



# Security Council

Eighty-first year

**10146**<sup>th</sup> meeting

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New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Al Zayani/Ms. Abdulla/Mr. Alrowaiei .....	(Bahrain)
<i>Members:</i>	China .....	Mr. Zheng Minghao
	Colombia .....	Mrs. Ríos Serna
	Democratic Republic of the Congo .....	Mrs. Liolocha
	Denmark .....	Ms. Ibrahim
	France .....	Mr. Shahrour
	Greece.....	Mr. Zves
	Latvia.....	Mr. Ilgis
	Liberia .....	Mr. Duopu
	Pakistan.....	Mr. Sarwani
	Panama .....	Mrs. Petrocelli Rojas
	Russian Federation .....	Mr. Khloponin
	Somalia .....	Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.....	Mr. Coyle
	United States of America.....	Ms. Patterson

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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*The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.*

**The President:** I now give the floor to Mr. Aboul Gheit.

**Mr. Aboul Gheit** (*spoke in Arabic*): Today's debate is taking place against a backdrop of extreme tension in the Middle East, the effects and repercussions of which are being acutely felt in that region and in the Arab world in particular. Our Arab States were not among those that called for war with Iran. On the contrary, a number of them sought to prevent it. Nonetheless, they have not been spared the barrage of unjustified and illegal Iranian attacks. These are heinous assaults. We have condemned them before the Council, and we condemn them once again in the strongest of terms, while rejecting any pretext for them whatsoever.

This major crisis currently gripping the Arab region must not, however, detract the attention of the world or the Council from the primary and abiding cause of instability in the Middle East: the continued Israeli occupation of Palestine and other Arab lands. Israel is pursuing a policy that can be aptly described as one of perpetual war — a strategy that sustains military confrontation across multiple fronts. That approach is being ramped up through the implementation of provocative policies entailing encroachment on the territories of a number of neighbouring Arab States, including in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria, under the pretext of security, while a settlement policy that is unprecedented in its violence, scope and terror is being executed in the West Bank. Israel has not stopped there; it has gone on to undermine stability in the Horn of Africa by undermining the territorial integrity of Somalia and recognizing a breakaway region in violation of Security Council resolutions and the tenets of international law.

The picture has thus become abundantly clear: a violent, expansionist settler Government in Israel, which lacks any genuine vision for peace or any real plan for peaceful coexistence in the region, is posing an imminent threat to regional stability as its sole agenda is to perpetuate conflict and pursue military operations, perhaps indefinitely. That dangerous agenda runs counter to the 20-point plan put forward by President Trump in October 2025 and is antithetical to the spirit and letter of resolution 2803 (2025), which, in our view, revived the prospect of a settlement based on the two-State solution.

If we turn to Gaza, we see that Israel has drawn yet another line in its series of endless lines, which, this time, is yellow in hue and it treats as a new status quo that can be sustained and prolonged, just as it treats the ceasefire reached in October 2025 through American and regional mediation as a unilateral arrangement that binds exclusively the Palestinian side, not Israel itself. We have supported President Trump's Plan, which contains key elements to fundamentally change the situation in Gaza, including early recovery and reconstruction, a full Israeli withdrawal and the disarming of Hamas. The implementation of these elements must proceed in a balanced, synchronized and gradual manner. It is unacceptable that more than 2 million Palestinians are still living in tents with no prospect of recovery or reconstruction on the horizon. The International Stabilization Force in Gaza provided for in resolution 2803 (2025) has not yet been operationalized; nor has the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza entered the Strip to start its work. Both of those elements are necessary.

The Palestinian people have paid the cost of this horrible war in blood and money. The war has been described by the International Court of Justice as a war of extermination. Today, they are again paying the price with their future and the future of their children, who have gone years cut off from their normal lives and schools. Were it not for the exceptional determination of the Palestinian people to come up with ways of maintaining a minimum of educational, and, for that matter sanitary, services amid the rubble and debris, the situation would be much worse.

I take this opportunity to strongly and unreservedly reiterate the position of the League of Arab States in support of the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which remains to this day, despite the occupation's policies and the invalid laws it has issued against it, the largest organization that provides health and education services in Gaza. As of today, it employs some 11,000 staff in the Strip alone. UNRWA needs support and protection, instead of illegitimate efforts to liquidate it and eliminate its role.

It is well known that Israel has a plan for de facto annexation of the West Bank. The implementation of that plan is proceeding apace, with an increasing pace of settlement in ongoing violation of resolution 2334 (2016). Israeli Government ministers are encouraging settler terrorism and crimes against Palestinians. Laws are being enacted to make it easier to seize Palestinian land. The Palestinian Authority continues to be hamstrung and pushed to the brink of financial collapse by the illegal seizure of tax revenues and the confiscation of billions in clearance revenues that Israel has refused to transfer to the Palestinian Authority since last May. These policies pursued relentlessly by the occupation have turned the two-State solution into a distant dream. Instead of implementing resolution 2803 (2025) to speed up transitional arrangements in Gaza and strengthen the institutional unity between it and the West Bank as a prelude to launching an irreversible track towards the two-State solution, we find Israel emptying the resolution and plan of its content. It is insisting on entrenching a new reality, the essence of which is the reoccupation of more than half of the Gaza Strip.

Allow us to recall here that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has an overarching context. It is not just a humanitarian crisis. Rather, it is essentially a political crisis that has produced catastrophic humanitarian dimensions. Without a political horizon that allows Palestinians to realize their desire for national independence and confers legitimacy on transitional arrangements, the occupying Power will continue to implement its plans to create a new reality in Gaza and the West Bank that makes the two-State solution unattainable.

I cannot end this intervention without saying something about Lebanon. The League of Arab States welcomed as a positive development the United States President's 16 April announcement of a ceasefire. We wish to put on record our full support for the courageous efforts of the Government of Lebanon. It has restored one of the basic elements of the country's sovereignty, namely, control of the legitimate institutions over decisions of war and peace. We stress that the ultimate objective remains a mutual and comprehensive cessation of hostilities, the achievement of stability, an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory, and preparations for the return of displaced persons to their villages, which the occupation destroyed to make them unfit to live in.

The illusion that military force alone can bring about security is indeed just an illusion. Security is provided by peace. Peace is based on justice, not arms. Peace requires courage, patience and openness to coexistence and serious and bold decisions that create hope for future generations. The absence of such concepts is troubling. It means that the region will remain trapped in a never-ending cycle of destructive wars and violence. As long as that situation prevails, the Council will unfortunately continue to appeal, demand and urge to no avail. We nevertheless cling to the hope that the Council can play an effective and genuine role in bringing about justice and peace in the interest of the region and its peoples and in the interest of global security and stability.

**The President:** I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Khalifa Shaheen Al Marar, Minister of State of the United Arab Emirates.

**Mr. Al Marar** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to thank Your Excellency Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and your team for organizing this meeting. I should

also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari; His Excellency Mr. Espen Barth Eide, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway and Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians; and Mr. Tony Blair, member of the Executive Board of the Board of Peace, for their valuable briefings.

Since the adoption in November 2025 of resolution 2803 (2025), which approved President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, my country has proactively supported these efforts, including through membership in both the Board of Peace and the Executive Board. We have worked with partners to operationalize the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, supported the Office of the High Representative for Gaza and supported moving ahead with the phases of the Plan in all their elements, including the disarming of Hamas and full withdrawal of Israeli forces, as provided for in the Comprehensive Plan, to pave the way for the Palestinian Authority, after it is reformed, to take over all its responsibilities in Gaza and the West Bank.

Since the beginning of the war, the United Arab Emirates has provided nearly \$3 billion in humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. It has pledged to allocate an additional \$1.2 billion through the Board of Peace. Operation Gallant Knight 3 continues to deliver aid by land, sea and air and will continue to perform that task as long as there is a need.

However, aid alone is not sufficient. Delivering it to the Palestinian people in Gaza at the required scale requires the opening the Rafah crossing in both directions, to ensure the smooth flow of humanitarian aid to meet the enormous needs and to enable the United Nations and international humanitarian organizations to carry out their work without obstruction.

Furthermore, the United Arab Emirates expresses its deep concern over the deteriorating situation in the West Bank, the encroachment and violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers and Israel's ongoing violations in Jerusalem and against Islamic and Christian holy sites. We emphasize the necessity of preserving the historical and legal status quo in these areas and view it as a fundamental pillar of any credible political process leading to a comprehensive and just solution.

With regard to Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire between the republic of Lebanon and Israel on 16 April and its extension for an additional three weeks and commends the United States diplomatic efforts that led to this agreement. The United Arab Emirates affirms its full solidarity with the Government of Lebanon and supports its efforts to place all weaponry under State control and dismantle terrorist organizations — steps that represent a pivotal milestone in the process of consolidating national security and stability. We also commend the progress achieved by the Lebanese Army in extending State authority south of the Litani River and reiterate our unwavering commitment to supporting Lebanon's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as our steadfast solidarity with the brotherly Lebanese people.

The United Arab Emirates also condemns, in the strongest terms, the Israeli attacks that targeted several areas in Lebanon. It reaffirms the importance of protecting civilians in accordance with international law and reiterates its call for de-escalation and for the resolution of the dispute through diplomatic means.

The United Arab Emirates strongly condemns the attacks targeting the peacekeeping forces of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), including the French and Indonesian contingents. The targeting of peacekeepers constitutes a grave violation of international law and the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006). We call upon all parties to respect the safety and security of UNIFIL forces.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates remains committed to working with its regional and international partners to achieve stability in Gaza and to implement the Comprehensive Plan, with the ultimate goal of realizing an independent, sovereign Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the two-State solution.

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

**Ms. Tinca (Romania):** Romania welcomes the convening of this important high-level debate.

We echo the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union on behalf of its member States, and we would like to further elaborate on our national position as follows.

We join earlier speakers in calling for continued dialogue and diplomacy and welcome the ongoing United States–Iran negotiations as the sole route to de-escalation and enduring peace in the region. We commend you, Mr. President, for the effort led by Bahrain, together with other partners of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, and the successful adoption of resolution 2817 (2026). Romania was proud to join these efforts from the outset in co-sponsoring this resolution, and we further call on Iran to fully abide by its provisions.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz and its grave consequences continue to cause intense angst. The use of critical global waterways as an instrument of coercion by Iran represents a dangerous escalation and a breach of international law. Romania will continue to actively engage in the maritime freedom of navigation initiatives in the Strait of Hormuz alongside like-minded partners, regional and international organizations, including the United Nations. We salute the proactive approach of the Secretary-General and his team in addressing the most dire humanitarian consequences caused by the disruption to the freedom of navigation through the Strait.

This current flare-up in the Middle East remains a matter of increased concern across multiple areas. We welcome the direct peace negotiations between Israel and Lebanon as a step forward in the pursuit of security and regional stability, and in particular we salute the three-week ceasefire extension brokered by the United States Administration.

Romania reaffirms its support for Lebanon's territorial integrity and sovereignty and encourages the efforts of the Lebanese Government to implement resolution 1701 (2006) and disarm Hizbullah. We also appreciate the efforts of the Lebanese executive to regain full control of its territory.

Furthermore, Romania recently joined the international humanitarian response led by Jordan for the benefit of the affected civilian population in Lebanon. I am glad to inform the Council that my country has ensured the donation of 15 tons of humanitarian aid to Beirut.

We must not lose sight of the situation in Gaza and the West Bank. Romania reiterates its support for the implementation of the President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, in accordance with resolution 2803 (2025). We look forward to the complete operationalization of the International Stabilization Force and the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza in supporting the efforts of High Representative Mladenov. We remain committed to our long-standing position in support of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the two-State solution, in accordance with the provisions of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Last but not least, with regard to Syria, we are encouraged by the positive developments in the humanitarian and political situation, and we salute the robust efforts led by President Al-Sharaa, in particular the resilience shown in not letting the country relapse into the wider regional conflict. We urge all Syrian actors to maintain and foster dialogue and genuine cooperation and call for all civilians to be fully protected by the Syrian authorities. Romania stands by Syria in this moment of great opportunity to foster a prosperous and peaceful country. Equally, Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity must be preserved.

In closing, Romania reaffirms its solidarity with partners from the region and beyond affected by the current crisis and reiterates its availability to support efforts aimed at achieving a sustainable peace.

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

**Ms. Plepytė (Lithuania):** I thank Bahrain's presidency for the opportunity to take part in this timely debate.

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the European Union, and I wish to make a statement in my national capacity.

I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his sober briefing on the situation in the region.

Lithuania stands ready to support and contribute through bilateral and multilateral political dialogue towards lasting solutions leading to sustainable long-term security in the Middle East, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Today, as all eyes are on the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf, it is also essential to ensure the implementation of decisions taken regarding Palestine. In this regard, I appreciate the briefings by Tony Blair and Foreign Minister Eide. Lithuania has welcomed the adoption of the landmark resolution 2803 (2025) and supports the calls for its full implementation. We underscore the need for unconstrained delivery of humanitarian aid and express hope that the second phase of the President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict will be implemented as provided.

Ensuring long-term stability requires the deradicalization and demilitarization of Gaza, including the disarmament of Hamas and its exclusion from any future governance of the Strip. We are also concerned about the deteriorating situation in the West Bank, in particular violence and continued settlement expansion, and call on Israel to take all necessary steps to prevent violence against Palestinians. Lithuania's position is that the two-State solution is key to resolving the conflict. We reiterate that it must also address Israel's existential security needs. Terrorism should not be tolerated.

Lithuania welcomes the ceasefire agreed by the United States and Iran and appreciates the mediation efforts of all contributing countries, in particular Pakistan. We have co-sponsored resolution 2817 (2026) condemning Iran's attacks on regional States and the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. In this regard, we welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General and commend the initiatives of France and the United Kingdom, including the recent summit on maritime security. Lithuania stands ready to support and contribute to follow-up efforts.

Turning to Lebanon, Lithuania welcomes the temporary ceasefire and commends the efforts of the United States to initiate direct negotiations between the two sides. We note the constructive engagement between Israel and Lebanon and their commitment to advancing the peace process. Durable stability in Lebanon requires strong and sovereign governance free from extremist and non-State actors. Lithuania welcomes the civil Government's steps to strengthen the sovereignty and integrity of decision-making. We strongly condemn attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, including those that claimed the lives of Indonesian and French peacekeepers and

injured others. We express our deepest condolences and sympathy and urge all parties to ensure the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel and premises.

Lastly, Lithuania reaffirms its support for an inclusive political process in Syria. We support Syrian and international efforts towards accountability for all atrocities committed by the Al-Assad regime and other parties. Lithuania expresses concern about foreign interference and urges all actors to fully respect Syria's unity, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. In this context, we call on the Syrian interim authorities to revoke the decisions that contradict the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and Georgia.

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

**Mr. Ochoa Martínez** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I begin by welcoming the respective announcements made on 21 and 24 April regarding the extension of the ceasefires in the Middle East. The fragility of the cessation of hostilities requires the efforts of the entire international community, and the Security Council in particular, to ensure that they lead to a permanent ceasefire and that space is urgently created to build a comprehensive peace throughout the region. The direct and indirect impacts have had multiple consequences in terms of humanitarian, economic, food security and maritime and air transport issues, to name but a few. My country expresses its most sincere condolences for the loss of civilian lives throughout the region and for the fallen blue helmets. There is no justification whatsoever for so many deaths.

Mexico supports the Secretary-General in appointing Mr. Jean Arnault as his Personal Envoy for the conflict in the Middle East and its consequences and in creating a task force. We are confident that diplomatic channels will create favourable conditions for dialogue and cooperation between the parties.

Regarding the situation between Israel and Palestine, we note that some progress has been made, despite the volatility in the area. It is positive that the establishment of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza as a transitional authority has been confirmed. The ongoing training of Palestinian police officers, thanks to international cooperation, will enable them to assume their duties once the withdrawal of Israeli forces has been achieved and the security situation has stabilized. We are confident that such progress will mark an irreversible shift in the dynamics of the conflict and that all the necessary institutional reforms will be undertaken to continue consolidating the Palestinian State. The Palestinian people's right to self-determination exists, irrespective of any transitional arrangement, and it must therefore be fully respected.

There is no justification whatsoever for legislation reinstating the death penalty. Mexico's position is clear in its rejection of the death penalty in any circumstance and in any part of the world. We have also taken note of the various efforts towards the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed factions. As one of the co-chairs of the working groups of the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, Mexico emphasizes the centrality of promoting narratives of peace that bring about profound changes in Israeli and Palestinian societies.

For any political or security solution to be sustainable, a transformation is required that prioritizes peaceful coexistence and rejects violence. The United Nations possesses tools for the peaceful resolution of disputes that can help the Middle East region to achieve peace, prosperity and justice. Likewise, the established capacities of those countries that have dedicated themselves to mediation and quiet diplomacy must be harnessed to achieve tangible results.

Stability in the Middle East is imperative for the international community, achievable only through diplomacy and the continuous and coordinated pursuit of peaceful solutions to conflicts. The Security Council has a special responsibility to achieve this objective. To this end, there must be fewer vetoes and more action to ensure full respect for international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. The peoples of the Middle East deserve a peaceful future.

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

**Mr. Marschik (Austria):** I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's open debate.

First, on the wider Middle East, we meet at a time of extreme escalation across the wider Middle East. Spillover effects, such as unacceptable attacks on Gulf countries, pose serious global risks, including threats to global food security, threats to energy security and a worsening humanitarian situation. As mentioned yesterday in our statement in the open debate (see S/PV.10145), any unilateral action restricting the freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz or other international straits is simply unacceptable, and the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz puts a particularly heavy burden on the most vulnerable countries. We therefore urgently need de-escalation and diplomacy. Negotiations must now advance for a comprehensive solution. I would like to reiterate that Austria is hosting platforms for dialogue and international institutions in Vienna, including the International Atomic Energy Agency, which stand ready to serve as a venue for international dialogue, including on nuclear issues.

Secondly, on the Palestinian question, Austria joins the call for the full implementation of resolution 2803 (2025). The 20-point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict adopted in October 2025 provides a clear road map. Above all, the ceasefire must hold, permanently and without exception. And we now need progress towards phase two: the disarmament of Hamas and other armed groups, the withdrawal of Israeli forces, the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance and the swift establishment of a functioning civilian administration. In our view, there can be no durable peace without a viable political solution. We share the position that the only sustainable path forward is a negotiated two-State solution based on international law. Gaza and the West Bank must remain Palestinian. In this regard, Austria fully supports the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. We call for an immediate halt to settlement expansion, annexation plans and settler violence in the West Bank and for the release of withheld tax revenues belonging to the Palestinian Authority.

Thirdly, on Lebanon, we are deeply concerned about the expansion of regional tensions onto Lebanese territory. With over 1 million people displaced, the humanitarian situation is catastrophic. As a long-standing troop-contributing country, Austria remains committed to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We are extremely alarmed by recent UNIFIL casualties and mourn the recent deaths of Indonesian and French peacekeepers. The parties must strictly adhere to the principles of international law in protecting civilians and guarantee the safety of peacekeepers. We emphasize the urgent need to restore and fully implement the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire arrangement of 2024 and resolution 1701 (2006). We welcome the willingness of the parties to engage in talks and encourage further diplomatic efforts after the extension of the ceasefire.

In conclusion, the Middle East stands at a crossroads. The choices made now will determine whether the region moves towards renewed escalation or a path to lasting peace. We urge all parties to uphold ceasefires, to act in full respect of international law and to engage in dialogue and diplomacy.

Our compass is the United Nations and the rules-based order.

**The President:** I now give the representative of Australia.

**Mr. Thistlethwaite** (Australia): Australia is deeply concerned about the situation in Gaza and the West Bank. We reiterate our support for President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict as the most viable pathway available to end the suffering and bring stability and an enduring peace. Australia remains distressed about the dire humanitarian situation and continuing loss of life in Gaza. More than 760 Palestinians have been killed since the October 2025 ceasefire. Shockingly, this includes 120 children. Countless families remain displaced without essential shelter and supplies. Gazans continue to face acute levels of food insecurity.

Australia has provided over \$135 million to support the conflict-affected people in Gaza and Lebanon, with a focus on the needs of women and children. We reiterate our call for the restrictions on humanitarian organizations to be lifted and for the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid. There is a critical need to protect civilians, including the aid workers who deliver food, water and medicine. Any attacks that deliberately threaten the safety and security of humanitarian personnel must cease.

In the West Bank, we have long been clear that the Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and a significant obstacle to peace. The recent decision of the Israeli Security Cabinet to expand Israeli control over the West Bank undermines the stability and security of the region. These measures, along with altering the demographic composition of Palestine, are unacceptable. Continuing violence by settlers in the West Bank is unacceptable, and Australia expects Israel to hold perpetrators to account.

The two-State solution is the only viable path to a long-term peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians alike. Australia is concerned by Israel's recently passed death penalty legislation. We are particularly worried about the de facto discriminatory character of the law. The death penalty is an inhumane and degrading form of punishment, without any deterring effect. We urge the Israeli decision makers in the Knesset and Government to reverse this decision.

On the region more broadly, the situation in Lebanon is deeply distressing, with over 2,000 people killed and the displacement of more than 1.2 million civilians. The attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon are unacceptable. The safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and aid workers must be ensured at all times.

The recently extended United States-brokered ceasefire agreed by Israel and Lebanon is an important step forward, and we call on the parties to the conflict, including Hizbullah, to adhere to it. We call for an end to the conflict, respect for Lebanon's sovereignty and full, swift, disarming of Hizbullah in line with resolution 1701 (2006).

The human cost of ongoing violence in the Middle East is mounting. Australia calls for de-escalation and for all parties to uphold international humanitarian law and human rights.

**The President:** I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. The flashing light on the microphone will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

**Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We welcome the presidency of Mr. Al Zayani at this meeting, and we would like to thank all briefers for their valuable contributions.

The Council's meeting comes at a critical time for the Middle East, in particular for Qatar and the Gulf countries, especially since 28 February, and the dangerous, multifaceted repercussions on peace and security. In this vein, we reiterate the position of Qatar as follows. We condemn all attacks by Iran against Qatar and the countries of the Gulf region. We condemn all violations targeting the national sovereignty of the State of Qatar and that of the countries of the Gulf, including targeting the critical infrastructure and the energy facilities which have led to the injury of civilians and other material loss. This is also a violation of international law and international humanitarian law.

Resolution 2817 (2026), which was submitted by the sisterly Kingdom of Bahrain on behalf of the Arab Gulf countries and Jordan, and had the support of 136 countries, affirmed their strong support for regional peace, and the sovereignty and political independence of those countries. It also stressed the importance of the freedom of navigation and rights in accordance with international law, especially in the vicinity of critical international waterways.

Turning to the developments in the Strait of Hormuz, we stress the importance of ensuring safe and free navigation in international waterways, in accordance with international law. We also stress that the security in the Strait of Hormuz is an international cause since it is closely linked to global energy security and safe international supply chains. This requires concerted efforts to ensure freedom of navigation and the necessary opening of waterways. Failure to do so will result in negative repercussions on the countries of the region, on energy and food supplies throughout the world and on international peace and security.

We stress that serious dialogue and commitment to international law and good neighbourliness are the main pillars for the settlement of crises and for avoiding their serious repercussions. Therefore, we welcomed the declaration of the ceasefire between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 8 April. We commend the efforts of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and other parties that have undertaken good offices and mediation. We underscore that it is important to fully commit to all efforts that ensure de-escalation and paves the way for dialogue.

Turning to the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, we condemn Israel's illegal decisions on the West Bank and the reclassification of the Palestinian territory as the so-called lands of the State of Israel, the expansion of settlement activity, the enactment of legislation that allows the death penalty to be applied in the occupied West Bank, and the constraint of freedom of worship for Muslims and Christians in Occupied Jerusalem. Therefore, we reiterate our principled position based on resolutions of international legitimacy and the two-State solution to establish an independent Palestinian State along the borders of 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. There is a need to put an end to occupation and settlement and the illegitimate Israeli practices in the occupied territory.

Turning to the situation in Gaza Strip, we stress the need for all parties to commit to the implementation of the President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and to opening the crossings to ensure the influx of humanitarian assistance without any restrictions. The State of Qatar stresses that its full and steadfast commitment with regards the Board of Peace, as it has been since the very first day of the mediation efforts to the signature of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement with our partners. We will continue to coordinate our humanitarian efforts with our partners in the United Nations and on the Board of Peace in such a manner that supports a path for recovery and reconstruction and promotes prospects for sustainable peace.

We reiterate our support for the sovereignty and unity of the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic. We condemn the Israeli aggression, which violates Syria's sovereignty, international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

We also stress our long-standing position with regard to the unity, sovereignty and security of the territories of the sisterly Republic of Lebanon. We fully stand by Lebanon and all the measures taken to ensure its stability and peace and welcome the ceasefire as a first step towards de-escalation. We welcome the efforts of His Excellency the President of the United States. In this vein, we stress the need to adhere to the ceasefire and build upon it.

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

**Mr. Alwasil** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to begin by welcoming His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain as President of this meeting, and we commend the convening of this important meeting at such a critical and sensitive time. We sincerely thank the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations for its efforts during its presidency of the Council this month. We also thank the briefers, Ms. Varsen Aghabekian, Foreign Minister of Palestine; Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations; Mr. Espen Barth Eide, Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians; and Mr. Tony Blair, member of the Executive Board of the Board of Peace.

We gather today against the backdrop of the current crisis in our region, particularly the heinous aggression directed against the State of Palestine and the Republic of Lebanon by Israel, as well as the attacks involving drones and missiles launched by Iran against the Arab Gulf States. My country condemns those brutal Iranian attacks, which have targeted civilian infrastructure, including oil fields and refineries, embassies and other civilian facilities. Although most of the attacks were successfully intercepted, they regrettably resulted in human casualties and material damage.

The convening of this meeting coincides with a difficult and critical phase in the Middle East region, with a new chapter of suffering and recurrent violations perpetrated by the Israeli occupation, including attempts to alter the historical and legal status quo of the Islamic holy sites in the city of Jerusalem, in particular the incursions into the blessed Aqsa Mosque and Al-Quds al-Sharif. Such actions constitute a flagrant breach of international law and international humanitarian law, represent an unacceptable provocation to Muslims worldwide and violate the sanctity of the Holy City. We express our total rejection of any attempts aimed at altering the existing historical and legal status quo in the city of Jerusalem and its Islamic holy sites.

We condemn all illegal settlement activities, including Israel's decision to authorize the construction of more than 30 new settlements, which constitutes a blatant violation of international law, including relevant Security Council resolutions and the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion of 2024. We also strongly condemn the recent attacks on Palestinian schools and children in the occupied West Bank.

Conversely, we would like to highlight the efforts of His Excellency the President of the United States of America and his Administration, as well as the attention they are devoting to ending the war and establishing peace in the Gaza Strip. The Kingdom participated in the Board of Peace meeting held in Washington, D.C., on 19 February, in accordance with President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, endorsed in resolution 2803 (2025). This track seeks to secure a permanent ceasefire, support the reconstruction of Gaza and advance a just and lasting peace based

on the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of their own independent State, in accordance with international law.

We also draw attention to the health situation that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) highlighted in its reports, including environmental risks such as pests, diseases and rodents, which are affecting residential areas throughout the Gaza Strip. We call on the international community to support UNRWA in fulfilling its health-related mandate, securing medical supplies, maintaining sanitation systems and protecting UNRWA staff to enable them to carry out their humanitarian duties.

The time has come to open the crossings and allow humanitarian aid to enter the Gaza Strip. It is also time to empower the Palestinian and international committees established to administer the Strip to carry out their duties without restriction or condition, in a manner that ensures the management of the daily affairs of the Strip's inhabitants. This should be carried out while maintaining the institutional and geographical link between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, ensuring the unity of Palestinian territories and rejecting any attempts to divide them or undermine that unity.

In conclusion, the only path to achieve a just and comprehensive peace requires establishing a permanent ceasefire; preventing displacement and annexation; ensuring a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip; supporting the reconstruction of the Strip; and advancing a genuine political horizon that leads to the establishment of an independent State of Palestine on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

**The President:** I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. The flashing light on the microphone will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

**Mr. Moustafa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*):** At the outset, I would like to thank the presidency of the Kingdom of Bahrain for its excellent leadership of the Council's proceedings this month. I also thank all the briefers for their valuable contributions.

It is my honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States, at a time when the Middle East region is witnessing escalating and overlapping crises that require the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities. In this context, I would like to raise the following points.

First, the Group of Arab States condemns in the strongest terms all illegal Israeli measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which constitute grave violations of international law and relevant resolutions of international legitimacy. We specifically highlight the expansion of the occupation and settlements; settler terrorism; efforts to displace Palestinians from their lands; and the systematic targeting of humanitarian and civil society organizations and United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). This is in addition to the imposition of restrictions on the Palestinian Authority and the measures related to the registration and regularization of land ownership in the occupied West Bank.

We also condemn the Israeli Knesset's enactment of a discriminatory law authorizing the execution of Palestinian prisoners, a measure that reinforces an apartheid system, as well as the continued security operations and repeated incursions by extremist Israeli Government officials into the blessed Aqsa Mosque and the Haram al-Sharif, carried out under the protection of occupation forces. Furthermore, we condemn the imposition of restrictions on freedom of worship for both Muslims and

Christians, in flagrant violation of the historical and legal status quo at Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

Secondly, we call on Israel, as the occupying Power, to immediately and completely cease those systematic violations and aggressions against Palestinians throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory; to refrain from practices that undermine the vision of His Excellency the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, and of the international community, which rejects the annexation or occupation of any territories in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; and to fully comply with the provisions of international law and international humanitarian law, as well as all Security Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2803 (2025). This includes arrangements relating to the ceasefire in Gaza, the opening of crossings and the safe, full and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid. Furthermore, we call for the launch of early recovery and reconstruction efforts throughout the Gaza Strip, and for Israel's complete withdrawal from it. In that context, we also emphasize the need to unify the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the policy of "one State, one Government, one law, one gun".

Thirdly, the Group of Arab States affirms that achieving security, stability and peace in the region remains contingent upon ending the Israeli occupation and enabling the Palestinian people to attain their legitimate and inalienable rights, foremost among which are the right to self-determination, an end to the occupation and the establishment of an independent State along the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the two-State solution.

Fourthly, the Group of Arab States welcomes the announcement of the three-week extension of the cessation of hostilities in Lebanon, brokered by the United States of America. We consider it an important step towards de-escalation and halting Israeli aggression against Lebanon. We also welcome the initiative of the President of the Republic of Lebanon, including the launch of negotiations aimed at ending the hostilities and the Israeli occupation. The Group stresses the imperative for Israel to comply with the ceasefire, end attacks against Lebanon and withdraw immediately, fully and unconditionally from all Lebanese territories, as well as to fully implement resolution 1701 (2006). We condemn, in the strongest terms, the Israeli attacks targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure in Lebanon, as well as the establishment of the so-called security zones. We condemn attacks against the personnel and facilities of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. We reaffirm our support for Lebanon's unity, sovereignty and independence, for the extension of the Lebanese State authority over its entire territory, for the monopoly of arms in the hands of the State and for the continued advancement of its reform agenda.

Fifthly, the Arab Group reiterates its condemnation of Israeli attacks on Syrian territories and its attempts to undermine Syria's internal security. We stress the need for Israel to immediately withdraw from all occupied Syrian territories, including the entirety of the occupied Syrian Golan, and the implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions.

Sixthly, the Arab Group condemns the treacherous and unjustified Iranian attacks against the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Iraq. These actions constitute a flagrant violation of State sovereignty, an unacceptable threat to their security and stability and a clear breach of the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The Group calls on the Security Council to assume its responsibility in maintaining regional and international peace and security by ensuring accountability for deliberate attacks against civilian objects and civilian infrastructure. It should also ensure the implementation of resolution 2817 (2026), including requiring Iran to immediately

cease all its horrendous attacks against Arab States and to comply with its international obligations.

In conclusion, the Arab Group reaffirms that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved by imposing a fait accompli, but rather by addressing the root causes of conflicts, ending occupation, respecting international law and adhering to United Nations resolutions.

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

**Mr. Obeidat** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I commend Bahrain for its successful leadership of the Council for this month and for holding this meeting.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered, respectively, on behalf of the Group of Arab States and on behalf of other groups.

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, particularly in the West Bank, is witnessing dangerous Israeli escalation and rapid deterioration, marked by the entrenchment of illegal and internationally condemned Israeli policies, including accelerated settlement activity, land confiscation and the demolition of Palestinian homes, as well as settler violence and the targeting of civilians, and the approval of racist and discriminatory Israeli laws targeting the Palestinian people and their inalienable and inviolable rights.

In this regard, we reaffirm our absolute rejection of any attempts at annexation or the forcible displacement of the Palestinian people. We further emphasize that all of these unilateral and illegal Israeli measures constitute blatant violations of international law, international humanitarian law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2334 (2016), as well as of the 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and systematically undermine prospects for achieving a just peace based on the two-State solution.

Secondly, Jordan condemns the repeated violations of the historical and legal status quo at Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem by the Israeli occupying authorities, particularly the ongoing incursions into the Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif by Israeli settlers and extremist ministers under the protection of Israeli police, the raising of the Israeli flag within the courtyards of the Mosque, other provocative practices and incendiary calls by extremist groups to storm the holy site. The 40-day closure of the Aqsa Mosque by Israeli authorities, including during the month of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr, as well as the imposition of restrictive measures on Christians during the observance of Holy Saturday and Palm Sunday, constituted a dangerous precedent and a flagrant violation of the historical and legal status quo at Jerusalem's holy sites, as well as of the right to free and unhindered access to places of worship. We stress that the Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif, in its entirety, spanning 144 dunums, is a place of worship exclusively for Muslims and that the Jerusalem Waqf and Aqsa Mosque Affairs Administration, affiliated with Jordan's Ministry of Awqaf, is the sole authority responsible for overseeing it within the framework of the historical Hashemite custodianship over Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

Thirdly, we affirm the necessity of stabilizing the situation and fully implementing the provisions of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which was adopted by the Council under resolution 2803 (2025), including removing all obstacles to the entry of sufficient and sustained humanitarian assistance into the Gaza Strip, opening all humanitarian crossings, halting Israeli violations of the ceasefire agreement, commencing the implementation of the second phase of the agreement and the reconstruction of Gaza and advancing towards a clear political horizon for the realization of an independent Palestinian State based on the two-State solution.

Fourthly, we commend the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for the significant humanitarian role it plays in Gaza and in its five other areas of operation. We underscore the importance of ensuring the continuity of UNRWA, which plays an indispensable and irreplaceable role in delivering vital services to millions of Palestinian refugees, in accordance with its United Nations mandate, the renewal of which received broad international support last year. We stress the need for the international community to provide the Agency with the political and financial support it needs and to ensure that Israel ceases its systematic campaign targeting UNRWA and its presence by imposing illegal restrictions aimed at undermining the Agency's vital role, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Such actions constitute a clear violation of Israel's responsibilities under the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, as well as of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice issued in October 2025. We also emphasize the critical importance of concerted international efforts to support the Palestinian economy, which is facing mounting pressures due to the economic blockade imposed by the Israeli Government through its illegal measures, including the confiscation of Palestinian Authority funds derived from tax revenues, which to date exceed \$5.1 billion, in addition to restrictions imposed on the movement of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

Fifthly, we renew our condemnation of Israel's attacks on Syria and its attempts to undermine Syria's internal security. We stress the need for an end to all repeated interventions and interferences, which constitute a flagrant violation of international law, a destabilization of Syria's security and a breach of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces. We also stress the need to consolidate the ceasefire in Lebanon and to respect Lebanon's sovereignty, security and stability. We reaffirm our full support for the Lebanese Government in all measures it takes to assert its authority over the entire territory of Lebanon, to ensure that weapons remain exclusively in the hands of the State and to retain sole decision-making authority over war and peace.

Sixthly, we affirm that the only path to achieving a just and lasting peace is by ending the occupation and fulfilling the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among them being the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State, along the lines of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the two-State solution, in line with relevant international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, so that it may live in peace and security alongside Israel.

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

**Mr. Garcia II (Philippines):** We thank Bahrain for convening this quarterly open debate and congratulate you, Madam President, on your successful presidency this month.

The Philippines remains concerned over developments in the Middle East and their implications for regional and global peace and stability. We reaffirm the statement by the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations of 13 April, which underscored the importance of dialogue and restraint and the full and effective implementation of ceasefire arrangements. We welcome the announcement on 21 April of an indefinite ceasefire between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and we urge the parties to continue negotiations with the utmost restraint that will lead to the permanent end of the conflict and lasting peace and stability in the region. We commend Pakistan and all the parties involved for their collaborative efforts in this regard.

The full and effective implementation of the ceasefire is essential. This includes minimizing disruption to the flow of energy and essential goods, safeguarding maritime security and freedom of navigation and mitigating broader economic impacts. We call for the restoration of the safe, unimpeded and continuous transit passage of vessels and aircraft in the Strait of Hormuz in line with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as for all parties to ensure the safety of seafarers and ships in accordance with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974.

Together with the other sponsors of the Joint Statement on the Safety and Security of Peacekeepers in support of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the Philippines voiced concern over the attacks in Lebanon, including those impacting peacekeepers, highlighting the ongoing risks to stability and the safety of personnel on the ground. We call for adherence to international humanitarian law, in particular the protection of civilians, migrants and United Nations personnel, including humanitarian, health and media workers. We welcome the extension of the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement between Lebanon and Israel, which has created a window for de-escalation.

Developments in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, emphasize both the urgency and the fragility of the situation. The people of Gaza desperately need free and unimpeded access to life-saving humanitarian aid, including food, water and medicine. We stress the importance of the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2803 (2025), as part of the efforts to stabilize the situation and advance recovery in accordance with international law. Current efforts must translate into a credible political horizon leading to durable peace. We reaffirm our support for the two-State solution, with Palestine and Israel living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, and we support renewed diplomatic efforts to advance that important objective.

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

**Mr. Olabi** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): During the past two months, the Middle East has witnessed a dangerous existential threat, throughout which my country, Syria, has helped play a constructive role in maintaining stability and preventing the situation from worsening. This Syrian effort has been welcomed and commended by the members of the Security Council on more than one occasion.

Although the situation in the region today is better than it was in previous weeks, the final settlement of the conflict has not yet been reached. The situation remains liable to deteriorate once again, and the world is still in a state of anticipation. We must all thank the States acting as mediators, especially the friendly State of Pakistan, along with the Arab Gulf States, Egypt and Türkiye. We express our support for efforts aimed at consolidating the de-escalation in the region, particularly those of President Donald Trump.

Syria welcomes the announcement of the extension of the ceasefire in brotherly Lebanon. My country indicates that it has been and remains supportive of all efforts aimed at maintaining the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and at protecting its security and that of its brotherly people.

Syria believes that the monopoly on arms is a right and a duty of the State. In confirmation of that, Syria welcomed the decision of the Lebanese Government regarding the rejection of any military or security operations launched from Lebanese territories outside the legitimate State institutions, including those involving the weapons of Hizbullah. Likewise, we support the exclusive control of arms by the State in Iraq, and we call upon the brotherly countries of Iraq and Lebanon to deploy forces in the border areas with Syria and to prevent militias from deploying there.

Syria stresses the importance of ensuring the safety and security of peacekeeping forces, especially in Syria and Lebanon, in view of the sacrifices they make to lay the foundations of security and stability in the region. We express our condolences to Indonesia and France following the loss of several members of their forces participating in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

Syria warns of the dangerous escalation and the unilateral and illegal Israeli measures in the occupied West Bank and stresses the need to stop all measures that undermine the two-State solution and lead to further tension and conflict. It also warns against the exploitation of the situation in the region as a pretext to impose a new reality in the occupied Palestinian territories. Syria affirms its support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital and supports its right to full membership in the United Nations.

Syria calls for pressure to be placed on the Israeli occupation to lift the blockade on the Gaza Strip and allow the entry of humanitarian assistance to the people of the Strip in a manner consistent with resolution 2803 (2025). At the same time, my country condemns the Iranian attacks on the Arab Gulf States and Jordan, expresses its full solidarity with those brotherly States and stresses the importance of maritime security and freedom of navigation in the Arab Gulf region. It denounces Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which violates international law and threatens the security of global energy supplies.

Since 8 December 2024, all statements by Member States in the Council regarding Syria and its Government have been extremely positive. The Syrian Government has felt that its efforts to establish security and stability in Syria and the region were widely welcomed and appreciated. Syria is, of course, determined to continue these efforts, which are currently being undermined, regrettably, only by the Israeli occupation and its criminal practices in southern Syria.

Occupation forces remain present in more Syrian territories in the area of separation and beyond, as well as on the summit of Mount Hermon, in a manner contrary to international law and the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces. The occupation is encroaching on villages and agricultural lands, uprooting trees, spraying crops and forests with unknown chemical substances and threatening the lives and livelihoods of Syrian men and women. It is erecting fortifications and dirt berms and seizing control of Syrian water resources to pump them to the settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan.

With regard to the issue of kidnapped Syrians in the prisons of the Israeli occupation, and as Council members have heard today from the United Nations itself — as we have long informed the United Nations, including the Security Council — the Israeli occupation terrifies peaceful Syrian civilians and carries out enforced disappearances and house raids, especially at night, kidnapping Syrians from their beds while they sleep. It continues to hold dozens of them for months inside its detention centres and prisons; indeed, a number of them are minors under the age of 18. A few days ago, several families of the kidnapped persons held a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Damascus and demanded that we, as the Syrian Government, convey their suffering and that of their fathers, mothers and sons to the world. Today, we are here before the Security Council, demanding that the Council bear its responsibilities alongside us in this matter. For our part, we will continue to coordinate with the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and the International Committee of the Red Cross to stop these practices and secure the release all those kidnapped.

The violations I have mentioned are not merely the words of the Syrian Government. Today, specifically, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner

for Human Rights highlighted these violations in southern Syria in a report, calling for independent investigations to be conducted immediately and for those responsible to be held accountable. The report also called for an immediate halt to settlement activities in the occupied Syrian Golan and the suspension of announced plans in that regard.

Just days ago, dozens of Israeli settlers climbed onto the roof of a house in the village of Ayn al-Tinah in the northern Qunaytirah countryside, at the foot of Mount Hermon, in full view of the Israeli occupation forces that had previously displaced its Syrian inhabitants. The settlers chanted provocative slogans calling for settlement and took photographs of themselves with false boastfulness.

It is clear to everyone that the Israeli occupation forces are seeking every possible way to provoke the Syrian people. The occupation appears to be waiting for the moment when some Syrians lose patience and rise up to defend themselves, their land and their honour, so that the occupation can then appear before the international community and falsely and shamelessly claim that it was right to commit all the practices and acts of sabotage that it has committed over the past months. If this is the Israeli occupation's objective, then we stand here today before the Security Council to give advance warning of the danger of this scheme before it is carried out.

Syria reiterates that it has engaged in earnest security talks with Israel, under the welcome mediation of the United States, with a view to finding a peaceful solution that addresses the security concerns of both sides. Although the Israeli representative stated here this morning that Israel favours diplomacy — and we do hope that this will be translated into action on the ground — all we see is the continuation of destructive practices.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that peace and stability in the region will be achieved only by addressing the root of the problem — namely, the occupation — and by implementing resolutions of international legitimacy and restoring rights to their rightful bearers. We say to the Israeli occupation and its settlers that neither incursions nor fortifications nor so-called security zones will change the fact that the occupied Golan is Syrian, that the area of disengagement is Syrian and that Mount Hermon is Syrian, for genuine security resides in the consciences, souls and hearts of the people, not in the security of barricades, trenches and armoured vehicles.

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

**Mr. Ferreira Silva Aranda (Portugal):** Portugal aligns itself with the statements to be delivered on behalf of the European Union and the core group for the statement of shared commitments on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. We would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

Portugal welcomes the ceasefire agreement between the United States and Iran and commends the efforts of all mediators, notably Pakistan. We urge all relevant parties to uphold international law, including international humanitarian law and freedom of navigation. Indeed, while all of us bear the consequences of restrictions on maritime trade, it is yet again the most vulnerable — namely, developing countries — that face the heaviest burden. Portugal strongly supports a diplomatic solution as the only viable way to achieve a comprehensive and long-lasting peace.

Turning to Lebanon, we welcome the direct negotiations between Israel and Lebanon, which can pave the way for lasting security. In the meantime, the ceasefire must be fully respected by all parties, including non-State actors. In the context of Portugal's diplomatic outreach in the region, during his recent visit to Beirut our Foreign Minister commended the Lebanese Government's courageous decisions and reaffirmed Portugal's unwavering support for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Minister Rangel also informed the Lebanese authorities of additional humanitarian contributions, given the gravity of the situation on the ground. We strongly condemn the attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, and we call on all parties to ensure the protection of peacekeepers and to fully implement resolution 1701 (2006).

Regarding Palestine, in Gaza, the humanitarian situation remains grievous. Portugal once again calls for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, including the provision of its phase one on humanitarian access. We stress that the United Nations and all its agencies, in addition to international non-governmental organizations, must be able to fulfil their roles. We call for the permanent disarmament of Hamas and other non-State armed groups. Violations of the ceasefire must also stop. Furthermore, the Palestinian Authority should be fully involved in the preparations for its return to the Strip.

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Portugal is extremely concerned about the continued settler violence and Israel's unilateral actions, including expanded settlements, which are illegal under international law, as recalled by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinions. We also condemn actions pertaining to altering the status quo of holy sites, the adoption of the death penalty bill and the bill's discriminatory character.

Portugal remains committed to the implementation of the two-State solution, promoting a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, in line with the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. For its part, Portugal formally recognized the State of Palestine in September 2025. As for the wider region, Portugal fully supports the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, Yemen and Libya.

Portugal remains committed to the rule of law and to an international system with the United Nations at its centre. Our positions are coherent and consistent across every file, and, as such, we will continue to strive for a just and peaceful solution to the Palestinian question, anchored in the relevant United Nations resolutions.

**The President:** I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to three minutes.

I now give the floor to Mr. Hadi.

**Mr. Hadi:** The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is not progressing towards peace. It is moving towards deeper fragmentation, dispossession and despair as Israel entrenches its illegal occupation by the day, escalating its unlawful policies and violent practices against the Palestinian people.

In Gaza, the humanitarian catastrophe continues. Settler violence continues at alarming levels in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. United Nations human rights experts have warned that Palestinians are facing an accelerating campaign of ethnic cleansing and annexation, describing it as "State-backed terror squads at the forefront of the violence". The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has reported settler attacks across more than 190 communities since January. Children in particular remain vulnerable to this consistent violence. Entire families are being forcefully displaced, homes attacked, and livelihoods destroyed. Communities are being subjected to a coercive environment designed to make conditions for Palestinian presence unbearable and to drive Palestinians off their land, in a continuum across decades, undermining their inalienable right to self-determination.

That same logic is visible in East Jerusalem, as we witness these continued actions of terror. United Nations human rights experts have also warned against the irreversible de-Palestinization of the city by illegal Israeli measures altering its demographic composition, religious character and legal status. During Eid al-Fitr and Easter, the

whole world was appalled by Israeli measures restricting and even completely preventing access to the holy sites and obstructing the freedom of worship. Jerusalem is a city of shared heritage. Israel must be demanded to halt its unilateral and unlawful transformation of the city, which is depriving Palestinians of their historical, cultural and religious heritage and of their very ability to remain in the city.

We must also speak plainly about dangerous legislative measures. On 30 March, the Knesset passed the so-called “death penalty for terrorists” law, a discriminatory measure that risks further entrenching unequal and punitive treatment of Palestinians. This cruel, inhumane law by the occupying Power must be repealed, and Israel must respect its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law.

Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are not separate files. They are one political, legal and territorial unit under brutal and unlawful Israeli occupation and must be addressed as such. Gaza must not be treated as an isolated humanitarian exception, while annexation, settlement expansion and violence continue elsewhere. Peace will not come through fragmentation.

The New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution endorsed by the General Assembly remains one of the clearest diplomatic frameworks before the international community for advancing a just solution to this historic injustice against the Palestinian people. In it, peace is not an abstract aspiration but an obligation to be fulfilled by concrete actions: ending the unlawful Israeli occupation; ending the war and siege on Gaza; advancing the two-State solution; supporting Palestinian self-determination, return, independence and statehood; and grounding diplomacy in international law and accountability. The Council must therefore act swiftly and with clarity, protect civilians, reject annexation, demographic engineering and collective punishment, uphold the unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, consisting of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and move with seriousness towards full implementation of the New York Declaration. This Committee stands ready to support the international community in this urgent endeavour towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestine question and long-overdue Israeli-Palestinian peace and security.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**Mr. Irvani** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Gaza remains devastated and under siege. The Israeli occupying regime continues to violate the ceasefire through military attacks and severe restrictions on humanitarian access, deepening hunger and civilian suffering. At the same time, illegal settlement expansion in the West Bank continues, in clear violation of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, further entrenching occupation and instability. The persistent absence of accountability fuels a dangerous culture of impunity.

Iran supports any credible efforts to end the suffering of the Palestinian people. Any viable solution for Gaza must ensure a durable and permanent ceasefire, the full withdrawal of the occupying forces and unhindered humanitarian access, while fully respecting the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. In parallel, accountability is imperative. Those responsible for grave breaches of international law, war crimes and crimes against humanity must be held to account.

Israeli aggression is not confined to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The regime continues to violate international law across the region through repeated destabilization and acts of aggression in Syrian territory, the ongoing illegal occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights and persistent violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. The Security Council must act decisively to compel Israel to fully uphold the

ceasefire in Lebanon, immediately halt all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure and withdraw all its occupying forces.

On 28 February, the United States and Israel launched an unprovoked war of aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in flagrant violation of international law, including the prohibition on the use of force and the preemptory norm prohibiting aggression. The aggressors have committed grave violations of international humanitarian law, deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure. In one instance, a girl's school in Minab was destroyed, killing more than 168 students. As of 8 April, at least 3,375 civilians had been killed. More than 700 educational institutions, along with healthcare and cultural facilities, have been attacked. Critical industrial infrastructure has also been targeted. The United States and the Israeli regime must bear full responsibility and must be held accountable.

Security and stability in our region are indivisible and deeply interdependent. Achieving genuine collective security requires a unified response that directly addresses the main source of instability: the occupying regime of Israel. This outlaw and terrorist regime remains a persistent and serious threat to regional and international peace and security.

Lastly, I categorically reject the baseless allegations levelled at my country. Regrettably, some delegations have attempted, once again, to ignore the root causes of the current situation in the region and deflect blame onto Iran rather than address the unlawful and destabilizing actions of the United States and the Israeli regime.

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

**Mr. Yıldız (Türkiye):** I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in my capacity as the Chair.

At the outset, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this quarterly open debate and for the comprehensive briefings provided to the Council.

In the previous open debate under this agenda item (see S/PV.10098), the OIC group welcomed the ceasefire agreement for Gaza and the imminent commencement of phase two of the agreement in line with resolution 2803 (2025). However, the situation in Gaza and elsewhere in the occupied Palestinian territory remains dire, and the Palestinian people continue to suffer untold hardship and tragedy under Israel's illegal occupation. In addition to the recent decision by Israel to approve new colonial settlements throughout the Palestinian territory, violent Israeli attacks and settler terrorism against the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza and the West Bank, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, have continued with greater intensity and brutality. This has included attacks on children and families and damage to civilian infrastructure, schools and places of worship in addition to recent legislation permitting the execution of Palestinian prisoners, thereby constituting a dangerous and unprecedented violation of international humanitarian law by the occupying Power, which is not sovereign in the occupied Palestinian territory and has no right to enact such laws, cruelly sealing the fate of the Palestinian population.

In the same vein, the humanitarian operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East have been largely obstructed owing to illegal and punitive Israeli measures and the recent demolition of buildings and facilities, including the Agency's main compound in Al-Quds Al-Sharif. Further violations include the closure of holy sites, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during Ramadan and Easter celebrations and the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, and restrictions on religious leaders, which constitute a serious

infringement on freedom of worship and violations of the historic and legal status of the holy sites, as well as the widespread seizure and demolition of Palestinian homes, particularly in the Al-Bustan neighbourhood.

It is regrettable that attacks by the Israeli occupying Power continue unabated. In just one week, between 24 and 30 March, 138 Palestinians were killed or injured. The total number of recorded casualties since 7 October 2023 now stands at more than 73,500 killed and more than 182,000 wounded. These acts in Gaza against civilians, mostly refugees and displaced persons, and settler violence in the West Bank following a pattern of displacement, colonization and annexation aimed at ethnic cleansing and permanent control, in violation of international law, require accountability. In this regard, we hereby reject all colonial settlement policies and measures by the Israeli occupying Power intended to impose a *fait accompli* in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Al-Quds al-Sharif, which constitute war crimes and flagrant violations of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as of the relevant advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice. We recall that in its July 2024 advisory opinion, the Court deemed the entirety of the Israeli occupation to be unlawful and stated that it must be brought to a complete and rapid end.

The OIC Group reaffirms the call by the OIC Executive Committee emergency meeting, held at the level of foreign ministers in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 26 February to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to implement a comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, ensure the full withdrawal of its forces, facilitate the return of displaced persons and enable the State of Palestine to assume its responsibilities, with regional and international support. In the same vein, the OIC Group welcomes the adoption of several resolutions by the Human Rights Council this year, during its sixty-first session from 23 February to 31 March, addressing the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. These resolutions reaffirm the need for accountability, demand the halt and reversal of Israeli settlement policies and stress the importance of upholding the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Within the context of ensuring full implementation of the existing ceasefire agreement and resolution 2803 (2025), we stress the need for full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the immediate commencement of the second phase of the plan and the unimpeded facilitation of humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip. We also support the State of Palestine in assuming its responsibilities for the recovery and reconstruction process, while categorically emphasizing the unity of Palestinian territory comprising the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including Al-Quds al-Sharif, as one inseparable geopolitical unit over which the Palestinian people are sovereign.

We wish to invite the Council to commence action on the implementation of its relevant resolutions, including resolutions 2803 (2025) and 2334 (2016), with the aim of transforming the ceasefire into a just, durable and comprehensive solution that brings an end to this prolonged illegal Israeli occupation, ensures the fulfilment of Palestinian rights and establishes genuine peace and security. Moreover, given the overwhelming recognition of the State of Palestine and commitments provided in the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution of July 2025, we reiterate our call for expeditious action by the Security Council on Palestine's admission as a full member of the United Nations. This step is essential for a just and lasting peace and the credibility of the multilateral system.

In this regard, the Group expresses its support for the international efforts aimed at advancing the two-State solution, including the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution initiative, led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the European Union and the Kingdom of Norway, and calls for active participation in implementing the relevant United Nations resolutions and international

declarations, including the New York Declaration, with the aim of achieving a just and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. While commending the establishment of the Emergency Coalition for the Financial Sustainability of the Palestinian Authority, we also call for the urgent implementation of the Arab-OIC reconstruction plan and encourage all States and partners to actively participate in these efforts.

The OIC Group reiterates that lasting peace in the Middle East requires Israel's complete withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan, and full compliance with resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981). We condemn Israel's incursions into Syrian territory since December 2024, in violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces. The OIC Group welcomes the announcement of a cessation of hostilities in Lebanon, brokered by the United States of America, and views it as a significant step towards de-escalating tensions and halting Israeli action against Lebanon. The Group further welcomes the four-point initiative of the President of the Republic of Lebanon with the launch of negotiations aimed at halting hostilities and ending Israeli occupation.

The Group emphasizes the imperative of Israel's full compliance with the ceasefire, the cessation of all military attacks against Lebanon, its immediate complete and unconditional withdrawal from all Lebanese territories and the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). It further reiterates its steadfast position in support of the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of Lebanon. The Group strongly condemns Israeli attacks on civilians including women and children, journalists, first responders, medical staff, the Red Cross, civil infrastructure and medical facilities, as well as the large-scale destruction of Lebanese areas and the establishment of so-called security zones, in flagrant violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

The Group reaffirms its support to the Lebanese State in asserting its control and sovereignty over all Lebanese territory, confining the possession of arms to the State alone — the Lebanese State — and advancing its reform agenda. The Group underscores the urgent need to scale up humanitarian assistance to Lebanon in order to address the growing needs of affected civilians, as well as to enhance support for the Lebanese Armed Forces. The OIC Group also strongly condemns the attacks on United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) personnel and premises. It extends its deepest condolences to Indonesia and France for the loss of four Indonesians and two French peacekeepers serving with UNIFIL.

In conclusion, the OIC Group reiterates its urgent call on the Security Council and the international community to intervene and take concrete measures to end these violations and uphold the principles of justice and international legitimacy. We wish to reiterate that continued Israeli policies and practices severely undermine regional peace and stability, and risk further escalating tensions into a broader religious conflict, with grave consequences for international peace and security.

I would now like to make the following brief statement in my national capacity.

Unfortunately, global order and regional security are facing unprecedented challenges, with our region at the epicentre. Israel's continued disregard for international law, international humanitarian law and even the most basic humanitarian principles, coupled with persistent impunity, must be addressed immediately by the Council.

The broader regional escalation, including developments involving Iran, carries significant risks for international peace and economic stability, affecting global trade, energy and food security. We firmly believe that diplomacy is the only viable path to a lasting resolution. We support ongoing diplomatic engagement, including between the

United States and Iran, as well as efforts by regional actors to sustain dialogue and prevent further escalation. We have supported Pakistan's facilitation efforts from the outset. The joint efforts by Türkiye, Pakistan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have been instrumental in the process leading to the ceasefire. Our leaders remain in close contact with their Iranian and American counterparts and continue to engage with regional actors to maintain the ceasefire and promote a lasting settlement.

As the eleventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons gets under way, let me reaffirm our support for advancing the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the 1995 decision and the 2000 action plan. Now more than ever, the international community must act decisively. We must move beyond the rhetoric, uphold international law, advance diplomacy and work collectively towards a just and lasting peace for all. Türkiye remains ready to engage with all relevant parties to advance peace in the Middle East.

**The President:** I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes because we have 39 statements left to finish. I also respectfully request that the audience keep side discussions to a minimum.

I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

**Mr. Umarov** (Kazakhstan): I wish to commend Bahrain for its leadership of the Council during this month. I also thank all speakers for their valuable briefings.

Since our previous discussion in January (see S/PV.10098), the regional environment has become more complex and fragile. While the ceasefire in Gaza created a window of opportunity, recent developments have demonstrated how quickly instability can escalate and spread across the region and beyond. Kazakhstan believes that the situation in the Middle East must be approached in a comprehensive and interconnected manner. The crisis in Gaza, the broader Palestinian question and the evolving regional dynamics are deeply interlinked and require a coordinated and balanced international response. We reaffirm our principled support for a just and lasting settlement based on the two-State solution, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Gaza requires urgent and sustained international attention, including unimpeded humanitarian access, early recovery and reconstruction. Kazakhstan underscores the indispensable role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in supporting the Palestinian people during this critical phase. In this context, Kazakhstan is translating its political support into practical contributions. Following the decisions of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Kazakhstan is ready to allocate up to 500 educational scholarships for Palestinian students, provide humanitarian assistance and consider the deployment of medical personnel and peacekeeping-related contributions, subject to international arrangements. We also support the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) and the work of the Board of Peace as key elements of the post-conflict framework.

The recent developments around Iran and in the Strait of Hormuz highlight the wider implications of the crisis. Disruptions to maritime security and trade routes affect both regional stability and the global economy. In this regard, we note the important role played by the countries of the Gulf region in maintaining regional stability, supporting dialogue and ensuring the resilience of global energy and trade systems. Their constructive engagement remains essential for de-escalation and confidence-building. We support all genuine mediation efforts and believe that sustained diplomacy remains the only path to long-term stability.

My country stands ready to continue contributing constructively to international efforts, including through humanitarian support and practical engagement.

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

**Mr. Muhamad** (Malaysia): Malaysia thanks Bahrain for convening this meeting and aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the statement to be delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The situation in Gaza remains gravely alarming. Despite the ceasefire of October 2025, approximately 800 Palestinians have since been killed and more than 2,100 injured. This adds to the already devastating toll of over 70,000 lives lost in the past two years. Restrictions at crossing points continue. Essential supplies, including medical aid, food, education materials and energy, remain severely limited. In March 2026, over 1,000 cases of acute malnutrition were recorded among children. No educational materials have entered Gaza in the past week. An entire generation is being denied its future.

In the West Bank, the situation is equally alarming. Since October 2023, over 1,000 Palestinians have been killed, including at least 235 children. This month alone, two children were killed in separate incidents. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has also reported cases in which settlers demolished a school in the Jordan Valley and obstructed children from receiving education in the Hebron area. Attacks on healthcare persist. A total of 892 incidents have been recorded, including the killing of 12 healthcare workers. Hospitals continue to be targeted, and medical access is obstructed. Settler violence is escalating sharply. March recorded the highest number of Palestinian injuries inflicted by settlers since 2006. These acts are not isolated. They are enabled by policies that expand settlements and displace Palestinians. This is a clear violation of international law and International Court of Justice decisions.

We also condemn the restrictions on access to Aqsa Mosque, particularly during Ramadan, as well as restrictions affecting Christian worshippers at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during Easter. These measures are discriminatory and provocative. They violate international law and the established status quo of the holy sites. We further condemn the passing of a law imposing a mandatory death penalty in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and its discriminatory application against Palestinians. It constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. It is yet another measure that entrenches an apartheid system under occupation. We are also deeply concerned by credible reports of the abuse of Palestinian detainees, including torture, inhumane treatment, starvation and the denial of basic rights. The international community must act firmly to bring an end to these violations.

The role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is indispensable. Malaysia condemns attacks against UNRWA's mandate and its premises. UNRWA must be allowed to operate freely across the Occupied Territories. Its staff must be granted visas and access, which have been denied since January 2025. Malaysia, together with the overwhelming majority of Member States, supported the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, adopted in September 2025. It reaffirms the Palestinian right to self-determination and recognizes a sovereign and independent State of Palestine, based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We also support the Arab-OIC reconstruction plan, reflected in the Declaration. This plan offers a credible pathway for recovery and stability.

Accountability remains essential. International law, the Charter of the United Nations and all relevant resolutions must be upheld. Impunity cannot continue. Without accountability, there will be no peace or stability in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The consequences are already spreading beyond Palestine into the wider region. The Security Council must act decisively. The Palestinian people have waited for far too long.

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

**Mr. De Vink** (Kingdom of the Netherlands): The tensions in the Middle East are resulting in instability, uncertainty and turmoil, shaping the lives of millions of people across the region and beyond. Although in the case of Iran and Lebanon both ceasefires offer some hope, they remain very fragile. Negotiations should continue to reach a durable, diplomatic solution. Sustainable peace in Lebanon requires the re-establishment of the State's monopoly on force and the full and effective disarmament of Hizbullah. Therefore, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has allocated additional support to the Lebanese Armed Forces and calls on other States to enhance their support as well.

On Iran, we underline our full support for diplomatic efforts towards a sustainable solution, including on the Strait of Hormuz. The freedom of navigation should be fully restored — this principle is non-negotiable. The Netherlands stands ready to shoulder its responsibilities and contribute to efforts to that end, in full solidarity with our Gulf partners.

We cannot lose sight of Gaza and the West Bank amid regional escalation. The situation in the West Bank is deteriorating rapidly. In that regard, we condemn the approval of 34 new settlements in the occupied West Bank.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands remains deeply concerned by the ongoing catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza. Further progress on the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict remains crucial, as does safe, unhindered and unconditional access for professional, mandated humanitarian organizations, including the United Nations.

The newly established United Nations Palestine Recovery Horizon Fund is an important means to achieve a coordinated effort in the early recovery and reconstruction of Gaza and the West Bank. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will therefore contribute €5 million to the Fund, and we call on other countries to join us to increase the Fund's impact, in pursuit of the two-State solution.

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

**Mr. Szczerski** (Poland): I would like to express our appreciation to the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this debate, which is particularly important given the increasingly fragile regional context.

As our discussions yesterday made clear, the consequences of the Iranian crisis extend far beyond the region. Poland firmly believes that diplomacy is the only viable path forward. Lasting peace requires consensus on three core issues: Iran's nuclear programme, its long-range ballistic missile capabilities and its regional conduct, while respecting international law, including freedom of navigation. Progress on all three is essential — it is the foundation for any stable and lasting security framework in the region.

On the Palestinian question, Poland remains a firm supporter of the two-State solution — yet recent months have moved us further from that goal. Poland views Israel as an important partner in the region. While we recognize Israel's right to self-defence

and its complex political and security situation, we cannot ignore the abuses or the repeated violations of international humanitarian law. Poland shares the international community's alarm over escalating tensions in the West Bank. The violence by illegal settlers against the Palestinian population, combined with actions by Israeli authorities that run counter to the Oslo Accords, is deeply troubling. We are also concerned about the new death penalty law, which in practice primarily targets people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We are equally troubled by the refusal of Hamas and other Palestinian factions to engage with the disarmament proposal put forward by the Board of Peace.

As an observer to this initiative, Poland remains committed to its success and calls on all parties to engage in good faith. Finally, we urge the Board of Peace to press Israel to grant humanitarian organizations full access to Gaza and to ease restrictions on aid in the West Bank.

Allow me to turn now to the situation in Lebanon. Poland welcomes the ceasefire and hopes that both sides will seize this opportunity to build towards lasting peace — one that both nations have long deserved. We remain a firm supporter of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. Despite the difficult security conditions, our troops continue to serve in Lebanon, ready to carry out training activities and fulfil their mission. We strongly condemn the recent attacks on peacekeepers and call on all parties to cease such actions immediately.

Poland's commitment to Lebanon goes further. Since 2023, our humanitarian contributions through United Nations agencies have surpassed \$4.5 million, with particular emphasis on supporting local administration in responding to natural disasters and expanding access to renewable energy — areas critical to Lebanon's economic recovery.

Looking ahead, Poland's development cooperation plan for 2026 designates Palestine, Lebanon and Syria as priority recipients of our humanitarian assistance. Our commitment to the people of this region remains steadfast.

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

**Mr. Hoehne** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland is deeply concerned about the recent escalation in the Middle East and its grave consequences for its civilian populations. It strongly condemns attacks targeting civilians, essential services and civilian infrastructure, which are prohibited under international humanitarian law.

The protection of civilians requires a political solution. The two-State solution, negotiated in accordance with international law, remains the only way to achieve this. We call for the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) and all relevant Security Council resolutions.

Switzerland condemns the ongoing violence in the Gaza Strip and is alarmed by the number of civilian casualties, including humanitarian workers, since the ceasefire came into effect. We call on all parties to fully respect this agreement and their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Persistent restrictions are severely hampering the humanitarian response. Switzerland reiterates the obligation to ensure safe, rapid and unimpeded access to all people in need and calls on Israel to lift those restrictions.

In the West Bank, the increase in violence against the civilian population is alarming. We are deeply concerned about the increasingly extreme settler violence, including in the form of sexual violence, and about demolitions and forced evictions, often carried out with the support of security forces. Switzerland rejects any attempt at annexation and any measure aimed at permanent territorial or demographic changes in

the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It welcomes the holding of Palestinian elections, which are essential to strengthening the Palestinian Authority and achieving the two-State solution.

Regarding the confrontation involving the United States, Israel and Iran, Switzerland is following with concern recent developments affecting the civilian population. It calls for respect for the Charter of the United Nations, including the prohibition on the use of force. It calls on all parties to respect the cessation of hostilities and to pursue diplomatic channels.

The repercussions of this escalation are also being felt in several Gulf States. Switzerland calls for respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries. In the Strait of Hormuz, freedom of navigation must be respected, and we call on all parties to ensure the safety of navigation.

Furthermore, Switzerland condemns the attacks against civilian populations and infrastructure in Lebanon and Israel. It welcomes the extension of the ceasefire and calls for its full implementation. A permanent ceasefire must prevail.

Switzerland remains at the disposal of the parties to support negotiations and the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). It condemns the attacks that claimed the lives of peacekeepers and expresses its solidarity with troop-contributing States. Humanitarian and United Nations personnel must be protected and respected, as required by international humanitarian law and reaffirmed by resolution 2730 (2024). A return to diplomatic channels, respect for international law, including the protection of civilians, and the revitalization of a credible political horizon are inseparable.

**The President:** I now give the floor to Mr. Lambrinidis.

**Mr. Lambrinidis:** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Montenegro, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement. The full text of my statement will be uploaded online.

The European Union welcomes the ceasefire agreed by the United States and Iran. We urge all involved to fully respect the ceasefire across the region, cease all military operations and fully ensure freedom of navigation, as well as free and safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, in line with international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In this context, we support the International Maritime Organization's plan for the release of vessels and seafarers trapped in the Persian Gulf and for the permanent reopening of the Strait.

We commend Pakistan and other regional partners for their efforts and mediation, which contributed to this positive outcome. Parties should continue to engage in good-faith efforts to reach a sustainable agreement on all areas of concern.

The European Union will contribute to all diplomatic efforts in this endeavour, taking into consideration its full range of interests, capabilities and concerns, in coordination with partners. To that end, the President of the European Council, António Costa, and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaja Kallas, recently visited Gulf countries to show our solidarity and coordinate our efforts.

The European Union also welcomes the ceasefire agreed by Israel and Lebanon on 16 April, under the auspices of the United States. We urge all involved to fully respect the ceasefire and a cessation of all military operations to allow for the negotiation of a lasting peace under just and conducive conditions. We call for full respect of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and reiterate the need for full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

The European Union reaffirms its unwavering support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and condemns the unacceptable attacks against peacekeepers, which constitute a grave violation of international law and must stop immediately. We call for a thorough investigation of these attacks. We pay tribute to the peacekeepers from Indonesia and France who died recently while serving in the name of peace and international security in Lebanon. We also express our steadfast support for the Lebanese people and authorities in the face of dire humanitarian needs, especially for displaced persons, and we stand ready to provide emergency assistance. We welcome the decision by the Lebanese authorities to ban Hezbollah's military activities and support the efforts to strengthen the Lebanese Armed Forces, with a view to gaining control of the whole of Lebanese territory and establishing the State's monopoly on holding weapons. We will continue to stand firmly with Lebanon and to support all efforts towards de-escalation and lasting stability, including by contributing to the strengthening of the Lebanese Armed Forces.

The deteriorating situation in Gaza and the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, is of grave concern. The European Union reiterates its call for the full implementation by all parties of the ceasefire and all other provisions of resolution 2803 (2025), in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions and international political and legal principles. In this context, we call for the permanent disarmament of Hamas and other non-State armed groups, and we support the mediators and the Office of the High Representative for Gaza to this end. We also call for the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and the deployment of the temporary international stabilization force.

The European Union deplores the continuing catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and calls on Israel to immediately allow unimpeded access and sustained distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale into and throughout Gaza, including via the Cyprus maritime corridor, and to enable the United Nations and its agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and humanitarian organizations to work independently and impartially to save lives and reduce suffering. The EU calls on Israel to reverse its decision regarding the non-governmental organization registration law, to reopen Gaza border crossings and to fully comply with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law.

The European Union stands ready to continue contributing to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, in accordance with resolution 2803 (2025). The European Union will engage with international and regional stakeholders to contribute to the reconstruction and redevelopment of Gaza, in line with international law. Our civilian Common Security and Defence Policy missions — the European Union Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories and the European Union Border Assistance Mission in Rafah — remain key for the EU in contributing to these efforts. The European Union will also continue to support the Palestinian Authority, including in its reform agenda, so that it can securely and effectively take back control of Gaza. The EU calls on Israel to urgently release withheld clearance revenues and extend the correspondent banking services between Israeli and Palestinian banks.

The European Union strongly condemns Israel's unilateral actions aiming to expand its presence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice declared to be unlawful. The European Union urges the Government of Israel to reverse these decisions, to abide by its obligations under international law and to protect the Palestinian population of the Occupied Territories. We also reiterate our call for the preservation of and respect for the status quo of Jerusalem's holy sites.

The EU strongly condemns the continued and growing settler violence against Palestinian civilians and will take work forward on further restrictive measures against extremist settlers and entities and organizations that support them.

Israel had long upheld a de facto moratorium on both executions and capital punishment sentencing, thereby leading by example in the region despite a complex security environment. The approval of the death penalty bill by the Israeli Parliament marks a grave regression from that practice and from Israel's own commitments. The EU is deeply concerned about the de facto discriminatory character of the bill and urges Israel to abide by its previous principled position, its obligations under international law and its commitments to democratic principles.

The EU is fully committed to international law and a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the two-State solution, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, whereby two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders. The New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution provides a political framework to guide these efforts. On 20 April, we co-hosted two important meetings in Brussels, namely the meeting of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians. Both events demonstrated the strong international consensus on safeguarding the two-State solution and strengthening Palestinian institutions as indispensable steps towards a sustainable peace.

Let me close with Syria. The European Union remains committed to supporting a peaceful and inclusive transition that upholds the rights of Syrians of all ethnic and religious backgrounds without discrimination. We will maintain engagement with Syria's transitional Government to advance an inclusive political and democratic transition based on national reconciliation, the promotion of human rights and socioeconomic recovery and reconstruction. We support the rebuilding of State institutions and the roles of Syrian civil society and women as indispensable to these efforts. We also strongly support the strengthening of cooperation between the Syrian transitional Government and all United Nations bodies.

In order for the transition to succeed, it is vital for Syria to remain insulated from regional hostilities and for it not to be drawn into the wider regional conflict. The EU urges all external actors to fully respect Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. We also recognize that Syria is particularly vulnerable to the economic impact of the current war, and we underscore the importance of reconnecting Syria to regional and global trade networks.

Finally, we reiterate that combating the resurgence of Da'esh and other terrorist groups remains a priority and welcome the transitional Government's renewed commitment to countering Da'esh, including through the Global Coalition against Da'esh.

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

**Mr. Arafat** (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): We meet today, 12 days after the cessation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel. The cessation of hostilities was brought about by the mediation of the United States of America, for which we are grateful, and the highly appreciated efforts of President Donald Trump and his team, in response to the initiative of the President of the Lebanese Republic and the sovereign positions of the Lebanese Government.

Today, too, the Lebanese Government reaffirms its determination to forge ahead with its efforts. Their aim is to achieve comprehensive and sustainable solutions that

safeguard the rights of Lebanon and the Lebanese people and that guarantee a safe life for them on their land following Israel's withdrawal from it, as well as the return of prisoners and abductees. We reiterate that the Lebanese Government will not compromise on a single metre of Lebanese land, nor will it accept any occupation. We stress that Lebanon, whatever the cost, will not be subservient to any axis, nor will it be a tool for score-settling on its own soil or a bargaining chip used in negotiations; for the Lebanese State alone is authorized to negotiate on its own behalf, in defence of its national and sovereign interests and of the destiny and future of its people.

While the diplomatic process takes its course, with Lebanon's earnest involvement, developments on the ground remain extremely dangerous. Israel continues to violate Lebanon's sovereignty and to target civilians, medical staff, hospitals, media personnel, Lebanese security forces and United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon troops, not to mention the systematic destruction of villages, towns, infrastructure and places of worship. Even the statue of Christ has not been spared attempts to desecrate it. Lebanon condemns in the strongest terms these Israeli attacks, which clearly and unequivocally contravene the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law and which, in many instances, amount to war crimes.

We are following the practices of the Israeli Army in southern Lebanon with the utmost concern, including the systematic acts of theft highlighted by Israeli media outlets — acts which, according to those same sources, go unchecked and unpunished. How can such practices possibly contribute to fostering the trust crucial to any future negotiation process? Furthermore, what lies behind the statements by Israeli ministers calling for the occupation of broader swathes of Lebanese territories and even the complete incineration of Lebanon and its iconic cedars? In this precise context, the remarks made by the representative of Israel this morning in the section on Lebanon outlined a series of falsehoods seeking to, inter alia, continue undermining the Lebanese Government's credibility. Such has been Israel's consistent modus operandi through its relentless violations of the 2024 declaration of cessation of hostilities. We have repeatedly cautioned the Council against the repercussions of this issue. However, and most critically, we believe that undermines the credibility of the guarantor States of the 2024 declaration of the cessation of hostilities, namely France and the United States, as well as the ongoing efforts being undertaken by the United States with a view to de-escalation and promoting sustainable peaceful solutions.

Lebanon now relies on the support of sisterly and friendly nations. We underscore the importance of reviving the initiative for a conference in support of the Lebanese Armed Forces, which had been graciously championed by France with the backing of the quintet group of countries. Furthermore, we express our deep appreciation to all nations contributing troops to United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We pay tribute to the peacekeepers who lost their lives while serving in Lebanon, and we renew our condolences to both Indonesia and France. In this context, we affirm our commitment to engaging with all relevant parties in charting a course for the post-UNIFIL phase so as to ensure stability along the borders and the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

Lebanon affirms the importance of safeguarding freedom of navigation for commercial and civilian vessels in accordance with the principles enshrined in international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In this same vein, Lebanon welcomes the announcement of the ceasefire between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran and commends mediation efforts, particularly those undertaken by Pakistan. We sincerely hope that these efforts will ultimately lead to a comprehensive and lasting agreement. Lastly, we reiterate Lebanon's unequivocal condemnation of the Iranian attacks against the Arab Gulf States

and Iraq and Jordan, which violate the sovereignty of these sister nations and pose an unacceptable threat to their security and stability.

Lebanon welcomes the positive trajectory taken by relations between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic and the extent of coordination and consultation between the two countries, particularly regarding the imperative to secure the borders and prevent any security breaches, while emphasizing respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both nations and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. Furthermore, we view Syria's recovery and stability as a genuine opportunity to advance the process for the safe, dignified, gradual and organized return of displaced Syrians.

Turning to the sisterly State of Palestine, Lebanon affirms that achieving security and peace in the region remains contingent upon ending the Israeli occupation and its associated practices and upon enabling the Palestinian people to enjoy their legitimate rights, foremost among which is the establishment of their own State along the 4 June 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We stand now at a watershed moment in Lebanon's history — one in which the page is being turned in a long chapter in which national decisions were held hostage to external calculations. Henceforth, Lebanon will no longer brook others' waging their wars upon its soil, nor their agendas, nor continued aggression against it from any quarters whatsoever. For the future belongs solely to the State and to a just peace that safeguards all Lebanese citizens. The solutions are available and within reach. May the Council shoulder its responsibilities. May Israel abide by the ceasefire, honour its commitments to the American mediator and implement resolution 1701 (2006).

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

**Ms. De Smedt** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

I wish to make the following points in a national capacity.

Yesterday, we addressed the issue of the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and maritime security in a Benelux format. I will not revisit the matter. I nonetheless wish to underscore Belgium's full support for the Gulf countries and the region in the face of Iranian attacks. We likewise support initiatives aimed at securing a cessation of hostilities, and we thank Pakistan and the other facilitators for their contribution to convening talks.

In Gaza, two key considerations demand more robust and more tangible action on our part.

First, the Gaza Strip must be demilitarized. Hamas, which is a terrorist organization, must lay down arms and cease playing a role in the governance of Gaza. Belgium supports the efforts of the guarantors of the accord and High Representative Mladenov undertaken in that regard pursuant to resolution 2803 (2025). These topics were discussed at the meeting of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution held in Brussels last week.

Secondly, in line with international law and the resolutions adopted by the Council, we must also strive to foster conditions conducive to a reformed Palestinian Authority resuming control of Gaza safely and in favourable conditions. The Palestinian Authority should also receive the clearance revenues to which it is entitled and access to the necessary macroeconomic and monetary aid in the future. We cannot talk of Gaza without mentioning the catastrophic conditions in which its inhabitants are living. The human plight continues to worsen, and humanitarian aid remains woefully inadequate. Access to Gaza must in no way be impeded. As the occupying Power, the State of Israel is duty-bound to agree to the relief efforts and to facilitate the delivery of aid in the

Gaza Strip. Belgium stands ready to take part in efforts for the recovery and reconstruction of Gaza, but the relevant stakeholders need to have access to the Strip. Belgium calls on Member States to actively support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which in spite of the necessary improvements noted in the Colonna Report, continues to be, under the circumstances, a humanitarian actor and a provider of crucial services, not only in Palestine but also in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. The follow-up to the Colonna Report and the implementation of the relevant reforms remain necessary to shoring up the credibility of UNRWA and promptly putting paid to its detractors.

Belgium strongly condemns the upsurge in Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank and the increasingly frequent use of violence by settlers and the Israeli forces. We cannot simply look on as the de facto annexation unfolds before our eyes. We must respond collectively to these unlawful acts and the other violations of the Council's resolutions. It is necessary to safeguard opportunities for the establishment of a Palestinian State, absent which the prospect of peaceful and sustainable coexistence of two States could evaporate.

In Lebanon, the attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon are unacceptable. I echo the condolences conveyed to France and Indonesia paying tribute to those whose lost their lives upholding the Charter of the United Nations and its principles. The safety of the Blue Helmets must be guaranteed in all circumstances. Deputy Prime Minister Prévot was able to witness first-hand the shelling of Beirut during his visit on 8 April. Belgium welcomes with a sense of relief the temporary ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon facilitated by the United States. It is our hope that it will lay the foundations for a more lasting peace consistent with international law. To that end, we urge Israel to fully respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, and we call on both Hizbullah and Israel to end their military action once and for all and to comply with international humanitarian law under all circumstances. Hizbullah must lay down arms and cease its military activities in line with the Lebanese Government's decisions and the Council's resolutions. The various efforts of the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese Armed Forces must be supported, including through a suitable and effective United Nations presence in Lebanon.

In conclusion, allow me to honour the memory of all the innocent victims of the conflicts raging in the region. Once again, the civilian population is bearing the brunt. I would also like to recall Belgium's unwavering commitment to compliance with international law and to the implementation of the Council's resolutions by all States. Failure to do so convincingly will inevitably lay the foundations for future crises.

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

**Mr. Yamazaki (Japan):** In the three months since our last open debate (see S/PV.10098), the global spotlight on the Middle East has shifted eastward from Palestine to Iran and the Persian Gulf. Japan calls for urgent diplomatic efforts to de-escalate, as the lack of a clear path forward risks further destabilization.

Regarding Iran, we urge all parties to remain committed to dialogue and to achieving a complete and long-lasting cessation of hostilities. Japan supports the talks between the United States and Iran and the mediation efforts by Pakistan and other regional countries, and we will work closely with the international community to pursue diplomacy and prevent escalation.

Japan also stresses the need to immediately restore stability in the Strait of Hormuz and ensure safe and free navigation as guaranteed by international law. Without the assurance of free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, global food and energy security will be placed in grave jeopardy.

We are deeply concerned that the crisis has spread to Lebanon, causing displacement, civilian casualties, infrastructure damage and the deaths of peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. Attacks on Blue Helmets are unacceptable and must be unequivocally condemned. While welcoming that the 17 April ceasefire agreement continues to hold, we strongly urge all parties to fully implement its provisions.

Even as global attention focuses on the Gulf and Lebanon, the importance of the Palestinian question remains undiminished. We are deeply concerned that since the conflict involving Iran began, the Israeli Government has approved new settlement plans and settler violence has intensified in the West Bank. Such activities violate international law and undermine the realization of the two-State solution. Israel should refrain from actions that heighten tensions there.

Six months have passed since the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict was agreed. It is necessary to move to the second phase, and Hamas must disarm. The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire. Israel should not obstruct supplies and should support humanitarian agencies to ensure basic services. In this context, we welcome the holding of local elections in the West Bank and Dayr al-Balah in Gaza, especially as this was the first such vote in Gaza in two decades.

In closing, Japan remains firmly committed to supporting efforts towards a stable and prosperous Middle East.

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

**Mrs. Patel (India):** At the outset, India would like to express its sincere appreciation to Bahrain for convening today's open debate. I would also like to thank the briefers for their insightful remarks.

There have been major developments, particularly in the Middle East, since the most recent quarterly open debate, held in January (see S/PV.10098). These developments have serious implications across domains, including international peace and security, economic and energy security, food security, international trade and global supply chains. Today's debate therefore could not have been more timely or more relevant.

For India, the Middle East is our proximate neighbourhood, and we have significant stakes in the security and stability of the region. Our trade and energy supply chains are strongly linked to this geography, with implications for our economy and energy security. Almost 10 million Indians live and work in the Persian Gulf region. Their safety and well-being are a key priority for us.

Since the outbreak of the conflict in the region on 28 February, India has been guided by its consistent and categorical calls to pursue dialogue and diplomacy and to de-escalate tensions. Addressing the underlying issues is central to these goals. We have also expressed deep concern about the conflict and its aftermath, and urged all relevant parties to exercise restraint, avoid escalation and prioritize the safety of civilians. In this context, India also underlines that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States must be respected.

Commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz is of particular concern to India, given its importance to our energy and economic security. Commercial shipping must not be the target of military attacks, and such attempts are deplorable. India notes with concern that the precious lives of Indian seafarers aboard ships have been lost during the course of the conflict. We underscore that targeting commercial shipping and endangering innocent civilian crew members or otherwise impeding the freedom of navigation and commerce in the Strait of Hormuz are unacceptable. International law in this regard must be fully respected. It bears mention in this context that India co-

sponsored resolution 2817 (2026), adopted on 11 March. We strongly urge the early restoration of safe and unimpeded freedom of navigation and global commerce through the Strait of Hormuz.

Ongoing developments in Gaza and the West Bank also deserve our utmost attention. The humanitarian situation there calls for more active discussions and urgent action to alleviate it. The loss of civilian lives, including women and children, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure continue to be a concern.

Over the years, including in the recent past, India has supported Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank through the implementation of projects, with a view to making a tangible impact on their daily lives. Capacity-building and livelihood development receive considerable attention under India's human-centric approach on this front. Even as we undertake such projects, the need for a lasting solution can hardly be overemphasized. At this juncture, India reiterates its support for a two-State solution and for all efforts towards a lasting and durable peace in the region.

India would now like to draw the attention of Member States to developments in Lebanon, including regarding the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Blue Helmets serve in challenging circumstances in accordance with the Security Council mandate in the cause of maintaining international peace and security, and they must not be targeted. We strongly condemn all attacks on United Nations peacekeepers deployed in UNIFIL. Such attacks must be thoroughly investigated in an expeditious manner, and their perpetrators must be brought to justice. It is vital to respect the sanctity and inviolability of United Nations premises. The safety and security of peacekeepers are non-negotiable. There must be accountability for crimes against these peacekeepers. It bears recalling that India piloted resolution 2589 (2021), regarding accountability for crimes against peacekeepers.

We welcome the announcement of a ceasefire in Lebanon and hope that this will advance negotiations between Israel and Lebanon, leading to a lasting peace in the region and an end to the suffering of people on both sides.

Turning to Syria, India supports a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process, and our commitment to the Syrian people is manifest in our humanitarian and development support to them in diverse ways.

The Middle East cannot remain a theatre of conflict. The people of the region deserve peace, dignity and hope after decades of turmoil. India stands ready to support all sincere efforts aimed at realizing a just and lasting peace in the region.

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

**Mr. Salah (Tunisia):** At the outset, we express our thanks to the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this open debate, and we reiterate our support for its presidency of the Security Council this month.

The tragic situation that the Middle East has been enduring for decades — the gravity of which today threatens the stability and peace of the entire world — is, as we have said before, a direct consequence of the international community's failure to restore the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people over their entire land.

Today it is extremely dangerous and irresponsible to continue to let our world be driven by a few personal and illegitimate agendas and to continue to manage the current international situation as if it were business as usual. Tunisia, as always, will continue to combat, with no hesitation, colonialist agendas and the murdering of civilians, wherever it is used as a policy. In this context, my country expresses its strongest condemnation of the continued violations by the occupying Power of the ceasefire

agreement in the Gaza Strip, its persistence in annexation policies and its efforts to expand settlement areas and create a new fait accompli.

Guided by the steadfast principles of its foreign policy, Tunisia reaffirms its commitment to respecting the sovereignty of all States, the rule of law and the primacy of peaceful means in the settlement of disputes. We reiterate our full solidarity with the Arab countries in the face of any threat to their security, stability and sovereignty. We call for an immediate halt to the escalation and for the adoption of negotiation and diplomacy in order to secure a decent life for future generations. It is crucial for Tunisia to remain, as it has always been, on the right side of history.

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

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

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

NAM reaffirms its long-standing common and principled position on the question of Palestine and is deeply concerned about the implications of this historical injustice against the people of Palestine and, most critically, in the Gaza Strip, where the civilian population continues to suffer from the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe inflicted on it by Israel, the occupying Power. NAM supports all prospects for a just solution to this historical injustice and for peace and security in the region.

The grave situation in Gaza has led to a worsening humanitarian situation, not only in Gaza but also throughout the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, with rising Israeli military raids, land confiscations, home demolitions and rampant settlement expansion, the forced displacement of entire Palestinian communities, widespread settler violence and terrorism and the constant violations against the historic and legal status quo at the holy sites of Jerusalem. The Non-Aligned Movement rejects in the strongest terms the approval of discriminatory legislation imposing the death penalty against Palestinians and calls for its immediate reversal.

NAM condemns in the strongest terms all these illegal practices and all forms of violence, particularly Israel's military attacks and its collective punishment against the Palestinian people, as grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. The killing and injury of more than 24,600 Palestinian civilians in Gaza, the majority of whom are children and women, as well as medical personnel, humanitarian workers and journalists, is an indictment of the mandate of the Security Council. NAM demands an immediate and complete cessation of all forms of armed hostilities, violent repression and illegal Israeli policies and practices against the Palestinian people and other nations in the region.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms its appreciation of the role played by the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Qatar in the efforts to ensure a permanent ceasefire. We further reiterate our call for unimpeded humanitarian access, including by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other United Nations agencies, and for the safe and effective distribution of sufficient humanitarian assistance throughout the Gaza Strip to all Palestinian civilians who need it, including for urgent medical needs, with full respect for the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Healing, recovery, and rebuilding for the Palestinian people in Gaza cannot be delayed any longer. They cannot continue to be deprived of the food, water, medicines and shelters

that are desperately needed to alleviate the catastrophic humanitarian conditions they have suffered for too long.

In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement commends the efforts of the Arab Republic of Egypt to convene and host the Sharm el-Sheikh peace summit on 13 October last year, which focused on unequivocal support for the implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement to end the illegal Israeli war on the Gaza Strip — the ceasefire agreement concluded on 9 October 2025 and mediated by the Arab Republic of Egypt, Qatar, Türkiye and the United States of America aimed at ending the illegal Israeli war on the Gaza Strip.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the announcement of a cessation of hostilities in Lebanon brokered by the United States of America for a period of 10 days, which was extended by three weeks, and views it as a significant step towards de-escalating tensions and halting the Israeli aggression against Lebanon. The Movement further welcomes the four-point initiative of the President of the Republic of Lebanon, with the launch of the negotiations aimed at halting hostilities and ending the Israeli occupation. The Movement emphasizes the imperative of Israel's full compliance with the ceasefire; the cessation of all military attacks against Lebanon; the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal from all Lebanese territories; and the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

The Movement reaffirms its support for the Lebanese State in asserting its control and sovereignty over all Lebanese territory, confining the possession of arms to the State alone and advancing its reform agenda. The Movement underscores the urgent need to scale up humanitarian assistance to Lebanon to address the growing needs of affected civilians and to enhance support for the Lebanese Armed Forces. The Movement also strongly condemns the attacks on United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) personnel and premises. It extends its deepest condolences to Indonesia and France for the loss of three Indonesian and two French peacekeepers serving UNIFIL.

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

NAM member States once again reiterate their call for the continued provision of needed humanitarian and socioeconomic assistance to the Palestinian people, including Palestinian refugees. The Movement reaffirms the continued indispensability of UNRWA along with other United Nations agencies and international organizations in the provision of urgently needed humanitarian assistance, in line with international standards, and urges the international community to support the Agency in all ways, including sufficient and predictable funding.

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

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

**Mr. Hoang Nguyen Nguyen** (Viet Nam): My delegation thanks you, Mr. President, and the Bahrain presidency for convening this important open debate.

Viet Nam aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Viet Nam remains deeply concerned about the ongoing situation in the Middle East, including developments in and around the Strait of Hormuz, continued hostilities and restrictions on humanitarian access in Gaza, the worsening conditions in the West Bank and the deterioration of security in southern Lebanon. These developments are causing immense human suffering, disrupting trade and energy supply, heightening uncertainties and jeopardizing the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) and the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict.

Viet Nam strongly condemns acts of hostility targeting United Nations personnel and facilities, including the recent attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, which resulted in the tragic loss of six peacekeepers over the past two months. We extend our deepest condolences to the United Nations, as well as to the Governments of Indonesia and France and to the families of those who have lost their lives.

Viet Nam firmly opposes military attacks against sovereign States, particularly those that have declared their non-involvement. We are especially alarmed by attacks against civilian infrastructure. Under all circumstances, civilians and critical civilian infrastructure must be protected. Any attack against these constitutes a violation of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 2573 (2021).

Viet Nam underscores that maritime safety and security, as well as freedom of navigation and overflight, must be upheld in accordance with international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It is essential, not only for stability in the Middle East, especially in and around the Strait of Hormuz, but also for safeguarding global energy supplies, food security and economic stability.

There can be no military solution to the conflicts in the Middle East. Viet Nam welcomes all mediation and facilitation efforts aimed at de-escalation, ending hostilities, consolidating ceasefires and advancing a balanced, constructive and mutually acceptable solution.

Viet Nam also calls on the international community not to allow recent developments in the Middle East to overshadow the Palestinian question. We reaffirm our unwavering support for the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and for the State of Palestine's full membership in the United Nations. We remain steadfast in supporting the two-State solution, based on the pre-1967 borders, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

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

**Mr. Lametti** (Canada): Canada is closely following the developments in the United States-Iran negotiations and welcomes the extension of the ceasefire announced by the United States. We stand ready to support efforts towards a diplomatic solution that would bring a durable end to the war. We also thank Pakistan, Türkiye, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other parties for their ongoing efforts.

Negotiations remain the most viable and sustainable means to address Iran's nuclear programme and destabilizing activities in the Middle East. Canada is also working closely with its partners to help ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and

Jordan have all been attacked by Iran and have sustained reprehensible strikes on their territory, civilian infrastructure and economic assets.

We all must stand united and in full solidarity with our Persian Gulf and Jordanian partners. Canada reiterates its strong condemnations against Iran for its unlawful strikes against civilians and civilian infrastructure, as well as its actions that threaten maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz.

Canada has intensified diplomatic engagement with Gulf partners, allies and international organizations to reinforce collective responses, including by co-sponsoring Security Council and Human Rights Council resolutions condemning Iranian strikes.

Canada fully supports the diplomatic efforts of Israel and Lebanon, facilitated by the United States, to seek a lasting political solution that ensures Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We commend the parties for their recent agreement to extend the ceasefire by three weeks, and we encourage them to use this opportunity to de-escalate hostilities and negotiate a durable political solution that guarantees Lebanese sovereignty.

Canada stands with the Lebanese Government in its efforts to consolidate all weapons under State authority and to disarm Hizbullah. We are deeply saddened by the loss of civilian lives, including that of a Canadian, and we have requested a thorough investigation into the circumstances of his death. Canada strongly condemns strikes on civilians, including journalists, humanitarian aid workers and United Nations peacekeepers. Canada will continue to work with global partners to deliver urgent aid to the people of Lebanon, and we express deep appreciation to Jordan for leading the humanitarian bridge initiative, in which Canada took part.

*(spoke in French)*

We remain alarmed by the deteriorating situation in Gaza and the West Bank. The position of Canada remains clear: only a two-State solution can bring lasting peace, security and dignity to Palestinians and Israelis.

Let us not forget Hamas' horrific terrorist attacks of 7 October 2023, which took the lives of nearly 1,200 people, including Canadians. Canada continues to support the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, and we are keen to see tangible progress. Political negotiations must lead to the disarmament and removal of Hamas from governance in Gaza. Canada fully supports the Palestinian Authority's reform agenda so that it can play a role in governing Gaza.

We welcome the holding of local Palestinian elections under difficult circumstances and were pleased to support them through the United Nations Development Programme, through election observation by staff from our representative office in Ramallah.

Canada denounces the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza, where, despite the ceasefire, the scale of suffering remains intolerable. Canada continues to call for immediate and sustained passage of humanitarian aid. Humanitarian aid is not a bargaining chip or a choice; it is an obligation.

Since 7 October 2023, Canada has committed more than \$400 million in international assistance. We will continue to support life-saving assistance, and we stand ready to support Gaza's stabilization, recovery and reconstruction.

Meanwhile, the expansion of Israeli settlements and extremist settler violence in the West Bank continues unabated. Canada condemns acts of violence, intimidation and the destruction of property by extremist settlers against Palestinians and urges the Israeli authorities to hold those responsible accountable. Furthermore, Canada reiterates its

condemnation of Israel's discriminatory death penalty law, which will promote extremist settler violence while further dehumanizing the Palestinian people.

Canada calls on all parties to remember our collective humanity and the sanctity of life. We must ensure there is room for diplomacy and political solutions that can lay the foundations for lasting peace and security.

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

**Mr. Gómez Hernández (Spain)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Since the Council's previous open debate on the Middle East (see S/PV.10098), open warfare and an unprecedented escalation of the conflict in the region, with global repercussions for us all, have shaken the very foundations of the international order that we have been building for 80 years from the United Nations Headquarters.

Every day we suffer as we watch the number of victims and the wounded rise and the destruction of basic necessities for life in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon. It must be stated very clearly that the bombing of densely populated areas, critical civilian and energy infrastructure, hospitals and schools constitutes a violation of international law and international humanitarian law. It must be stated very clearly that attacks on journalists and healthcare workers constitute assaults on freedom of expression, the right to information and the right to health. Spain will continue to condemn such attacks and call for them to be investigated and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

In the face of war and violence, our response is an unequivocal "no" — no to military solutions, no to disputes, no to the use of force and no to acting outside of international law. Diplomacy and dialogue are the only path to conflict resolution. Peace is built, not imposed. We are a majority clamouring for negotiations and supporting the work of regional mediators, so that the ceasefires between the United States of America and Iran, and between Lebanon and Israel, can take hold, so that the destruction and loss of human life can cease, and so that we can begin to work on restoring stability.

Respect for international law is the path to resolving the blockade at the Strait of Hormuz. The full guarantee of freedom of navigation, in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and resolution 2817 (2026), is essential to prevent an even greater global impact, including a large-scale food crisis. Before the Council today, I wish to reiterate the demand that Iran reopen the Strait of Hormuz, in accordance with public international law.

Dialogue is the only viable way to breaking the recurring cycles of violence in Lebanon. The parties must commit responsibly to upholding the ceasefire and to advancing towards what could prove to be a historic opportunity for peace and security. Here today, I wish to acknowledge the courage demonstrated by the Lebanese authorities in striving towards peace, and to pledge Spain's full support for their efforts to defend Lebanon's integrity and sovereignty and the State's exclusive right to bear arms. Our solidarity with the people of Lebanon remains steadfast, and we will bolster our humanitarian assistance through a new financial aid package worth €9 million to alleviate the suffering of the Lebanese people and the refugee crisis.

Spain supports the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and the work of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, where a significant contingent — the second-largest from Europe — has been deployed for the past 20 years. I want to acknowledge here the commitment and loyalty to peace of all the peacekeepers in such difficult circumstances and condemn the unacceptable attacks that they have suffered, in violation of the most basic principles of international law. We offer our deepest condolences to the fallen from Indonesia and France, and we demand a thorough investigation into all attacks against peacekeeping forces.

One of the perverse consequences of the current conflict is its potential to destabilize the entire region in the long term. We cannot allow the expansion of this conflict, at this critical juncture, to undermine the progress achieved in Iraq and Syria. Spain will continue to support stabilization efforts to rebuild and consolidate their respective institutions, to uphold a model of inclusive governance committed to security and to guarantee their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Likewise, we condemn in the strongest possible terms Iran's unjustifiable attacks against its neighbours, which violated their sovereignty and international law and struck civilian targets.

The proliferation of conflict fronts must not overshadow the violations of international law and human rights being perpetrated in Palestine amid a rapidly deteriorating situation: a humanitarian tragedy in Gaza, devastating more than 2 million people after two years of war, as well as the consolidation of a *de facto* occupation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, advancing unchecked day by day and accompanied by rampant and unpunished settler violence, demolitions, forced evictions and new expansion projects.

What else must happen before we take action? How many more discriminatory laws, such as the one imposing the death penalty on Palestinians, must we witness? We must be clear and state that Israel must comply with international law, fulfil its obligations under international humanitarian law as an occupying Power and respect human rights.

We reiterate our call on the Israeli Government to allow the entry of large-scale humanitarian aid; open all border crossings; and allow the United Nations, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to operate. We reiterate the need to strengthen political and financial support for the Palestinian Authority, which must participate in transitional governance mechanisms. We welcome its reform efforts and work to renew its political legitimacy, including the successful holding of local elections on Saturday.

However, to achieve a genuine, just and lasting peace — in which Israel and Palestine coexist peacefully, and we can work towards extending peace and security throughout the region — it is imperative that we define our next steps for implementing the two-State solution. This must be done on the basis of our collective decisions, the relevant resolutions of the Council, including resolution 2803 (2025), and the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. Other options have already failed time and again.

Lastly, the citizens of the Middle East are watching their lives slip away before their very eyes. In the face of such human tragedy and such loss of hope, it is urgent that the Council take action. As Members of the United Nations, we have a responsibility to mobilize all the means at our disposal to restore peace and stability in the Middle East, on which global peace and stability depend.

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

**Ms. Karadjova** (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): Bulgaria is following the evolving security landscape in the Middle East with the utmost concern. We believe that recent diplomatic breakthroughs offer a fragile but vital window of opportunity for resolving the outstanding issues with a view to achieving long-term sustainable stability.

Bulgaria welcomes the ceasefire reached between the United States and Iran. We commend the mediation efforts of Pakistan and other regional partners, which have proved essential in facilitating dialogue. Freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz must be guaranteed at all times, as it is a cornerstone of global energy security and

international trade. Tolls for passage are neither acceptable nor legal. All parties must strictly adhere to international law, including international humanitarian law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Bulgaria expresses its strong support for the ceasefire reached between Israel and Lebanon and calls for its full and strict observance. We highly commend the leadership of the United States of America in brokering this agreement, following intensive mediation. It is now essential to ensure that the ceasefire stays in force so that negotiations for a more lasting security and peace agreement can continue. We underscore the importance of fully implementing resolution 1701 (2006), fully respecting Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and restoring the State's full authority over weapons and the disarmament of all non-State armed groups, in particular Hizbullah.

Bulgaria will contribute to humanitarian aid and to efforts to support Lebanon's stability and resilience, as the Lebanese people have been the main victims of the recent escalation.

Bulgaria calls on all parties to ensure the protection of civilians, humanitarian workers and United Nations peacekeepers, as their presence is essential for maintaining peace and delivering life-saving assistance in volatile areas. In that regard, we extend our sincere condolences to France and Indonesia.

Turning to Gaza, Bulgaria reiterates its call for the full and effective implementation by all parties of the ceasefire and all the provisions of resolution 2803 (2025). This includes concrete progress on the disarmament of Hamas and all other non-State armed groups, as well as measurable improvements in the humanitarian situation and the establishment of conditions conducive to stabilization and recovery.

Bulgaria expresses its strong support for the Office of the High Representative for Gaza, Mr. Mladenov, and its central role in facilitating and coordinating the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025). We recognize its efforts to ensure coherence among international actors, support the operationalization of ceasefire arrangements and advance concrete measures on the ground, including humanitarian access. Strengthening that mechanism remains essential to translating commitments into tangible results and sustaining momentum towards a durable and peaceful resolution.

Bulgaria is deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza. Sustained humanitarian access throughout the Gaza Strip should be ensured, and humanitarian organizations must be able to operate independently and impartially. As a member of the European Union, Bulgaria is also concerned about the ongoing unilateral actions aimed at expanding Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Bulgaria believes that lasting peace requires a broader regional security framework. We support efforts aimed at establishing such an architecture, including through the Abraham Accords, as a means to foster dialogue, cooperation and stability.

Bulgaria renews its firm commitment to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, grounded in full respect for international law and the relevant United Nations framework. We reiterate our unwavering support for the two-State solution, with Israel and a viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security. Achieving this goal requires sustained diplomatic engagement, regional cooperation and the consistent implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions. We remain committed to working with our international and regional partners to advance a credible political horizon, strengthen stability and promote lasting peace and prosperity across the region.

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

**Mrs. Engelbrecht Schadtler** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time we are taking the floor this month, allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you and to wish you every success at the helm of this important organ, the mandate of which has acquired renewed importance in the current international context. We would also like to express our gratitude to the briefers for their valuable presentations, of which we have taken due note.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of the Republic of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Three months after the previous open debate of the Security Council on the important topic that brings us together today (S/PV.10098), the situation on the ground and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continues to be deeply worrisome. Far from improving, the situation is only getting worse, particularly in the Gaza Strip, with an entire people still under siege and still facing, day after day, extreme and vulnerable conditions.

In spite of the ceasefire announced six months ago, in October, there are continued reports of violence, of civilian victims and of severe restrictions to humanitarian access. Multiple reports confirm that the Palestinian population continues to live under precarious conditions, subject to prolonged displacements, food insecurity and limited access to essential basic services. Beyond the tragedy in Gaza that everyone knows about, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, homes continue to be demolished, communities displaced and settlements expanded, all of which undermines prospects for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution based on the two-State solution.

While remaining respectful of international law and the sovereignty of States, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is duty-bound to express its profound concern over the recent adoption of Israeli legislation that envisions imposing the death penalty on Palestinian citizens. This is a measure that has been broadly questioned, not only for its discriminatory nature, but also because it contravenes fundamental norms of international humanitarian law and human rights. We consider the introduction of such pseudo-legal instruments, which seek to codify a de facto racial system and which confirm, in turn, the existence of an apartheid system, to be a dangerous escalation that is clearly incompatible with the obligations of an occupying Power and with international standards in the area of due process, the right to life and human dignity.

Furthermore, our delegation would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its strong support for the essential work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In a context where the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people continue to grow, the role of UNRWA continues to be essential to millions of Palestinian refugees. We therefore call for an end to the growing pressure against the Agency, including operational restrictions and challenges to its mandate.

Against that backdrop, we reiterate, fully in line with the tenets of our historic Bolivarian diplomacy of peace, that the solution to the Palestinian question cannot be found in the imposition of a fait accompli on the ground, but rather in strict respect for international law, including the relevant Security Council resolutions. Venezuela reaffirms its unshakable support for the just Palestinian cause and for the inalienable right of this heroic people to self-determination in a free, independent and sovereign State of Palestine within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and as a fully-fledged member of the United Nations.

In that context, and in light of the escalation of events witnessed over the past few months in the Middle East, we would also like to take this opportunity to issue a call to double down and support diplomatic efforts under way and to favour mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,

as an essential path to preserving peace, security and stability in this kindred region and beyond.

The international community has a responsibility to act consistently and with determination, guided at all times by the principles that unite us, that we have agreed on together and that sustain both the multilateral system and the system of collective security envisioned in the founding Charter of our Organization and that, despite all forms of adversity, remains fully relevant today.

We therefore conclude by reiterating the firm commitment of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to upholding international law, justice and peace and supporting any initiative geared towards promoting a world of peace and development, backed by values such as solidarity and international cooperation, wherein the legitimate aspirations of our peoples can, without further delay, become a reality.

**The President:** There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting.

I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until Thursday, 30 April, at 3 p.m.

*The meeting was suspended at 6.20 p.m.*