



Security Council

Eighty-first year

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	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. Burbergs
	Liberia	Mr. Sackie
	Pakistan	Mr. Sarwani
	Panama	Mr. Barrios La Fontaine
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dergachev
	Somalia	Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Alltridge
	United States of America	Ms. Postel

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting resumed at 3.55 p.m.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statement 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 Iraq.

Mr. Al Faily (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this quarterly meeting, which allows us to express our position on the Palestinian question and the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

Repeated meetings of the Security Council have failed to halt the systematic attacks being perpetrated by the Israeli entity in the occupied Palestinian territory despite the Council's adoption of a number of relevant resolutions. The Israeli occupation forces have disregarded these resolutions and continue to violate international law and to commit crimes, including genocide, while significantly escalating violence in the region. The clear demands reflecting the will of the international community for the Security Council to play an effective role in maintaining international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations are particularly relevant given the dire humanitarian conditions afflicting the Palestinian people and the deleterious consequences of ongoing Israeli attacks on Lebanese and Syrian territories.

The Israeli entity is undermining regional and international efforts to establish peace by creating a climate in the region that is fraught with war and destruction through its disregard for international legitimacy, including resolutions of the Council and the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 19 July 2024, not to mention the waging of an unjustified war of aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The practices of the Israeli occupation forces through their hostile military campaigns on Arab lands, particularly in Southern Lebanon, have killed and wounded thousands of civilians. The peacekeeping forces of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon have been targeted, and Iraq, Syria and neighbouring Iran have been attacked, entailing a dangerous and unprecedented escalation in the region. The remit of the Council requires it to not remain silent in the face of these hostile acts and to take measures to curb Israel's aggressive behaviour, which poses a threat to regional and international peace. Iraq and the countries of the region have cautioned against allowing Israel to act with impunity. Iraq reiterates its unwavering support for the rights of the Palestinian people and rejects all forms of aggression against them, while emphasizing that a just political solution based on ending the occupation is the only way to achieve security and stability. Iraq underscores that genuine peace can be achieved only through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital and in which the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are guaranteed.

Iraq is monitoring developments in the region closely and reaffirms its steadfast position on the importance of resolving disputes through peaceful dialogue and diplomatic means in a way that strengthens peace and averts further escalation in the region. My country emphasizes the importance of liaising with brotherly and friendly nations to support joint initiatives and efforts aimed at ending wars and conflicts and returning to the political track, with a view to mitigating the harm being inflicted on the peoples and economies of the region. Iraq is directly affected by the ongoing regional conflict, as its complexities have given rise to a new security reality in which the country has suffered material damage and loss of life owing to the attacks. Furthermore, the continuation of the war has adversely affected the economy, particularly as a result of the escalation linked to oil exports. Iraq reaffirms its categorical rejection of any aggression against neighbouring countries, while emphasizing that their security is an

integral part of Iraq's national security and that the peoples of the region have a shared interest in regional stability. The Government of Iraq is working to tackle these challenges, in line with international law and international legitimacy, and to keep the country out of the conflict. Per its official position, Iraq refuses to allow its territory or its airspace to be used to carry out any attacks on neighbouring countries, in full respect for the sovereignty of States and to prevent Iraq from becoming an arena in which scores are settled.

In conclusion, we affirm that resolving the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz through constructive dialogue is the main way to address tensions, rather than through policies of escalation. We also affirm that freedom of international navigation is in our shared interest. Iraq remains committed to supporting efforts to ensure the safe and stable supply of energy to global markets.

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

Mr. França Danese (Brazil): I deliver this statement on behalf of the members of the core group on the shared commitments in support of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) — namely, Algeria, Belgium, Brazil, Guyana, Indonesia, Ireland, Jordan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Norway, Palestine, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain and Türkiye. I will make a speech in my national capacity afterwards.

As the spread and escalation of violence continues to impose new challenges on the already dire humanitarian situation in the Middle East, including in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, our countries remain deeply concerned about the long-standing campaign carried out by Israel against UNRWA, which is a cornerstone of support for Palestine refugees across its five fields of operation.

Attacks against the Agency and its staff, installations and activities have intensified in the context of the conflict in Gaza and further escalated with the approval, in October 2024, by the Israeli Parliament of laws that aim to severely hinder the Agency's operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The death of 391 UNRWA personnel is the largest toll of fatalities of aid workers in the 80-year history of the United Nations. Restrictions imposed on UNRWA by the Israeli Government have directly contributed to the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza and are part of a disturbing pattern of obstruction and violence. No less concerning are the ongoing efforts to delegitimize UNRWA through disinformation campaigns, defamation and legal harassment, all with the aim of undermining its credibility.

We remain deeply concerned about attempts to sideline UNRWA from Gaza's reconstruction process. That would seriously undermine efforts to restore dignified living conditions for the population of the territory and run counter to the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 22 October 2025 (see A/80/502), according to which Israel remains under the obligation to facilitate humanitarian assistance by the United Nations and its agencies in Gaza, including UNRWA.

We also deplore the occupation, closure and demolition of UNRWA offices and facilities in East Jerusalem and the other measures aimed at obstructing UNRWA's operations and ultimately dismantling its work across the West Bank, including by forcibly closing schools and health facilities, blocking access to education and healthcare and cutting off the supply of electricity and water to the Agency's premises. These actions constitute grave breaches of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

As 2026 marks the midpoint of the horizon for implementation of the Colonna Report, we commend UNRWA for maintaining a strong focus on consolidating gains,

embedding reforms within institutional culture, operational practices and regulatory frameworks and managing implementation risks proactively, including by the establishment of the working group on neutrality and integrity within its Advisory Commission.

UNRWA faces a multidimensional crisis that strikes at the core of international law and multilateralism. Until a just solution to the plight of Palestine refugees is implemented, UNRWA is and will remain indispensable and irreplaceable, representing a lifeline for almost 6 million people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Regrettably, the financial situation of the Agency remains dire. We share the concerns of the outgoing Commissioner-General, Philippe Lazzarini, who warned that UNRWA may soon no longer be viable, with potentially far-reaching consequences not only for Palestine refugees, but also for the whole region. Adequate and predictable funding are essential for the Agency to plan and deliver its services, and that must be matched by strong political backing that protects its operational space and staff and the mandate bestowed upon it by the General Assembly.

The core group on the shared commitments reaffirms its support for the Agency, reiterates its call for a halt to all attacks and measures against the Agency's operations and stresses the urgency of preserving UNRWA's vital humanitarian lifeline and contribution to regional stability, which are more crucial than ever.

I shall now deliver a statement in my national capacity.

We are following with grave concern the conflicts in the region. Brazil condemns the attacks by the United States and Israel against Iran and the subsequent unwarranted attacks by Iran. Both constitute a serious threat to international peace and security. Hostilities during diplomatic talks undermine the trust necessary for a long-lasting solution. All parties must abide by international law and international humanitarian law. Brazil reiterates its deepest sympathy with the families of the victims in all States affected by the conflict.

We call for the immediate cessation of hostilities and for respect for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The humanitarian situation in Lebanon is alarming, with forced displacement and spillover effects in Syria. Israel must halt its military operations and withdraw from Lebanese territory. We strongly condemn attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, journalists, universities and civilian infrastructure, which violate international law and may constitute war crimes. The intensification of hostilities in the Middle East triggered a regional escalation, with acute humanitarian and economic impacts. The recently achieved ceasefire must be expanded and consolidated. We encourage all parties to engage in good-faith negotiations, and we commend the efforts of regional actors and partners.

We cannot lose sight of the appalling situation in Palestine, for which accountability must be sought. Gaza has been struck in 159 out of the first 175 days since the start of the ceasefire, with more than 700 Palestinians killed and nearly 2,000 injured. The unacceptable ongoing human and physical destruction underscores the need for a cessation of hostilities and an end to the occupation. Brazil calls for an immediate end to all attacks, protection of civilians and unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza, where reconstruction efforts are urgently needed.

The situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is deeply concerning. The illegal expansion of Israeli settlements aims at creating a fait accompli that could hinder the two-State solution. The International Court of Justice reaffirmed that States must not support illegal policies and practices of occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Furthermore, restrictions on access by Christians and Muslims to holy sites in Jerusalem violate their historic status quo and the principle of freedom of religion.

We also condemn the killing of an 11-year-old Brazilian-Lebanese child and his Brazilian-Lebanese mother in Bint Jbeil, together with the death in Israeli custody of Brazilian-Palestinian teenager Walid Khalid Abdalla. These acts reflect a pattern of grave violations of international law. The Brazilian Government reiterates its demand for accountability and the immediate return of Abdalla's body to his family.

There is no military solution to these conflicts. Dialogue, diplomacy and compliance with international law remain the only path toward a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, which requires the implementation of the two-State solution. An independent and viable State of Palestine should be living side by side with Israel, in peace and security, within the pre-1967 borders, including the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

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

Mr. Mohamedou (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to reiterate my delegation's thanks to the fraternal Kingdom of Bahrain for its tireless efforts in presiding over the Council this month. We also thank Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, His Excellency Mr. Espen Barth Eide, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway and representative of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, and His Excellency Mr. Tony Blair, member of the Executive Board of the Board of Peace, for their valuable briefings.

We are meeting today only a few months after the meeting of the Council that was held in October 2025 to discuss the same agenda item (see S/PV.10023), and the situation is becoming more complicated amid Israel's continued violations of the rules of international law and the resolutions of international legitimacy, through the expansion of settlement activity, the targeting of relief organizations and the continued Israeli incursions into the blessed Aqsa Mosque. In addition, the Knesset has adopted a discriminatory and inhumane law providing for the execution of Palestinian prisoners.

This is an opportunity to call on the Council to take all measures to stop these violations, stop any Israeli efforts to annex or occupy more Palestinian territories and ensure the full implementation of the ceasefire arrangements in the Gaza Strip by opening the crossings, ensuring the entry of humanitarian aid and initiating reconstruction efforts. In parallel, the Board of Peace should start implementing its mandate to reconstruct and secure the Gaza Strip so that its residents may have a safe and dignified life.

While my country condemns the hostile acts carried out by Israel in the brotherly Lebanese Republic by targeting civilians, critical infrastructure and peacekeepers, we welcome the extension of the ceasefire under United States auspices. We call on Israel to respect the ceasefire, and we look forward to bilateral talks leading to the consolidation of a permanent ceasefire that will restore security and stability to brotherly Lebanon. Mauritania also renews its solidarity with the Syrian Arab Republic in the light of the ongoing Israeli attacks and violations. We also call for Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Syrian territories.

My country has condemned all the unjustified aggressions over recent weeks by the Islamic Republic of Iran against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Qatar, the State of Kuwait, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Sultanate of Oman, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Republic of Iraq. These attacks are unlawful. They undermine regional peace and security and represent a flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law, thereby posing a serious threat to international peace and security.

While we hope that the negotiations under the auspices of, and with the commitment of, our brothers in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan will lead to a permanent cessation of military action, we renew our solidarity with the brotherly countries of the Arabian Gulf, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Republic of Iraq.

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

Mr. Naanda (Namibia): As global attention remains fixed on the unfolding tensions in the Middle East, the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territories continues to deteriorate alarmingly. The New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and the recent Security Council resolution on the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict (resolution 2803 (2025)) set out a deliberate framework for peace and recovery. Yet, in reality, reconstruction has not begun, and the sustainable ceasefire remains unfulfilled. The absence of the tangible implementation of international commitments further exacerbates an already dire situation.

Namibia is deeply concerned by the persisting humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, where, despite a declared ceasefire, violence and deprivation continue to claim the lives of civilians, overwhelmingly women and children. The blockade, the displacement of thousands of people and restrictions on humanitarian access constitute a collective punishment. These actions are prohibited under international humanitarian law. Namibia would like to emphasize that an effective ceasefire and the urgent reconstruction of Gaza are imperative to support Palestinian economic recovery and institution-building, which are crucial for the aspiration for statehood.

Namibia notes with deep concern that Israeli actions on the ground demonstrate no intention of halting the unlawful practices that undermine peace and stability. Such actions not only fuel tensions and restrict Palestinian access to land but also threaten the viability of a contiguous and sovereign Palestinian State and violate international law and United Nations resolutions. The Israeli authorities and Israel Defense Forces are exploiting the current regional instability to seize additional Palestinian land and enacting discriminatory measures demonstrating a clear disregard for international norms and deepening the realities of occupation and dispossession. The Security Council must move beyond expressions of concern and adapt concrete actions and support the realization of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. We pay tribute to the unwavering resilience of the Palestinian people in the face of these challenges and underscore that it is vital for the question of Palestine to remain a priority for the Council and the international community, encompassing all dimensions — political, development, economic and cultural.

The situation in the Middle East is further compounded by the senseless attacks on the Islamic Republic of Iran by the United States and Israel and the genocidal bombings on Lebanon by Israel, further exacerbating tensions, creating instability and making it more challenging to achieve lasting peace in the Middle East. Namibia's own experience under apartheid and illegal occupation obliges us to speak against oppression wherever it persists. We cannot accept a world order whereby some people's freedom is conditional and others' suffering is normalized. The right to self-determination, freedom and sovereignty is universal and indivisible.

Namibia calls for an immediate and permanent cessation of hostilities and a renewed commitment to diplomatic dialogue aimed at advancing stability and justice across the region, including for the people of Palestine. Let the Council act not only to manage the crisis but to resolve its root cause: the denial of Palestinian statehood. Silence and inaction would render this body complicit in the dismantling of international law. Namibia therefore urges the Security Council to uphold its Charter responsibilities

to ensure peace based on justice, equality and the rule of law and to allow the people of Palestine to finally live freely and fully independently.

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

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I would like to express our appreciation to the Bahraini presidency for convening this open debate. Since this is the last meeting of the Security Council in April, I want to congratulate Bahrain for its able and successful conduct of the presidency of the Council.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and the joint statement of shared commitments on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) delivered just now by the representative of Brazil.

Allow me to start today's intervention where I finished at the recent General Assembly veto debate (see A/80/PV.80): the Middle East and its peoples urgently need peace. The Middle East is the region in which the Charter of the United Nations and international law have been systematically violated with impunity for far too long. We are witnessing a race to the bottom, with unimaginable consequences for peace and security far beyond this region. This alone should sound the ultimate alarm in the Council.

Like so many colleagues before me, I come to the Council today, again, with a call for action. We believe that the Council should, urgently and decisively, do the following.

First, it should encourage and support further United States-Iran talks, ultimately leading to a lasting ceasefire, reopening passage through the Strait of Hormuz and reaching agreement on the nuclear file, thus ensuring safe skies above the Gulf and bringing lasting calm to the citizens of Tehran and Tel Aviv alike. In the words of the respected President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, "Any return to a conflict of such intensity and scale will be catastrophic for millions". In light of such a warning, the Council has a responsibility.

Secondly, the Council should support the Israeli-Lebanese talks, with a view to achieving de-escalation and a functioning ceasefire, in line with resolution 1701 (2006) and with respect for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, in order to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers, as well as humanitarian and health workers and journalists.

Thirdly, the Council should pay renewed and sustained attention to Gaza. Resolution 2803 (2025) was not an end in itself.

Today I want to focus on the last point, the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

First, the Council should be gravely concerned by the collapsing humanitarian relief and recovery situation in Gaza. Gaza remains a place of despair and daily indiscriminate attacks, where UNICEF contractors are killed while delivering water to civilians, where families build shelters from the food boxes while construction materials remain blocked across the border and where the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East — a backbone of United Nations support — is prohibited from operating.

Secondly, the Council should be deeply alarmed by the recent secretive approval of new illegal settlement plans in the occupied West Bank. Life for Palestinians in the West Bank is untenable and continues to worsen. As we have witnessed in Jerusalem in recent days, not even nuns have been spared from attacks just for being different — of a different ethnicity and a different religion. The Council must react to the not-so-

secretive path towards de facto annexation and to settler violence, which seems to enjoy total impunity.

Thirdly, we condemn Israel's decision to abandon its moratorium on the death penalty, in violation of its obligations under international law. The amended death penalty bill constitutes a discriminatory regime of capital punishment, making Palestinian lives less worthy of legal protection. At the very least, the Council should urge Israel to respect and adhere to one of the most fundamental achievements of human civilization — the principle of equality and non-discrimination of all human beings.

Finally, Slovenia welcomes the Palestinian Authority's efforts to hold local elections this past weekend in parts of the West Bank and Dayr al-Balah. They represent a critical step towards a lasting two-State solution.

While all efforts to support peace are welcome, we believe that nothing can substitute the legitimacy, inclusiveness and legal authority of the United Nations system. The Council members — and I appeal especially to the elected ones — have a Charter responsibility and general membership backing to act.

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

Ms. Jóhannsdóttir (Iceland): Resolution 2803 (2025) marked a critical juncture on the path to peace, by endorsing the Comprehensive Plan to End the Conflict in Gaza, the establishment of the Board of Peace and a temporary international stabilization force. Critical steps have since been achieved. All hostages were released and returned to their families, a ceasefire was announced, although an imperfect one, humanitarian assistance has resumed, and there have been some improvements in the rate of delivery.

However, five months on, the full promise of resolution 2803 (2025) remains unrealized, and more progress is needed towards the peace and relief it pledged for Palestinians in Gaza. As we heard on Tuesday (see S/PV.10146), the humanitarian situation continues to be very serious, with access to clean water now critically low. Humanitarian access remains restricted for many essential items, and Israel continues to delay, obstruct and prevent the work of United Nations agencies and key international non-governmental organizations in Gaza.

Meanwhile, the situation in the West Bank continues to deteriorate, with Palestinians enduring some of the most severe restrictions and military operations in decades. Settler violence and crimes persist with impunity and are fuelled and enabled by inflammatory rhetoric and permissive government policy. Compounding those challenges, Israel continues to withhold clearance revenues from the Palestinian Authority, thereby restricting its ability to provide essential government services.

Looking ahead to secure a stable and peaceful future for the people of the region, clear conditions need to be established. Hamas has no role in the future of Palestine, and the military equipment of militant factions in Gaza must be fully decommissioned. The National Committee for the Administration of Gaza has a vital role to play and needs to exert authority in Gaza. While calls for a two-State solution may almost seem futile in the current dire circumstances, it remains the only viable path to sustainable peace and security.

Once again, Lebanese civilians have become victims of the vicious warfare between Israel and Hizbullah. We condemn all attacks on civilians, civilian infrastructure and United Nations peacekeepers and staff. The obligation of all parties to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law should be respected.

We reaffirm the importance of respect for Lebanon's territorial integrity and sovereignty and call for the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). It is essential

to build on the progress achieved under the current, albeit fragile, ceasefire, in order to advance towards lasting peace and stability in both Lebanon and Israel.

We welcome the extension of the ceasefire between the United States and Iran and continue to call for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Iran's obstruction of the Strait of Hormuz is unacceptable and must stop. Its hindered passage presents a direct threat not only to the region, but also to world energy markets and global food security. International law, including the law of the sea and maritime law, must be respected. Iceland was one of the 136 Member States, a record number, that co-sponsored resolution 2817 (2026) seven weeks ago. We lament the Council's inability to take further decisive action on the matter.

The people of the Middle East deserve nothing short of peace and a prosperous future. Members of the Security Council must live up to their fundamental responsibility to maintain peace and security in this region, as elsewhere.

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

Mr. Tau (New Zealand): Conflict in the Middle East, including the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, is having an enormous global impact on not only the region, but also as far afield as New Zealand and the Pacific. New Zealand welcomes the ceasefire between the United States and Iran and continues to urge de-escalation and negotiation. Nevertheless, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and, increasingly, Lebanon, demands urgent attention.

Six months ago, we welcomed the Israel-Hamas peace arrangement as a crucial first step towards a lasting resolution. Since then, developments have been deeply concerning. Humanitarian conditions in Gaza remain dire. More than 1.5 million people are facing a food insecurity crisis. A generation of children will be severely impacted by malnutrition. Making adequate nutrition available without delay is therefore vital.

Increasing violations of the ceasefire by both sides, including Israel's strikes across Gaza, risk escalation and a breakdown of the peace deal. This is alarming. We also strongly oppose Israel's recent decision to expand control over the West Bank, which represents a major setback to a two-State solution. We have also seen worrying escalation with Hizbullah's unjustified attacks on Israel and with Israel's heavy-handed response across Lebanon. These actions have resulted in mass displacement. A reported 1.3 million people in Lebanon need urgent humanitarian assistance. Attacks by both parties on civilians and civilian infrastructure and the targeting of United Nations peacekeepers and humanitarian workers are simply unacceptable.

New Zealand reiterates its support for the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025). We welcome the release of Israeli hostages as a demonstration of what sustained diplomacy could achieve. Although New Zealand is pleased to see an increase in humanitarian assistance, we urge Israel to allow further unhindered assistance into Gaza. Israel must immediately amend registration regulations to ensure non-governmental organizations can continue their essential work. New Zealand also expects Israel to comply fully with the findings of the International Court of Justice and with international law.

New Zealand has welcomed the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire. All parties must adhere to the ceasefire and commit to meaningful negotiations to secure lasting peace. This truce must not be derailed by those seeking to continue the cycle of violence. We acknowledge the United States efforts to broker a ceasefire. We urge all involved to arrive at a solution that preserves Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while providing Israel with security along its northern border. New Zealand fully supports the disarmament of Hizbullah, as called for by the Council.

It is crucial that we do not lose sight of the urgent situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including Gaza and the West Bank, and in Lebanon. We call on all parties to uphold international law, including international humanitarian law, to ensure humanitarian support gets to those in need and quite simply to prevent the suffering of innocent people.

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

Mr. Cha (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea expresses its grave concern at the ongoing escalation of tensions across the Middle East. At the same time, however, we caution against any erosion of our focus on Palestine as its centrality to long-term peace and stability in the region cannot be overstated. Despite the arduous efforts of the Council over the past two years, it was only in November last year that a ceasefire was finally achieved and endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025) under the leadership of the United States. However, the situation in Gaza remains perilous and requires the renewed and reinvigorated attention of the international community at this crucial juncture. Against this backdrop, I would like to highlight the following three points.

First, the Republic of Korea calls for progress on the vital second phase of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict without further delay. All elements of resolution 2803 (2025) should be fully implemented, *inter alia*, the deployment of the International Stabilization Force and the disarmament of Hamas. This is the foundation for further development and reconstruction. We firmly stress that steadfast political will, alongside intensified efforts, is indispensable to achieving this objective.

Secondly, we remain deeply concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. Nearly all of Gaza's hungry population remains forcibly displaced in makeshift tents or crumbling buildings. In this regard, safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access for the delivery of aid at scale must be ensured. We urgently call on Israel to remove all barriers for the delivery of essential humanitarian supplies. Given the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the Republic of Korea has provided a total of \$96 million in humanitarian assistance since the armed conflict began.

Thirdly, any unilateral measures regarding the annexation of Palestinian territory in the West Bank should be revoked, and all settler-related violence must be punished. Illegal settlement expansion continues rapidly alongside an increase in violent settler attacks. It is deeply disturbing that according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, March saw the highest number of Palestinians injured by Israeli settlers in the past 20 years. Turning briefly to Lebanon, we welcome the three-week ceasefire extension but we are seriously concerned about continuing attacks on civilians, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, aid workers and journalists. All parties must comply with the Charter of the United Nations and international law and take every measure to protect civilians, peacekeepers and aid workers.

I would like to conclude by reiterating that the two-State solution is the only viable and universally recognized solution to the question of Palestine. Yet, to get there, we must not let our focused attention on Gaza slip. Indeed, we now have a limited window of opportunity to consolidate the ceasefire's hard-won gains. Let us rekindle greater international focus on Gaza to bring peace and dignity for all.

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

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my sincere thanks to you, Mr. President, my dear brother Jamal, for your excellent stewardship of the Council's proceedings this month and for convening this important meeting.

The Republic of Yemen, in line with its firm and principled stance, reaffirms its categorical rejection and strong condemnation of all illegal Israeli policies and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including settlement expansion, land confiscation, the legalization of settlement outposts, settler terrorism, attempts to displace the Palestinians from their lands, the systematic targeting of humanitarian organizations, civil society and United Nations bodies, foremost among them the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and the discriminatory legislation that violates the rights of Palestinian prisoners and undermines the Palestinian Authority. These practices constitute a flagrant violation of international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions and systematically undermine the peace process and the prospects of achieving a two-State solution, thereby jeopardizing regional and international peace and security. The pursuit of these policies in the West Bank, alongside the injustices witnessed in the Gaza Strip in the form of widespread destruction and human suffering, underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive and just solution to the conflict, grounded in legitimate international resolutions rather than the imposition of a *fait accompli* by force. Against this backdrop, the Republic of Yemen calls on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and compel Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately cease its systematic attacks and violations against the Palestinian people, halt all settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem, and end all attempts to annex Palestinian territories and impose sovereignty on them, while underscoring that such actions are legally invalid.

Furthermore, we call for international protection for the Palestinian people, full compliance with international humanitarian law and the implementation of the relevant Council resolutions, the most recent being resolution 2803 (2025), which provides for arrangements for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the opening of crossings, the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid and the launch of recovery and reconstruction efforts entailing Israel's full withdrawal from the Strip. In this connection, the Republic of Yemen reaffirms its full support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent, sovereign State within June 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. It calls for the revival of a genuine and credible political process under international auspices, culminating in an end to the occupation and a just and comprehensive peace on the basis of the two-State solution.

The Republic of Yemen welcomes the announcement of the ceasefire agreement reached in the sisterly Republic of Lebanon under the auspices of His Excellency United States President Donald Trump and all the efforts that led to it. We reaffirm our full support for the endeavours of His Excellency Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and his Government to preserve the unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon, protect its citizens and restore security and stability to the country. It is Yemen's hope that this announcement will mark a genuine step towards enabling the Lebanese State to exercise full sovereignty over all its territories and shore up its national institutions, thereby ensuring that weapons are confined exclusively to the State and that decisions on matters of war and peace remain the preserve of the State so that the interests of the Lebanese people are upheld, security and stability are safeguarded and the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territories ends.

The Republic of Yemen condemns Israel's attacks targeting Syrian territory and reaffirms its unwavering position of support for Syria's unity and territorial integrity. We call on the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to put an end to those attacks, which violate international law, and to terminate all forms of occupation, including the occupation of the Syrian Golan, in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy.

The Republic of Yemen expresses its condemnation in the strongest terms of the blatant aggressions committed by the Iranian regime against the territories of sister nations within the Gulf Cooperation Council, as well as Jordan. Those attacks constitute grave violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of those States, undermine peace and security in the region and represent a flagrant breach of international law, including international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. They pose a serious threat to international peace and security.

We call on the Council to discharge its responsibilities in upholding regional and international peace and security, including implementing resolution 2817 (2026). We further urge the Council to ensure accountability for officials within the Iranian regime responsible for targeting civilians and economic infrastructure and to bring an end to all practices by the Iranian regime and its proxies that threaten the stability of Arab States, the wider region and the world.

In conclusion, the Republic of Yemen reaffirms that the path to lasting stability in the Middle East begins with ending occupation, upholding the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter, and working to resolve all sources of tension, thereby fulfilling the aspirations of the peoples of the region to live in peace and dignity.

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

Mr. Cronin (Ireland): I thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening today's meeting.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and the statement delivered by the representative of Brazil on behalf of members of the core group of the shared commitments on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

People across the Middle East have suffered terrible destruction, death and despair in recent months. We welcome the recent ceasefires between the United States and Iran and between Israel and Lebanon. We call for diplomatic efforts to be continued and intensified to achieve lasting peace.

In the Gulf, the ongoing disruption of the Strait of Hormuz is causing economic damage and disruption in the region and around the world. We are dismayed by the impact of this conflict on the countries of the Gulf and other countries in the region. We hope that talks resume and that agreement can be reached to address all issues, including legitimate concerns regarding Iran's nuclear programme and its role in the region, in order to provide a lasting basis for regional security. We call on Iran to cease its support for Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine.

The widening of the conflict into Lebanon was a disastrous development provoked by Hizbullah and Iran. Once more, Lebanon is embroiled in conflict, which sets back progress carefully achieved. Ireland has condemned Hizbullah's attacks on Israel and Israel's disproportionate response. Both must stop. Since the ceasefire, Israel has continued to occupy Lebanese territory, displacing villagers and destroying homes. The death toll continues to mount.

We are greatly saddened by the death and injury of peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We again condemn all attacks against UNIFIL personnel, posts and vehicles. Such attacks are unacceptable, and we call for accountability. We renew our condolences to Indonesia and France.

It is hard to imagine Lebanon without a United Nations peacekeeping force at the end of the year, given the risk of a security vacuum and continuing instability. Now more than ever, we see the need for oversight of ceasefires and the protection of communities.

Recent events in Lebanon — from the targeting of healthcare workers and journalists to the intimidation of communities — resemble the atrocities in Gaza. This cannot continue.

We must not lose sight of the situation in Palestine. Ireland is deeply concerned by the massive expansion of settlements, including the approval by Israel this month to build 34 new settlements, as well as rampant and escalating settler violence in the West Bank, which continues in an atmosphere of impunity. Israel's actions consistently contravene international law and are part of an established pattern to create a new status quo in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Despite the ceasefire in Gaza, over 700 Palestinians have been killed and over 2,000 injured in Israeli military operations. The humanitarian situation continues to worsen. We call on Israel to immediately remove restrictions on aid access and facilitate the delivery of essential supplies and services, unimpeded and at scale, across the Gaza Strip.

Ireland remains ready to work with the United States and regional mediators to preserve the ceasefire and advance a sustainable peace plan, in accordance with relevant Council resolutions. It is important that the Palestinian Authority be involved in all developments related to Gaza. Gaza is an integral part of the Palestinian State and must be unified with the West Bank.

Ireland condemns the law passed by the Israeli Parliament to expand the scope of the death penalty and revive its implementation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The right to life is a fundamental human right. Ireland is consistently and strongly opposed to the use of the death penalty in all cases and in all circumstances. Ireland is particularly concerned about the discriminatory nature of the law as it relates to Palestinians.

Let me conclude by stating that ceasefires in the Middle East, like anywhere, must deliver a cessation of violence and give rise to a political pathway for longer-term agreements that provide security for all. The peoples of the region must be given a chance to live in true peace. This requires dialogue and diplomacy and a clear commitment by all to work for a sustainable end to conflict. Ireland stands ready to support these efforts.

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

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): We thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this open debate on a matter of critical importance to international peace and security and stability in the Middle East.

The deaths of and injuries inflicted on Palestinian civilians, following the escalation of violence, are excessive, with women and children disproportionately affected. Civilians continue to suffer across the Gaza Strip. Homes, hospitals and essential infrastructure lie in ruins. This cannot be allowed to persist. International humanitarian law and international human rights law must be upheld.

We reiterate our appreciation to international partners for their mediation of the ceasefire agreement concluded on 9 October 2025. Currently, international commitment and support for the reconstruction of Gaza remain of utmost priority. We urge consolidated action in this regard.

Notwithstanding the global efforts to de-escalate the violence in Gaza, we express our regret over the constant breaching of this hard-earned ceasefire. Continued killings even after the ceasefire raise serious concerns. We are also alarmed by the continuing humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the broader deterioration across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Non-compliance with the ceasefire

severely impacts stability in Gaza and offers no benefit to innocent civilians in either Palestine or Israel. Even as we meet in the Chamber, families continue to be torn apart, communities displaced and bright futures dimmed. The human cost of this conflict will last for generations.

Sri Lanka reiterates its call for an immediate and sustained cessation of hostilities, the protection of civilians and the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those in need. In this regard, the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) remains indispensable and must be fully supported. We reject all attempts to undermine UNRWA and condemn attacks against its facilities in violation of international law.

At the same time, we are witnessing a fragile but hopeful opening in the broader region that may provide a path towards lasting peace. Recent developments suggest a degree of momentum towards de-escalation. This presents an opening for the international community to work collectively towards a more stable and peaceful future. The moment should be seized to advance a broader and lasting peace.

These efforts will fall short without meaningful progress on the question of Palestine. Sri Lanka reaffirms its unwavering support for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, including the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security. All Member States must uphold their obligations in accordance with international law, relevant resolutions and the rulings of the International Court of Justice. The international community must act with unity and purpose to address the immediate humanitarian situation and to support an inclusive and durable political process that can finally bring an end to this tragic conflict and lead the world towards a more peaceful future.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Alves (Timor-Leste): Timor-Leste thanks the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this important open debate and for its stewardship of the Security Council this month. We also extend our appreciation to the briefers for their valuable and insightful contributions.

Timor-Leste remains profoundly concerned by the continued deterioration of the situation in the Middle East, particularly in relation to the Palestinian question. The persistence of violence, the tragic loss of civilian lives and the deepening humanitarian crisis demand not only our attention but our collective resolve. The current trajectory is unsustainable and underscores the urgent necessity of renewed commitment to dialogue, restraint and a peaceful resolution grounded in international legitimacy.

We reaffirm our principled position that all parties must fully respect their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The protection of civilians must remain paramount. Civilian populations must never be the targets of violence; nor should they bear the disproportionate burden of protracted conflict.

In this regard, Timor-Leste stresses the absolute necessity of safeguarding humanitarian personnel and United Nations peacekeepers. Attacks against humanitarian workers and United Nations personnel are unacceptable and constitute violations of international law. We call on all parties to ensure their protection and to facilitate safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access to all those in need. The delivery of life-saving assistance must never be politicized or obstructed.

Timor-Leste continues to support a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East consistent with the relevant United Nations resolutions and internationally

agreed parameters. Central to this objective is the realization of a credible political process that meaningfully addresses the legitimate aspirations, rights and security concerns of all parties. Only through dialogue, anchored in mutual recognition and respect, can sustainable peace be achieved. In this context, we commend Pakistan's efforts to facilitate dialogue and host peace initiatives to de-escalate tensions. Such mediation efforts are essential in creating space for diplomacy and confidence-building, particularly in times of heightened volatility. Constructive engagement by Member States remains indispensable in advancing pathways toward peace.

Timor-Leste is equally concerned by the broader regional and global implications of continued instability in the Middle East. Escalation risks further undermining international peace and security, exacerbating humanitarian needs and diverting critical attention and resources from sustainable development efforts worldwide. In an interconnected world, the consequences of prolonged conflict extend far beyond regional boundaries.

In light of these challenges, we call upon all parties to: first, exercise maximum restraint; secondly, refrain from actions that could further inflame tensions; and thirdly, re-engage in meaningful good-faith dialogue and diplomacy.

The international community, including the Council, bears the collective responsibility to support de-escalation efforts and to foster conditions conducive to a credible and inclusive political process. Silence or inaction in the face of escalating conflict risks eroding the very foundations of the multilateral system.

As a nation that has emerged from the shadow of conflict through perseverance, dialogue and reconciliation, Timor-Leste speaks with the conviction that peace is not only possible but achievable. Our own experience affirms that even the most entrenched conflict can give way to hope when dialogue is prioritized, trust is revealed and international solidarity is sustained. We therefore urge all stakeholders to place peace above division, humanity above hostility and cooperation above confrontation. The people of the Middle East deserve no less than a future defined by dignity, stability and lasting peace.

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

Mr. Chaivaivid (Thailand): Thailand once again commends your leadership, Mr. President, in convening this open debate. Like many other countries, Thailand follows with deep concern the developments in the Middle East, including in Gaza and other areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We stand ready to support all efforts to translate our collective resolve into meaningful progress with a view to achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The situation in the Middle East continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza has reached a breaking point. We are concerned that unilateral measures and settlement expansion in the West Bank risk undermining the two-State solution, which is the only viable path to a just and sustainable peace. There is no alternative to a negotiated peaceful solution.

Thailand underscores that the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure is not optional. It is a fundamental obligation under international humanitarian law. We call for the immediate, safe, unhindered and sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale. In this context, we stress the indispensable role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East as a lifeline for the survival of millions of Palestinian refugees.

We welcome progress in the first phase of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to end the Gaza Conflict, which led to the ceasefire agreement.

However, renewed regional escalation has further complicated overall peace efforts and worsened the already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. We call for concerted efforts to advance the second phase, paving a credible pathway towards a two-State solution in which Israel and Palestine live side by side in peace and security.

We are also concerned about rising tensions affecting key maritime routes, particularly the Strait of Hormuz, which remains vital to global energy security and trade. Any disruption would result in far-reaching consequences, especially for energy-importing countries such as my very own country, Thailand. This underscores the urgent need for de-escalation and safeguarding freedom of navigation.

The ceasefire remains fragile. We call on all parties concerned to adhere to their commitments and to the agreed terms and to engage constructively in advancing the next phase of the Comprehensive Plan with restraint and in good faith towards a peaceful and lasting resolution of the conflict. Thailand will continue to follow developments closely and support all efforts to advance lasting peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians, while reaffirming the importance of dialogue, de-escalation and respect for international law.

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

Mr. Ananyan (Armenia): Allow me to express our gratitude to the presidency of Bahrain of the Security Council for convening this timely open debate and thank the briefers for their remarks.

We have been following the developments in the Middle East with grave concern. The recent military escalation in Armenia's immediate neighbourhood has led to human casualties and suffering, the destruction of critical civilian infrastructure and damage to renowned world heritage sites. The dire consequences of this conflict extend way beyond the region, affecting global trade, disrupting supply chains and transport connectivity, and resulting in sharp increases in prices for critical goods, in particular oil and gas.

The leadership of Armenia has been in close contact with the Governments of countries affected by the war. Our message has been clear: diplomacy and negotiations are the only way forward to address all the issues. We have been consistently underlining the urgent need to reduce tensions and prevent further escalation. For Armenia, this is especially pressing given our direct border with Iran and potential humanitarian, economic and security consequences of the prolongation of the conflict.

Furthermore, we call on the parties to fully comply with international humanitarian law. Any attack targeting the civilian population, residential areas, critical civilian infrastructure and cultural landmarks is unacceptable.

Armenia is vitally interested in peace and stability in our immediate neighbourhood. We welcome the crucial decision between Iran and the United States to cease hostilities and move towards de-escalation. We commend the mediation efforts, including those undertaken by Pakistan, aimed at reducing tensions and preventing further escalation. It is crucial to give diplomacy and negotiations a real chance to resolve all outstanding issues and preserve peace in the Middle East. We believe that upholding the ceasefire will create the necessary conditions for a political settlement and for lasting peace in the region.

We express our deep concern about the humanitarian situation in Lebanon, including significant civilian casualties, extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure and the mass displacement of more than 1 million people. Armenia reiterates its firm support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Lebanon and commends the efforts of the Lebanese Government aimed at the restoration of stability in the country. In this context, we also emphasize the importance of ensuring the safety, security and

full rights of Christian communities and the protection of their heritage in the region. We support the efforts of the Lebanese Government to implement the Nation Shield Plan to ensure the State monopoly on weapons and establish full control by the armed forces of Lebanon over the country's whole territory. As a troop contributor to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Armenia reaffirms its full support for the peacekeeping mission. We urge the parties to take all measures to ensure the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel and premises, in accordance with international law. Those responsible for the attacks against UNIFIL personnel must be held accountable.

The Republic of Armenia stands ready to work with all international partners genuinely interested in achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East for the benefit of all countries and peoples of the region.

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

Ms. Moutchou (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, for presiding over this open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. I also take this opportunity to extend the Kingdom of Morocco's warmest congratulations and deep appreciation to the brotherly Kingdom of Bahrain for the sincere efforts made during its successful presidency and to commend its effective role in promoting regional and international peace and security.

In line with the firm and consistent commitment of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, and his continued concern for the situation in the Palestinian territories, Morocco renews its call for greater mobilization of the international community to help the region overcome its crises and achieve a comprehensive and just peace.

In this context, the Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the announcement by the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. Donald Trump, on the entry into force of the second phase of the ceasefire in Gaza. Morocco expresses its strong appreciation for President Trump's sustained efforts and personal engagement, which have led to this hopeful outcome. Morocco also commends the tireless efforts of all mediators and calls on all parties to fully implement this agreement, allowing for rapid and adequate humanitarian access and the launch of reconstruction efforts within the framework of a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian question. Morocco further emphasizes the importance of halting settlement activities, annexation plans and incursions into the grounds of the blessed Aqsa Mosque.

The Kingdom of Morocco, under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, reaffirms its firm commitment to the two-State solution as an indispensable basis for achieving a just and lasting peace in the region, through the establishment of a sovereign State of Palestine on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital and Gaza as an integral part, living side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security.

The Kingdom of Morocco also affirms its full readiness to contribute effectively at all stages and on all the paths that were agreed upon, in a such a manner that guarantees the rights of the brotherly Palestinian people and supports stability in the Middle East region. These developments, which we welcome, call for effective engagement to advance negotiations towards a political solution, based on a clear timetable that guarantees the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. It is equally important to integrate the economic dimension into the peace process, as it is an essential factor for stability and development. Furthermore, it is necessary to strengthen support for the Palestinian Authority, under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas, to bolster its institutions and meet the Palestinian people's aspirations for security and

dignity. The next phase will also require political and financial support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to allow it to carry out its vital mission to provide humanitarian support for the Palestinians.

As part of Morocco's continued engagement in promoting peace in the Middle East and its sustained support for the two-State solution, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, accepted an invitation from President Donald Trump for Morocco to join the Board of Peace as a founding member. This is an initiative that is aimed at contributing to peace efforts in the Middle East and promoting a new approach to conflict resolution worldwide. As part of its contribution to the International Stabilization Force for Gaza, Morocco has announced its readiness to deploy members of the Moroccan police to train police in Gaza and deploy Royal Armed Forces officers to leadership roles in the International Stabilization Force for Gaza, establish a field hospital to provide emergency medical services and launch a comprehensive programme to combat hate speech and promote tolerance and coexistence.

Morocco reaffirms its steadfast commitment to defending holy sites, in particular the blessed Aqsa Mosque, which holds special significance for His Majesty King Mohammed VI as Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee. This commitment is reflected in the work of the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency, the executive arm of the Al-Quds Committee, which seeks to preserve the legal and historical status of Jerusalem, protect its identity and support the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish an independent State along the June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its full solidarity with brotherly Arab states, including members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and its support for all legitimate measures they are taking to safeguard their security and ensure the safety of their populations and residents. Morocco emphasizes that the security of these brotherly Arab States is an integral part of its own security.

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

Mr. Van Schalkwyk (South Africa): We thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this quarterly open debate on the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

We meet at an unprecedented period since the end of the Second World War, in which international law, multilateralism and the credibility of the Council are being tested. The Middle East has been plunged into violent confrontation and instability following the joint attack by the United States and Israel against Iran. This military conflagration in the region has left several countries in a state of profound fragility and instability.

South Africa is deeply concerned and alarmed by Israel's continued military aggression in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, which has resulted in civilian casualties, the destruction of essential infrastructure and the displacement of communities. The attacks on Lebanon constitute a serious breach of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, further destabilizing the region and must be condemned.

While we welcomed the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon, and have encouraged both parties to pursue peace talks, we stress that there can be no military solution. We condemn Israel's continued and consistent violation of the ceasefire agreement, including that of the ceasefire authorized by resolution 2803 (2025). The blatant and brazen violation of ceasefires undermines the ability of these agreements to build the trust needed for further negotiations for sustainable peace.

It is deeply concerning that since the announcement of the ceasefire in Gaza, in October 2025, over 700 Palestinians have been killed. We are also concerned by the harrowing reports of the continued killing of Palestinians, as well as the demolition and bulldozing of homes in new sections of Khan Yunis and eastern Gaza City neighbourhoods.

The continued closure of the Rafah crossing to aid deliveries has resulted in what the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs calls a “major bottleneck”. It constitutes the choking off of a vital lifeline to the people of Gaza, and we call for the immediate and unhindered delivery of aid at the scale required to meet the Gazan population’s urgent needs.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) plays a crucial role in delivering humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees. It is therefore important to underscore that the international community has a moral responsibility to ensure that UNRWA’s vital work continues unhindered.

The political campaign seeking to undermine UNRWA’s credibility and operational mandate must be stopped by Members States by supporting United Nations efforts to uphold the Agency’s mandate and exerting diplomatic pressure on Israel to comply with international law and the rulings of the International Court of Justice. There is a need to act collectively and demand that Israel immediately revoke its legislation restricting the Agency’s work and comply fully with its obligations under international law. Efforts to delegitimize UNRWA have direct consequences on refugee rights, regional stability and service delivery.

South Africa reaffirms its full support for UNRWA’s indispensable role in providing life-saving humanitarian assistance and human development services. UNRWA is not an optional actor. It is a lifeline for millions of Palestine refugees.

South Africa continues to believe that peace in the Middle East remains contingent on the realization of Palestinian statehood. Our failure to find a lasting solution to the plight of the people of Palestine and ensure their self-determination, security and freedom remains an enduring threat to the international community’s core objective of achieving a just and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine that results in Palestinian statehood.

The protection of civilians must remain paramount. We are alarmed by the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the continuing violence affecting civilians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. International humanitarian law is not optional. All parties must ensure unhindered humanitarian access and the protection of civilian infrastructure and adhere to the obligation to distinguish between civilians and combatants.

We call on Israel to halt the E1 settlement project in the occupied West Bank and to reverse the expansion of settlements. These illegal settlements violate international law and Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016) of December 2016, which declares that Israel’s settlements in Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation under international law.

In conclusion, United Nations Member States must work collectively to take active, irreversible steps to end Israel’s unlawful occupation and realize the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination through statehood that delivers true sovereignty on equal terms with Israel. South Africa will continue to support all efforts towards this goal, so that Palestinians can live in peace and dignity.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Ms. Lawrence (Federated States of Micronesia): I thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this important open debate and for its leadership of the Security Council during the month of April.

Micronesia remains gravely concerned by the evolving and interconnected crises across the Middle East. The continued escalation of violence, including attacks that threaten the sovereignty and security of States in the region, risks further destabilizing an already fragile situation. In this regard, Micronesia strongly condemns Iran's attacks against its neighbours, as well as its continued support for armed groups that contribute to instability across the region.

We are equally alarmed by any actions or threats by Iran to disrupt or close the Strait of Hormuz. Such actions would constitute a serious violation of international law and pose a direct threat to global peace, security and economic stability. For small island developing States like Micronesia, the free flow of energy and commerce through international waterways is essential. We underscore that freedom of navigation must be fully respected and safeguarded.

Micronesia unequivocally affirms Israel's right to defend itself against attacks and threats to its security. This right is fundamental and non-negotiable. Israel cannot be expected to tolerate ongoing attacks against its territory or population. At the same time, we emphasize that all measures taken in self-defence must be consistent with international humanitarian law and ensure the protection of civilians.

We are also deeply concerned by the escalating situation along the Blue Line between Israel and Lebanon, including continued attacks by Hizbullah against Israel. These actions risk provoking a broader regional conflict with devastating consequences. We call for the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), the cessation of hostilities and the Lebanese State to exercise effective control over its territory.

Turning to the Palestinian question, we reaffirm our support for a peaceful, negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on relevant United Nations resolutions and the two-State solution, with Israel and a State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

Micronesia emphasizes the urgent need for de-escalation across all fronts and calls on all actors to refrain from actions that further inflame tensions or undermine regional stability. As a small island developing State, Micronesia places strong faith in multilateralism, respect for sovereignty and adherence to international law. We urge the Security Council to act with unity and resolve in addressing these serious and interconnected challenges.

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

Ms. Meli Daudey (Malta): Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and makes the following remarks in its national capacity.

We meet at a time when developments in the Middle East continue to have significant implications for regional and international peace and security. Instability continues to evolve, spilling across theatres and reshaping how conflicts interact. In these circumstances, it is natural to look for new responses, new frameworks and new tools. But we should be equally clear that the foundations for addressing crises of this nature are already in place. The United Nations remains central in this regard.

The regional developments we are discussing are deeply interconnected and cannot be treated in isolation. The ongoing situation in Iran continues to carry wider ramifications, reverberating far beyond the Middle East.

We stand in solidarity with our partners in the Gulf, who have been among the first to feel the impact of this conflict. Diplomacy, dialogue and de-escalation must

remain our guiding principles in addressing the current situation and preventing further escalation.

Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz highlight the importance of sustained diplomatic engagement to preserve maritime security and ensure durable, secure freedom of navigation, in line with international law and regional stability. Instability in this vital corridor has direct repercussions for global supply chains, energy markets and broader economic stability worldwide.

Yet even as these dynamics evolve, the situation in Gaza and the West Bank continues to require sustained, focused attention. The ceasefire in Gaza remains fragile. The humanitarian situation continues to demand sustained access and the full protection of civilians. Developments in the West Bank, particularly settlement expansion and settler violence, continue to erode the conditions necessary for a negotiated solution. These are not isolated developments; they directly impact the viability of a future political settlement.

Malta's position is clear and consistent. A just and lasting peace can be achieved only through an end to violence against civilians and a two-State solution, in line with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, based on the 4 June 1967 lines with East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace and security. We must also address the obstacles to this outcome with equal clarity. Hamas's continued refusal to disarm and its role in perpetuating violence cannot form part of any future political arrangement. In this regard, the Palestinian Authority must be supported as the sole legitimate basis for governance and strengthened in its capacity to assume that role. Without this, the space for a credible political solution narrows further.

The situation in Lebanon further reflects the fragility of the wider region. The current ceasefire remains vulnerable, and the unresolved issue of Hizbullah's armaments continues to pose the risk of a renewed escalation. We welcome the recent efforts by the parties to engage in dialogue facilitated by the United States.

Syria remains a critical part of this regional picture. Malta remains concerned by the continued humanitarian needs and the risk of renewed escalation. We underscore the importance of protecting civilians and upholding international law. We reiterate our support for efforts towards a credible Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

What this moment requires is both clarity and pragmatism. We should be mindful that the foundations for peace are already well established and remain valid. The task before us is to draw on these where they continue to serve us and to apply them with coherence and consistency, while adapting our responses to evolving realities. For the Council, this means maintaining focus, upholding international law and reinforcing diplomacy as the primary instrument for conflict resolution. Malta remains committed to working with partners in support of de-escalation and a credible political pathway towards a just and lasting peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Sovereign Order of Malta.

Mr. Beresford-Hill: At the outset, I wish to thank the presidency of the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this timely meeting.

We address the Council as a sovereign entity unencumbered by internal political agendas but with an overarching mission to the suffering, the forgotten, the sick and the poor of this world; and nowhere is our vision more acute and our energies more focused than in the Holy Land. The recent celebration of Easter, Ramadan and Passover confirms the central role of faith in sustaining regional pluralism and diversity. Yet these values

are being profoundly challenged by a steady erosion of the status quo. During the past sacred season, restricted access to the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Aqsa Mosque threatened the very foundations of religious freedom. The depth of the challenge facing us was displayed only last week with the desecration of a religious statue in Lebanon, when boundaries of tolerance and respect were severely violated, while globally, antisemitic violence cannot be ignored and continues to remind us that the consequences are not limited to the cradle of the three Abrahamic religions.

We are profoundly alarmed by the intensifying humanitarian catastrophe unfolding across the Holy Land, where essential goods, including incubators for newborns and life-saving pharmaceuticals, remain restricted by arbitrary and capricious regulations, while water scarcity poses a pervasive threat to public health. In the West Bank, restrictions to movement and aid delivery have caused a physical paralysis compounded by a fiscal crisis, placing the healthcare system under immense strain and jeopardizing the lives of the most vulnerable. As Pope Leo XIV observed, humanity cries out and pleads for peace.

The Sovereign Order of Malta reaffirms — as we unequivocally stated to the General Assembly last week — that the protection of civilians, healthcare personnel, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers is a fundamental obligation of all States and non-State actors. Public safety — alongside the right to worship and the provision of unimpeded aid where needed and where necessary — must never be subordinate to the conduct of hostilities. Recalling Stalin's callous comment that one death is a tragedy but a million is a statistic, we believe, as I am sure we all do, that every death is a tragedy, as is every suffering. And like other aid providers in the region, we decry the cycle of self-perpetuating violence that seeks its excuse in history and its rationale in politics while destroying lives with impunity. Blessed are the peacemakers.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Maldives.

Ms. Sameer (Maldives): I thank Bahrain, the President of the Council, for convening this quarterly open debate.

The Maldives aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

A few weeks ago, a video circulated on social media from Gaza: a young girl sitting beside the lifeless body of her brother outside what remained of a school shelter. She was not crying. She was silently asking whether she should wait for her parents or if they were gone too. Children mourning children and lost childhood is an unremarkable daily occurrence in present-day Palestine. Since October 2023, more than 73,000 Palestinians have been killed. More than 182,000 have been injured. More than 1.7 million people have been forcibly displaced. More than 500,000 people have faced an emergency level of hunger, with more than 100,000 in famine-like conditions. Hospitals have been bombed into ruin. Doctors perform surgeries without anesthesia. Ambulances have been struck on their way to save lives. Schools have become mass graves. Humanitarian aid continues to be obstructed.

The root cause for this suffering remains unchanged: years of Israel's occupation, its apartheid policies and its entrenched impunity. In the past months, Israel has approved advancement of 6,000 settlement units expanding into the West Bank. Settler violence has escalated and increased.

A ceasefire is essential, but it is not enough. A lasting resolution must address the root causes; the end of the Israeli occupation, apartheid and impunity; accountability without exception; and justice for the future lost. It must be grounded in the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and in the recognition of the independent State of

Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and with full United Nations membership.

The people of Palestine are not asking for sympathy. They are asking for a reprieve from genocide. They are asking for justice.

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

Mr. Soberón Guzmán (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We support the statements delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Indonesia in his capacity as Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The Middle East region is going through a period of deep instability as a result of the application of the United States doctrine of peace through force, which Israel also applies with impunity, in systematic violation of the Charter of the United Nations. The genocide against the Palestinian people, the occupation and the aggression against sovereign States in the Middle East constitute violations of international law and serious threats to international peace and security.

Cuba reiterates its strongest condemnation of the attacks perpetrated on 28 February by the United States and Israel against the Islamic Republic of Iran, in flagrant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter. This aggression, which violates the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran, has resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians, including children, and has derailed diplomatic efforts, to the detriment of regional stability and with global consequences.

We emphasize that the use of force, far from resolving conflicts, exacerbates and multiplies their humanitarian consequences. It is vital to promote peaceful conflict resolution through negotiation and dialogue in order to ensure regional and international peace, stability and security.

Cuba calls for dialogue, the principle of good neighbourliness, and peace, friendship and cooperation to prevail between Iran and the Arab States, based on full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of all parties. In this regard, we welcome the ongoing diplomatic efforts to achieve a ceasefire and a lasting solution to the conflict in that region.

We cannot ignore the tragic situation of the Palestinian people. Israel's attacks against civilians and essential infrastructure in the Occupied Palestinian Territories have deprived the population of essential services. The long-standing complicity of the United States and its unconditional political, diplomatic, military and financial support for Israel, including the abuse of its undemocratic veto power, have sustained for more than seven decades a criminal and expansionist policy, in violation of multiple Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

We strongly condemn Israel, the occupying Power, for imposing obstacles to humanitarian access, attacking healthcare facilities and refugee camps, and using hunger as a weapon of war. Israel must be held accountable for its crimes against humanity, apartheid and genocide, which constitute systematic violations of international humanitarian law.

We also denounce Israel's persistent actions against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and its attacks on humanitarian workers and United Nations institutions, which aggravate the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population.

Israel's continued violations of the Gaza ceasefire, together with its sustained military incursions, including in the north of the West Bank, are unacceptable. These

actions form part of a systematic strategy of occupation, colonization and collective punishment to prevent by force the recognition of the State of Palestine.

Cuba reiterates the urgency of admitting Palestine as a full Member State of the United Nations and reaffirms the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent and sovereign State, on the basis of the two-State solution, within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and with the right of return of refugees guaranteed. A just and lasting peace in the Middle East will not be possible without a comprehensive and definitive solution to the Palestinian question.

Israel's policy of aggression, aimed at reshaping the Middle East by force, is perpetuating the cycle of violence and insecurity in the region. Israel must carry out the total and unconditional withdrawal from the Syrian Golan and all occupied Arab territories.

We condemn the continued Israeli attacks against Lebanon, which have resulted in the death of more than 2,000 Lebanese, and its attacks against the positions of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. Israel must put an end to its attacks and respect the ceasefire in Lebanon.

The international community must act firmly to restore peace with the urgency and determination that the moment demands. We reaffirm that true peace cannot be achieved through force, but through compliance with international law and through dialogue and negotiation, not under threats, pressure or coercion.

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

Before adjourning the meeting, as this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of April, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the members of the Council and the Secretariat for all the support they have given us.

Indeed, it has been a busy month and one in which we rallied to consensus on several important issues within our purview. We could not have done it alone or without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat, including the technical support team, conference services officers, interpreters, translators, verbatim reporters and security staff.

As we end our presidency, I know I speak on behalf of the Council in wishing the delegation of China good luck in the month of May and all the best.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.