occupied territories and return to the path of diplomacy. The key guiding principle for the parties must remain strict adherence to their obligations under resolution 1701 (2006) and other relevant Council decisions, including those related to the parameters of UNIFIL's operations, which continues to maintain its positions despite security threats and, at the cost of the lives of its personnel, to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council to stabilize the situation in the region.

Ms. Solano Ramirez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the presidency for organizing this meeting, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific; and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings.

Official reports and recent information confirm an alarming deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation in Lebanon. In our most recent statement on this topic (see S/PV.10118), my delegation warned that the situation required an urgent international response to prevent, precisely, the scenario we face today.

Against this backdrop, Colombia reiterates its call on all parties to fully respect international law, including the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1701 (2006). There can be no sustainable solution without adherence to these frameworks. It is therefore imperative to return to peaceful means of

dispute resolution and to put an end to the use of force, including Israel's illegal occupation of Lebanese territory.

The humanitarian crisis currently unfolding in Lebanon is not unrelated to the systematic disregard and violation of those principles. My delegation therefore condemns the repeated attacks on civilian infrastructure and health facilities, as well as the forced displacement resulting from Israeli military actions, as well as the ground incursions that run counter to the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006).

Colombia calls for a cessation of all actions incompatible with the obligation to protect civilians and for the necessary international support to be guaranteed, including sufficient and sustainable funding, to provide assistance on the ground and mitigate the impact of hostilities on the civilian population. My delegation also stresses that those responsible must be held to account, as only through justice can a resurgence of violence be prevented.

At the same time, the safety of the Organization's personnel and the inviolability of its facilities must be guaranteed at all times by all parties. Colombia extends its condolences to the victims, their families and the Government of Indonesia. To them, their families and to all Members of the Organization, especially personnel on the ground, we express our gratitude for their service in the interest of peace.

Colombia reiterates its solidarity with the Lebanese people. It also emphasizes that respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity is non-negotiable. In that connection, my delegation welcomes the decisions taken by the Lebanese Government in recent weeks with a view to containing the effects of the escalation of hostilities and proceeding with reinstating the legitimate monopoly on weapons. At the same time, it calls on the parties to cease any action that obstructs those efforts.

The current situation in Lebanon is not taking place in a vacuum. To tackle the humanitarian crisis without clarity as regards the root causes fuelling it or to secure an end to hostilities while disregarding the wider regional dynamics amounts to not only a piecemeal approach but also an inadequate response given the gravity of this juncture. Colombia is of the view that the Council will struggle to duly discharge its responsibility if it continues to resort to partisan and selective approximations in addressing a crisis of this magnitude.

Ms. Abdulla (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): As we convene the Council's final meeting for the month of March, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to the United States presidency for its efficient and capable stewardship of the Council's proceedings throughout this month. We also extend our thanks to the French Republic for its swift response to the dangerous escalation in southern Lebanon and for requesting the convening of this meeting.

Furthermore, we commend the comprehensive briefings by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific; and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their detailed and accurate descriptions of the situation in Lebanon. I also welcome the participation of all the Permanent Representatives in today's meeting.

The Kingdom of Bahrain strongly condemns the attack on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which claimed the lives of three of its personnel and injured five others. We affirm that the targeting of peacekeeping forces constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and Security Council resolutions. The Kingdom extends its sincere condolences and sympathies to the families of the victims, the

Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the United Nations, while wishing the injured a swift recovery. The Kingdom further emphasizes that ensuring the security and safety of peacekeeping forces is the responsibility of all parties. It underscores the need to respect their mandate and enable them to perform their duties unhindered.

The Kingdom of Bahrain underlines the importance of insulating Lebanon from regional conflicts and rejects any attempts to embroil it in them. The Kingdom further reaffirms its steadfast position in support of the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the sisterly Republic of Lebanon and the need to enable Lebanese State institutions to extend their full authority throughout its territory in a manner that safeguards national security and stability and fulfils the aspirations of the brotherly Lebanese people.

In this context, the Kingdom commends the steps recently taken by the Lebanese Government, which demonstrate its clear assiduity in endeavouring to ensure that weapons are confined exclusively to the State and its legitimate institutions, including measures related to disarming the entity that calls itself “Hizbullah”. The Kingdom also expresses its appreciation for the Lebanese Government’s unequivocal stance in rejecting and condemning the attacks carried out by Hizbullah, given the threat that they pose to Lebanon’s stability and the perilous escalation that they represent within the region, while welcoming the Government’s efforts to impose an immediate ban on all security and military activities associated with the group. We are also pleased at the Lebanese leadership’s announcement of its intention to engage in negotiations with Israel, under international auspices, with a view to reaching an immediate ceasefire — a course of action that reflects a sense of national responsibility and a keen desire to spare Lebanon from further escalation.

In this context, the Kingdom of Bahrain condemns any escalation that might broaden the scope of confrontations and turn them into a full-scale regional conflict and any violations of the ceasefire agreement. It further condemns Israel’s expansionist statements and cautions against any ground incursions that could infringe upon the sovereignty of Lebanon’s territory and threaten its security and safety, result in civilian casualties, exacerbate humanitarian conditions and trigger wide-scale displacement, given the grave repercussions that such actions would entail for regional stability. In this regard, the Kingdom emphasizes the need for full compliance with the provisions of international law, including international humanitarian law, in particular those pertaining to the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, and for the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is of the view that supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces and the internal security forces and enhancing their capabilities are the bedrock of the preservation of Lebanon’s stability, sovereignty and security. Concerted international efforts are required to provide them with the necessary support so that they can discharge their duties efficiently, in southern Lebanon in particular.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms that preserving Lebanon’s unity, stability and sovereignty is a collective responsibility and appeals to all parties to adhere to the relevant international resolutions, foremost among them resolution 1701 (2006), and to strive as a matter of urgency to consolidate the ceasefire and avert further escalation.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Assistant Secretary-General Khiari and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for briefing us today.

The United Kingdom strongly condemns the recent attacks on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), including those that caused the deaths of three Indonesian peacekeepers and injured Polish peacekeepers. Our thoughts are with the

families of the deceased and with the injured. Such attacks are unacceptable. We urge all parties to ensure the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel and premises in accordance with international law. I thank all peacekeepers serving in Lebanon for their dedication, bravery and professionalism. Many of us here had the opportunity to meet them during our visit to Lebanon in December.

The United Kingdom is clear in its condemnation of Hizbullah's decision to join Iran's attacks against Israel. Hizbullah's attacks on Israel, including civilian communities south of the Blue Line, must cease immediately. The actions of this proscribed terrorist group at the instigation of the Iranian regime are once again drawing the people of Lebanon into a conflict that they do not want and that is not in their interests. I commend the Lebanese Government's decision to ban all Hizbullah military activity and initiate a plan to bring all weapons under State control. We will continue to support the Lebanese Armed Forces as they undertake this task, as Lebanon's sole legitimate defender. However, Israel's decision to expand its ground operations further into Lebanon undermines this work and threatens Lebanon's sovereignty. Strikes on Lebanese Armed Forces positions are also deeply concerning.

As we have heard here, the conflict is causing a deepening crisis with dire consequences for civilians. The humanitarian toll is staggering. More than 1 million people have been forced from their homes, with women and children facing the greatest risks. Among the displaced are more than 12,000 pregnant women, many struggling to access essential healthcare. At least 121 children have been killed, and countless others are enduring the trauma of violence, loss and upheaval. Attacks affecting healthcare facilities have intensified, with more than 50 health workers killed to date. This is unacceptable. All parties to the conflict must uphold international humanitarian law. Civilians and critical infrastructure must be protected and humanitarian access enabled. The United Kingdom has provided \$12 million in support of the efforts by the Government of Lebanon to reach vulnerable communities. We stand with those working tirelessly to protect civilians and deliver life-saving assistance.

Finally, we echo the urgent need for direct negotiations between the Governments of Israel and Lebanon. This is the only path towards lasting peace and security for people on both sides of the Blue Line. Both Israel and Lebanon want to see an end to Hizbullah's ability to threaten the region. Further expansion of this conflict will only repeat the cycle of violence across the Blue Line and drag the region further into crisis.

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

I thank our briefers for their thorough updates, and I thank France for convening this urgent meeting.

We, too, mourn the loss of three Indonesian peacekeepers on 29 and 30 March. We extend our heartfelt condolences to their families and loved ones, and we honour their sacrifice in the service of international peace and security. We also wish a full and swift recovery to the other United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) peacekeepers who were injured.

One of those whom we mourn is Private First Class Rhomadhon. Just 28 years old, Private Rhomadhon was still at the dawn of his career. His company was due to return very soon to Indonesia, where the young husband and father would be reunited with his two-year-old daughter Shanaya. His final communication with his family was a simple red heart — an emoji. I have worked personally with many junior soldiers like him, and I think that the Indonesian press got it right, based on everything that I have read about him, when they called him a “young warrior” in training. Unfortunately, this young warrior died while keeping the peace. He was a young father, a young soldier, thousands

of miles from home, who trusted that the Council would deploy him where he would be most effective.

Peacekeepers endure exceptional dangers to prevent conflict and protect civilians. Their safety and security must be respected by all parties at all times. That is why I ask the Council, the media and the watching world to pause and to reserve judgment until the United Nations can fully investigate and assess the circumstances of these tragic incidents, even as we share in the shock and sorrow of this loss.

Again, on a personal note, as a soldier — now turned diplomat — who has commanded coalition troops, I and others all know the dangers that exist when we accept these missions. However, in contrast here, the peacekeepers that this body sends to conflict zones are often surprised by the very real perils that they face. Countries like Indonesia send their sons and daughters to support the Organization's mission of peace. They are not sending them to fight a war. The Council owes them condolences, but we also owe them a wise approach to peacekeeping that recognizes that terrorists have no respect for the Council or for the norms of international law.

We all recognize that the suffering in this region is immense and has gone on for far too long. Parents, children and grandparents — whether Israeli or Lebanese, whether civilians or United Nations peacekeepers — should not face the daily dangers caused by Iranian-backed terrorists, who have long afflicted both Israel and Lebanon. The people in this region deserve a different future, one defined by security, economic opportunity and normal life, not by rockets, tunnels and the constant threat of escalation and retaliation.

We must support the Government of Lebanon, as the duly elected Government of the country, and the Lebanese Armed Forces as they exercise sovereignty — and we have heard a lot of talk about sovereignty today — over all of Lebanon's territory and beat back Hizbullah, a group that hides behind civilians while threatening their neighbours, a terrorist group that has a long history of hiding weapons, fighters and caches of rockets in schools, hospitals and civilian homes. Hizbullah also has a long history of attacking peacekeepers and of firing on Israeli civilians from near UNIFIL and peacekeeping positions, inviting retaliation for their own propaganda aims.

Since 1978, more than 300 UNIFIL peacekeepers have been killed in this mission, and this is why the Council must think very carefully about the effectiveness of this effort. We can help refocus international efforts on supporting Lebanese State institutions, reducing risk to peacekeepers and pressing Hizbullah and Iran to cease their destabilizing activities. We, the United States, will continue to work with Council members, regional partners, troop-contributing countries and the parties on the ground to reduce tensions, support Lebanon's sovereignty and make a better future for the Lebanese people.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

Mr. Arafa (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Lebanon condemns in the strongest and most unequivocal terms the attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which threaten the security and safety of the mission and its personnel. Lebanon stresses the need for all parties to fully respect UNIFIL's mandate; to ensure its safety and security, the inviolability of its premises and its freedom of movement; and to do everything necessary to facilitate the performance of the Force's tasks, in accordance with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The attacks on peacekeepers are attacks on the Council and undermine its reputation and credibility in the eyes of the peoples of the world. These barbaric and

irresponsible acts must cease, whoever is responsible for them, and the Council has a legal and moral responsibility to identify those responsible and hold them to account.

It is perhaps worth noting that this Force and the States contributing to it have embodied the highest ideals of sacrifice, both past and present. Who among us does not recall Israel's deliberate targeting of the UNIFIL headquarters in the town of Qana in 1996 or Israel's threats and demands that UNIFIL leave its area of operations in 2024?

We meet today after three soldiers from the Indonesian battalion were killed and others were wounded, one of them a Polish national. This incident was preceded by attacks on the Ghanaian and Nepalese battalions.

On behalf of the Government of Lebanon, I offer my condolences to the Government and the people of Indonesia and to the families of the soldiers. We wish a speedy recovery to the injured and commend the sacrifices of the Indonesian battalion and all the soldiers participating in the Force for their contributions to maintaining security and stability in Lebanon. Today we reaffirm Lebanon's commitment to UNIFIL more than ever before, and we stress the importance of maintaining the unity of the forces contributing to UNIFIL and ensuring their continued participation. We also take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude to the Force Commander and all those serving in the Force.

The price the Lebanese people are paying for this conflict is heavy and exhausting. And they did not choose this war; rather, it was imposed upon them. Israel has never respected the cessation of hostilities and has continued its violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure. Meanwhile, Hizbullah unilaterally decided to wage a war at a time when the Lebanese Government was showing openness to dialogue that could have led to sustainable political solutions and provide a framework for addressing outstanding issues.

The humanitarian disaster is compounded by the continuing Israeli attacks, which have claimed the lives of 1,250 Lebanese and injured 3,700 people to date, including children, women, paramedics, aid workers and journalists, in direct attacks that constitute a flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. These attacks have led to the displacement of more than 1.2 million Lebanese, from their towns and villages in a process of mass forced displacement. Israel continues to demolish towns and villages and to carry out large-scale incursions into Lebanese territory, accompanied by calls to establish security zones and buffer zones, amid serious threats to Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, all of which constitute a flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice.

We would like to recall the letter we sent to the Security Council yesterday regarding the statements by the Israeli Ministers of Defence and Finance concerning the Israeli army's intention to occupy southern Lebanon as far as the Litani River and to consider the river Israel's new border. We call on the Council to act immediately, to clearly and unequivocally condemn these statements and to take the necessary measures to compel Israel to cease its incursions and threats to Lebanon's territorial integrity and political independence, to withdraw its forces to the internationally recognized borders and to comply with the United Nations Charter and the relevant international conventions and resolutions, including resolution 1701 (2006), and the cessation of hostilities.

In the same vein, we condemn in the strongest terms the threats by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps to target American universities in the Middle East, which have forced the American University of Beirut and the Lebanese American University to evacuate their campuses and move their students to remote learning. We call upon

Iran, which repeatedly recalls, through the Council, the need to respect the sovereignty of States and refrain from interfering in their internal affairs, to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and its sovereign decisions and to cease interfering in its internal affairs.

Lebanon and its people are determined to rebuild the State and its institutions and to carry out the necessary reforms. The Government has already embarked on this path and taken tangible and serious steps to re-establish the State's authority and control across the country and restrict weapons to its legitimate State institutions. Recognizing that States do not exist in isolation, the Government decided to open up to its regional neighbours, based on a principled approach grounded in the preservation of rights and the belief that sustainable solutions are not achieved by force but through peaceful means. In contrast, Israel has continued to undermine the Government's credibility through its ongoing violations and serious threats of occupation and its disregard for the United Nations Charter, international law and international humanitarian law.

The question that arises today is: has Israel achieved security since its occupation of Lebanon in 1978? Can security or stability be achieved through military solutions and without negotiations? Modern history has taught us, and Israel too must learn, that lasting security, stability and sustainable peace cannot be achieved through prolonged wars, protracted conflicts or occupation. The time has come to learn the lessons of the past once and for all: only a diplomatic solution can bring about lasting security and stability and, ultimately, a just peace. Diplomatic initiatives are already on the table, and the time has come to seize them. Let the violence stop now. This is Council members' responsibility and their duty. Every day that this conflict drags on it undermines the Security Council's credibility and that of the United Nations as a whole.

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

Mr. Danon (Israel): First, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and your team for presiding over the Council during this month. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for their briefings.

Israel extends its deepest condolences to the families and the loved ones of the United Nations peacekeepers who lost their lives. We honour their service and recognize the risks they take every day in carrying out their mandate.

Regarding the attack that took place yesterday, 30 March, we can confirm today that United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) forces were hit by Hizbullah explosive devices in an incident near Bani Hayyan. In addition, the shelling of the UNIFIL position near Adshit al-Qusayr on 29 March in which UNIFIL peacekeepers were tragically killed was carried out by Hizbullah. The Israel Defense Forces did not fire in the close vicinity of the position.

The situation is complex. It is changing quickly, and it is dangerous. But one thing is very clear: this did not happen in a vacuum. Israel did not choose this conflict; Hizbullah did when it began firing on our communities claiming to avenge the death of the Iranian regime's Supreme Leader.

This is taking place in an environment shaped by ongoing Hizbullah attacks against Israel. And Council members know it started on 2 March. Hizbullah has carried out coordinated attacks against Israeli civilians acting at the direction of Tehran. More than 5,000 rockets, missiles and drones have been fired at our people. Many of these attacks have been launched from areas south of the Litani River.

Council members know the consequences. People have to hide and go to shelters. The same communities that were displaced more than 18 months ago are again being displaced. These are violations of resolution 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004).

Hizbullah is deeply embedded across southern Lebanon. It operates from villages. It launches attacks from civilian areas. It positions itself close to UNIFIL forces. This is not by accident. It is a deliberate strategy. It chose where to put the launchers. Hizbullah embeds weapons and command centres within civilian areas.

Let me show the Council one example among hundreds. This map shows Hizbullah launch sites operating directly next to a UNIFIL position. The UNIFIL position is shown in yellow, and the red dots are the launch site. It shows four Hizbullah launches towards Israel on 9, 10 and 11 March near Haniyah, right next to UNIFIL position 510. We have hundreds of examples of where Hizbullah placed the launchers. It put UNIFIL in the line of fire, in the middle. This is not a coincidence.

Israel is coordinating closely with UNIFIL to reduce risk. Meanwhile Hizbullah is exploiting its presence.

On 22 March, the Head of the Northern Command of Israel sent a formal letter directly to UNIFIL warning that the vicinity of the Jba' area was dangerous. We saw it coming, unfortunately. And we made clear that Hizbullah was deliberately operating near United Nations positions and placing them in the direct line of fire. We notified UNIFIL so that it would be aware of this risk and take precautions. Let me quote directly what we wrote:

“Hizbullah is exploiting the presence of the United Nations positions in a manner that endangers UNIFIL personnel.”

We asked for temporary repositioning, not to escalate, but to protect. Israel has maintained continuous contact with UNIFIL, with Headquarters and with troop-contributing countries. We have urged forces to remain in protected bases and take shelter because we are trying to reduce risk.

As I stressed earlier, we regret any incident in which United Nations personnel are harmed. But we cannot ignore the bigger picture. Hizbullah continues to violate resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004). It acts as a proxy of Iran. Iran continues to fund, arm and direct Hizbullah. We also need to be honest about the role of the Lebanese Government. There have been statements, even today, important ones, but it is not enough. What we need is action. Lebanon committed to disarm Hizbullah south of the Litani River. It committed to deploy its own forces in that area. It has done neither.

I also listened carefully to my colleague from France. When it comes to Israel, he condemns and demands action. But when Iran openly defies Lebanon's sovereign decision to expel the Iranian Ambassador, all their responses are very measured, very diplomatic, very polite. When it comes to Israel, there is little thought about diplomacy. I ask — how come Lebanon took a decision to expel the Ambassador last week? The deadline has passed. As we speak, he is still in Beirut. The guest is no longer acting like a guest. He is acting like he owns the house. I ask diplomats, who serve in other countries, to imagine getting a request from a host country to move out, and then telling the host country: “No, I am not leaving. I have different orders from my capital, from Tehran, and I am staying now.” How can that happen? At the same time, Hizbullah ministers remain part of the Government, and attacks continue to be launched from areas that the Lebanese army says it controls, including south of the Litani River. The gap between words and reality is a problem. Lebanon has not taken sufficient action to address Hizbullah's military presence. Lebanon needs to take real action. Until that happens, no one is safe — no one, not in northern Israel, not in Lebanon and not in UNIFIL bases. We are paying a heavy price.

Last night, four Israeli soldiers fell in southern Lebanon. We remember them; we honour them. Israel will not accept attacks against its citizens, and we will take the necessary measures to defend them in accordance with international law. Let me be clear.

I tell my colleague from Lebanon: we have no desire to remain or operate in Lebanon. Our goal is to protect our communities and to push the threat away from our border.

This is what happens when a terrorist group turns an entire region into a battlefield. When rockets are launched from villages, when weapons are hidden among civilians and when international forces are placed in the middle of it all. Let me therefore be clear. If Hizbullah continues, the danger continues. If Hizbullah remains armed, the threat remains. Calls for de-escalation that ignore what is happening on the ground — the rockets, the attacks and the ongoing threat — will not solve this. We call on the Council to act: first, unequivocally condemn Hizbullah for its grave violations and designate it for what it is — a terrorist organization; secondly, demand that the Lebanese authorities fulfil their obligations, disarm Hizbullah and ensure full compliance with Security Council resolutions; and thirdly, address Iran's role as a threat to international peace and security and hold it accountable for the continued transfer of weapons and funding to Hizbullah. When others fail, Israel acts. We will do whatever is necessary to protect our people.

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

Mr. Hadi (Indonesia): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this urgent meeting. Alongside France, Indonesia requested this meeting as a testament of Indonesia's long-standing commitment and continued contribution to peacekeeping operations since 1957. I also thank the briefers, Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Assistant-Secretary-General Khiari and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher, for their remarks. I should also like to thank you, Madam President, for giving me the floor to express the sense of grief, anger and frustration of the more than 285 million people of Indonesia. I am sure that this sense of grief, anger, and frustration is widely shared by the people of the world. I am heartened by the outpouring of expressions of condolence, support and solidarity from the members of the Council and the wider international community.

Let me begin by honouring the memory of the fallen soldiers of peace by calling their names in the Chamber: Zulmi Aditya Iskandar, Major, Infantry, 33 years young; Muhammad Nur Ichwan, First Sergeant, 25 years young; and Farizal Rhomadhon, Corporal, 27 years young. Corporal Farizal lost his life serving his duty in our post in Adshit al-Qusayr. Major Iskandar and First Sergeant Ichwan lost their lives in an attack on their convoy, providing logistical supports in Bani Hayyan. We cannot accept the killing of peacekeepers. This is a grave loss to Indonesia. This is also a grave loss to all of us, to the United Nations, to the Council and to every community that looks to peacekeepers as symbols of hope and peace.

In addition, the attacks injured five other peacekeepers: Captain Sulthan Wirdean Maulana, Corporal Rico Pramudia, Corporal Arif Kurniawan, Corporal Bayu Prakoso, Cadet Private Deni Rianto. These peacekeepers were wounded while carrying out a mandate entrusted to them by this very Council. Indonesia condemns in the strongest terms these heinous attacks against those peacekeepers serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) on 29 and 30 March. Indonesia urges all relevant actors to ensure the prompt, safe and dignified repatriation of the remains of the three deceased personnel and requests the best possible medical treatment and comprehensive care for the five injured peacekeepers so as to ensure their full and swift recovery.

Some detractors have argued that the fallen soldiers were positioned in a zone of active war. But this framing overlooks a fundamental question: who is responsible for creating and sustaining that zone of active hostilities? The current escalation did not arise in vacuum. It results from repeated incursions by the Israeli military into the territory of Lebanon. Indonesia strongly condemns Israeli attacks in southern Lebanon, which constitute a serious violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of

Lebanon. Indonesia continues to stand in solidarity with the Government and the people of Lebanon. As hostilities in southern Lebanon escalate, attacks against UNIFIL peacekeepers have also increased in recent weeks.

These repeated attacks are not mere incidents but deliberate assaults aimed at undermining UNIFIL and deterring its ability to fulfil the mandate of resolution 1701 (2006). These attacks also represent a direct threat to international peace and security and may constitute war crimes under international law. We therefore demand an immediate, thorough and transparent investigation.

Let me be clear: we demand investigation by the United Nations, not excuses from Israel. We demand the Security Council to keep abreast of the investigation and to immediately follow up on the results. We demand that the perpetrators be held legally accountable. Immunity must not become the standard, and attacks against peacekeepers must not be repeated nor tolerated. We also demand a firm guarantee from all parties involved, including Israel, to uphold their obligations under international law to immediately cease attacks and aggressive behaviours that endanger United Nations personnel and property and to refrain from any action that further escalates hostilities.

The safety and security of peacekeepers must remain our utmost priority. Amid escalating hostilities, the Council and the Secretary-General must immediately implement emergency measures to ensure the full protection of UNIFIL personnel and assets. This includes a review of security arrangement protocols and activation of contingency and evacuation plans commensurate with the developments on the ground. We must leverage all political and diplomatic means to de-escalate the situation.

The Security Council must reaffirm the foundational principles that guarantee the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers. It is imperative for the Council and the wider international community to take immediate and decisive action to protect those who protect peace. We make these demands in deep reverence for our fallen peacekeepers, to whom Indonesia pays its highest respects for their ultimate sacrifice in the service of international peace and security. To this end, Indonesia remains committed to contributing to the maintenance of peace and security as our constitutional mandate.

Now, we demand that the Security Council act and deliver. Today, the Security Council must speak up with a clear, strong and unified voice to condemn the attacks against peacekeeping personnel. Today the Security Council must reaffirm the obligations of all parties to ensure and guarantee the safety and security of peacekeepers. Today the Security Council must take decisive action to prevent future hostilities and attacks against peacekeepers. There can be no more attacks.

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

Mr. Kempinski (Poland): Let me thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting upon the request of France and Indonesia. I would also like to thank the briefers for the comprehensive information on the situation on the ground.

Poland is deeply concerned about the increasing instability in Lebanon, which directly affects the safety of the civilian population, as well as the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) personnel. As a result of recent attacks, three Indonesian peacekeepers have lost their lives and others were injured, including a soldier from the Polish contingent. We extend our deepest condolences to Indonesia and to the loved ones of the fallen peacekeepers, and wish the injured a swift recovery. Poland strongly condemns these incidents. Ensuring the safety of peacekeepers must be a top priority for all parties involved. We expect the ongoing investigation to conclusively determine all the circumstances of these tragic developments.

We wish to point to the increasingly difficult situation of UNIFIL, marked by growing security threats, a reduction of operational capabilities due to 15 per cent cuts

and the lack of a clear plan for the termination of mandated activities. These elements create uncertainty regarding UNIFIL's mode of operation in the future. We therefore call for the development of clear operational guidelines for the implementation of resolution 2790 (2025), enabling the troop-contributing countries to align their planning while ensuring both the continued implementation of the mandate and the safety of soldiers remaining in Lebanon.

More broadly, we call on all parties to refrain from any actions that would further escalate the situation and to return to the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, which was negotiated by the United States and France in November 2024, and to ensure the full implementation of the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006).

We are deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation of the civilian population. In response, Poland has delivered the first batch of humanitarian aid to Lebanon. Additionally, in response to humanitarian appeals, we have made voluntary contributions to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Further aid programmes are currently being prepared.

We call on all parties to urgently return to the ceasefire agreement and to fully respect resolution 1701 (2006). Poland reaffirms its strong support for the mandate of UNIFIL in southern Lebanon and we commend the courage, professionalism and steadfast commitment of UNIFIL peacekeepers in the fulfilment of their mandate.

The President: The representative of France has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Bonnafont (France) (*spoke in French*): I will be very brief in response to the remarks made by our Israeli colleague. I will not engage in a comparison between France's statements regarding Israel and Iran, simply because it would never occur to me to compare the nature of relations between France and Israel, on the one hand, and France and Iran, on the other. Our sole concern is the desire for de-escalation and the desire for Lebanon's territorial integrity and sovereignty to be respected by all, and we continue to emphasize the overwhelming responsibility of Iran and Hizbullah for the start of all of these operations.

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

However, before adjourning this meeting, I would like to warmly thank the secretariat of the Council for all the support they have given us this month, and I thank all the members of the Council for joining us in this bit of history and for lending us their support. I also thank the variety of voices from this seat, from the First Lady of the United States to Ambassador Waltz to myself and to all the other ambassadors from the United States Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

As I gavel the presidency closed, I also speak on behalf of everyone here at our Mission in wishing the delegation of Bahrain good luck for the month of April. But we know luck favours the prepared, so they are going to do very well. I thank everyone from the Mission and I wish one and all a great day.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.