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Provisional

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

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Israel to participate in this meeting.

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

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following speakers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator; Mr. Itay Epshtain, Special Advisor and Senior Humanitarian Law and Policy Consultant at the Norwegian Refugee Council; and Ms. Mariam Barghouti, independent journalist, writer and political analyst.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Alakbarov.

Mr. Alakbarov: Today's briefing is focused on the Secretary-General's quarterly report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) (S/2026/513), as circulated to Council members last week.

Since the 12 June cut-off date for the written report, the situation across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory — in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem — has remained volatile. Israeli air strikes and military operations have continued across Gaza, resulting in further fatalities and bringing the total killed since the ceasefire to over 1,000, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health.

Israeli forces continue to expand the scope of their territorial control in Gaza and the extension of areas requiring coordination for humanitarian operations. Israel has said that it currently controls approximately 70 per cent of the Gaza Strip. This encroachment of areas under Israeli control is reducing the space available to civilians. Palestinians in Gaza are concentrated in increasingly limited areas, living amid insecurity and violence.

As the Emergency Relief Coordinator briefed the Council on 18 June (see S/PV.10177), since the adoption of resolution 2803 (2025), there have been improvements in the humanitarian situation in Gaza. The share of households going to bed hungry dropped from 92 to 36 per cent, and humanitarians were able to expand the provision of water, health and education services. But as Under-Secretary-General Fletcher said, resolution 2803 (2025) and President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict are meant to deliver much more than that, while the needs in Gaza remain immense. Sanitation conditions remain alarming. Seventy per cent of the population lacks dignified shelter. Humanitarians continue to face persistent constraints as they carry out their essential work.

I am deeply concerned about the reports of intimidation in the context of protests that were planned in Gaza on 26 June. Civilians must be able to exercise their rights

peacefully, without fear, and must be protected at all times. The legitimate needs, concerns and aspirations of the people of Gaza must be addressed through the full implementation of resolution 2803 (2025). This includes the disarmament of Hamas and all other armed groups in Gaza, the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces, the deployment of the International Stabilization Force and the transfer of governance responsibilities to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza. In coordination with the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations is ready to support the Committee in providing critical public services and in laying the groundwork for reconstruction to restore dignity, improve living conditions and offer hope for the future.

I welcome last week's joint visit to Gaza by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch and the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. Amid ongoing deprivation and suffering, their visit sent a timely signal of peace, tolerance and dignity for all. Meanwhile, the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has continued to deteriorate. Israeli military activity continued in and around the refugee camps in Jenin and Tulkarm in the northern West Bank, resulting in the evacuation and displacement of Palestinian households, including refugee families. This activity, including the reported establishment of an Israeli military post in Jenin, remains especially concerning as it is taking place in Area A, which falls under the Palestinian Authority's civil and security control.

On 17 June, Israeli authorities reportedly approved the expansion of a building used as a yeshiva in Hebron's H2 area. The approval followed the transfer of planning authority from the Hebron municipality to the Israeli Civil Administration, in line with the Israeli Security Cabinet decision of 8 February. Yesterday, 28 June, the indemnity waiver issued by the Israeli Ministry of Finance permitting correspondent banking relations between Israeli and Palestinian banks was extended for another two weeks, until 12 July. On 14 June, President Abbas issued a decree amending the general elections law. Among other changes, the decree increased the number of seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council, lowered the electoral threshold for winning seats and required the inclusion of at least one woman among every three candidates on a list. The decree also committed to holding presidential elections in 2027.

Allow me to highlight some of the Secretary-General's observations from the report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). I reiterate the Secretary-General's strong condemnation of the relentless expansion and acceleration of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. These developments further entrench the unlawful Israeli occupation and threaten the viability of a fully independent, contiguous and sovereign Palestinian State. All Israeli settlements and related infrastructure have no legal validity, constitute a flagrant violation of international law and must cease immediately.

I am deeply concerned about the steps taken by Israeli authorities to implement formal land registration in Area C. There is a serious risk that this decision will facilitate further settlement expansion and entrenchment of the unlawful occupation. I am also concerned about broader measures aimed at deepening Israeli administrative and territorial control of the West Bank. Along with the threat of annexation, which would have no legal validity, these actions are steadily transforming geographical and demographic realities across the West Bank and further undermining the prospects for a two-State solution.

The escalating violence and tensions in the West Bank are highly concerning. I condemn all violence against civilians, including acts of terror. I echo the Secretary-General's deep concern about persistent and intensifying settler attacks. I also remain deeply concerned about ongoing attacks by Palestinians against Israelis. All perpetrators must be held accountable. In addition, I reiterate the Secretary-General's

alarm over the scale of displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank. Settler violence, access restrictions, demolitions and prolonged security operations have resulted in the largest displacement crisis in the West Bank since 1967. I am appalled at the numerous instances in which officials glorified violence and engaged in dangerous provocation, incitement and inflammatory language. All incitement to violence must stop immediately.

I share the Secretary-General's concern about the growing threats to the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem. I reiterate that the status quo must be respected and upheld, in line with the special and historic role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

I echo the Secretary-General in condemning in the strongest terms the Israeli authorities' decision to establish military facilities at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Shaykh Jarrah compound in East Jerusalem. I urge the Government of Israel to rescind its decision and immediately return to the United Nations the UNRWA Shaykh Jarrah compound. I also urge Member States to continue to politically support and financially sustain UNRWA.

Despite the ceasefire announced eight months ago, Gaza still faces profound uncertainty and immense human suffering. I condemn the continued killing and injury of civilians in Gaza, including women and children. I am particularly concerned about the recent increasing calls for a resumption of widespread hostilities in Gaza. This would be disastrous for the Palestinian people of Gaza, for Israelis and for the entire region. I reiterate the Secretary-General's deep concern about the humanitarian situation in Gaza. I call on all parties to facilitate the full, rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance. The provision of humanitarian aid must never be used as a bargaining chip.

I welcome the continued commitment of the international community to supporting the Palestinian Authority and advancing concrete steps towards the realization of the two-State solution. I urge the international community to continue supporting the Palestinian Authority in strengthening its governance capacity, implementing reforms and addressing its fiscal challenges as it prepares to reassume its full responsibilities in Gaza, in line with resolution 2803 (2025).

I join the Secretary-General in reiterating the strong commitment to supporting Palestinians and Israelis in ending the occupation and resolving the conflict, in line with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and bilateral agreements in pursuit of the vision of two States — Israel and a fully independent, democratic, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, of which Gaza is an integral part — living side by side in peace and security within secure and recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Alakbarov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Epshtain.

Mr. Epshtain: On behalf of the Norwegian Refugee Council, I wish to thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to brief the Council at this quarterly consideration of resolution 2334 (2016).

Adopted almost 10 years ago, its words are familiar: Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine constitute a flagrant violation of international law. The question before the Council today is not whether those words remain correct. The question is whether the Council is prepared to give them effect.

It is the plight of Palestinian communities we serve — living with the consequences of non-implementation: displacement, dispossession and the steady erosion of protection — that I wish to share today. When States gathered after the Second World War to codify the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War — the Fourth Geneva Convention, including its prohibition on population transfer, they did so in the shadow of mass atrocities, colonization, forced displacement and racial persecution. For Palestinians today, this is not an abstract legal proposition. It is a lived reality. The law saw this danger clearly from the outset.

In June 1967, Israel came to occupy the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and Gaza. Within weeks, Theodor Meron, then counsel of Israel's Foreign Ministry, set out the legal consequences with notable clarity. He affirmed the applicability of the Regulations respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and the Fourth Geneva Convention to the newly occupied territories, recalled the prohibition on annexation and advised that civilian settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory would be in contravention of explicit provisions of international humanitarian law. What has changed since is not the law. What has changed is the scale of the breach, the entrenchment of the occupation and the cost borne by Palestinians for the failure of enforcement.

The Council must bring into view the convergence of phenomena too often treated separately: settlement expansion and settler violence, demolitions and displacement, obstruction of humanitarian relief and denial of essential services and the fragmentation of Palestinian governance. Together, they create a system of coercion. Since January 2023, 117 Palestinian communities have experienced full or partial displacement linked to settler attacks and related access restrictions.

The displacement crisis is not confined to Bedouin or herding communities. More than 33,000 Palestinians have been displaced from Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams refugee camps and surrounding areas. As we have just heard, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has described this as the largest and longest displacement crisis in the West Bank since 1967. The figures matter because they confirm the pattern. The home, the school, the water network, the olive grove and the refugee camp have all become pressure points in a wider effort to make Palestinian presence harder to sustain. One recent field assessment shows what prolonged displacement means for families. Households displaced report worsening shelter conditions, collapsing livelihoods and fear of repeated displacement. Another assessment should deeply trouble the Council. More than 70 per cent of displaced households identified threats against women and children, including sexualized threats and gender-based harassment, as decisive in their decision to flee.

Forcible transfer does not always announce itself with a single order. It may occur through accumulation: repeated attacks, sexualized threats, demolished homes, lost livelihoods and the absence of credible protection. East Jerusalem and the Jerusalem periphery illustrate how coercion becomes a strategy for acquiring territory. In Silwan, Palestinian families face eviction and takeover by settler organizations. In and around E1, Khan al-Ahmar and nearby Bedouin communities face renewed demolition risk and intense pressure in an area of profound territorial and political significance.

The International Court of Justice has clarified the matter before us in decisive terms. In its 2024 advisory opinion on the *Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem* (see A/78/968), the Court did not merely characterize discrete Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as unlawful. It found that Israel's continued presence in that territory, as such, is unlawful. It reaffirmed that the West

Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza are occupied territory over which the Palestinian people hold permanent sovereign rights. It identified legal consequences for Israel, for all States and for the United Nations. That clarification matters for the Council. Resolution 2334 (2016) rested on legal rules that were already clear when it was adopted. The Court has now confirmed those rules and the consequences that flow from them: settlements are not only a flagrant violation of international law and an obstacle to peace. They form part of an unlawful situation whose consequences cannot be ignored. What was framed in 2016 as a call upon States has, after 2024, acquired the character of a judicially endorsed legal obligation. The Security Council cannot, through subsequent resolutions, dilute obligations grounded in peremptory norms or negate the legal consequences identified by the Court. From wrong comes no right, and no passage of time cures illegality.

This matters because annexation is often described as irreversible. That is a political claim dressed up as certainty. It confuses material entrenchment with legal consolidation. It seeks to turn unlawful facts into lawful rights. Annexation has become more costly to reverse, more complex to dismantle and more disruptive to vested interests. It has not become irreversible as a matter of law.

The same clarity is needed in relation to settler violence. It is often described, including in this Chamber, as extremism, as though it were a marginal deviation from State policy. That language is legally inadequate. Where armed settlers operate as integral or auxiliary parts of military forces, or where public officials enable, direct, or exercise control over settler violence, the inquiry cannot stop with individual criminality. The question becomes one of State responsibility. Only last week, Israel's own military advocate warned that violent settlers and the armed forces are no longer readily distinguishable when, without legal authority, they impose restrictions on Palestinian movement. Settler violence may, therefore, be both individual wrongdoing and part of a coercive environment for which Israel, as the occupying Power, bears responsibility. Settler violence forms part of the broader architecture through which territory is unlawfully acquired and controlled.

The response of third States has begun to shift, with greater attention to individual perpetrators of settler violence and extremist groups. That attention matters, but individual accountability cannot substitute for the broader obligations of States. Measures aimed solely at direct perpetrators fail to address the roles of ministries, settlement councils and the legislative and financial infrastructure that sustain the settlement enterprise. States must ensure that their own conduct does not recognize, aid, or assist an unlawful situation. They must also cooperate to bring it to an end.

That means restitution first. Homes, orchards and olive groves must be restored to their rightful owners. Settlements and associated infrastructure must be dismantled. Palestinians displaced by coercion or violence must be able to return voluntarily, in safety and dignity. Where restitution is materially impossible, compensation must follow.

The General Assembly has shown the way: the United Nations Register of Damage, born of the 2004 wall advisory opinion, should now be expanded to receive claims and quantify compensation for the full consequences of Israel's unlawful presence since 1967, including displacement, destruction, resource exploitation and denial of housing, land and property rights. Recognition of Palestinian self-determination without restoration of the material basis on which that right depends will be a promise without land beneath it.

Restitution addresses harm after the fact. Protection must prevent harm before it occurs. Communities at risk of forcible transfer need protection and humanitarian

aid before they are uprooted, not only assistance after injury is felt. Israel has an obligation to facilitate the presence and activities of impartial relief societies, such as the Norwegian Refugee Council. The International Court of Justice confirmed this obligation last year. Yet Israel continues to interfere with the presence, registration, staffing and independence of humanitarian organizations, restricting their ability to reach Palestinian communities in need and carry out the very activities Israel is required to facilitate. The Council should put Israel on notice: as the occupying Power, it must allow and facilitate principled humanitarian action and comply with its obligations under international humanitarian law.

The obstacle is not lack of law. The obstacle is political reluctance. Annexation persists because its costs remain tolerable to those who sustain it. Settler violence persists because it is too often dismissed as deviation. Forced displacement persists because the international response remains fragmented. The task before the Council is at once simple and demanding: to ensure, without delay, the end of an unlawful Israeli presence that continues to drive displacement, dispossession and civilian harm across the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We are not asking the Council to invent new law. We are asking it to apply the law it has already affirmed.

The late Benjamin Ferencz, the last surviving prosecutor of Nuremberg, reminded us that there can be no peace without justice, no justice without law and no meaningful law without a forum to decide what is just and lawful. The law is clear. The facts are before the Council. What remains now is consequence.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Epshtain for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Barghouthi.

Ms. Barghouthi: I am speaking today not as a diplomat or a representative. I am speaking as a journalist who has spent years documenting the reality of occupied Palestine, focusing specifically on the West Bank. I come here with testimonies and the first-hand witnessing of voices and lives that are rarely allowed to enter this Chamber, except as statistics.

For Palestinians, the reality is not a political dispute. It is experienced every morning, every day and every evening when going to school or to work or when carrying out the most basic activities such as family gatherings, weddings and funerals that are consistently and relentlessly interrupted by armed Israeli violence, more often by the military, but also by armed Israeli militia groups. It is a reality of navigating military checkpoints, where we are seeing an increase not just in military violence, but violence from armed Israeli militias that are not even bound to the chain of command of the army. This does not only mean delay. This does not only mean the theft of time of Palestinians, but it is a re-wiring of the entire nervous system of Palestinians, in constant anticipation of violence and through what we see as a systemic weaponization of fear. But it also means, at a practical level, the denial of access to life-saving spaces, including hospitals. I myself have witnessed Israeli soldiers in places such as Jenin and Tulkarm denying Palestinian women who are pregnant and in labour access to hospitals that are just a few metres away, and they will hold them at gunpoint. I have seen in Silwad, in the West Bank, an Israeli soldier caught on camera by a medic after shooting a young Palestinian teenager and leaving him to bleed, and saying, "thank God, he is dead now."

These are the lives of Palestinians, day in and day out. They include Palestinian farmers being denied access to their lands, as well as more recently where we are witnessing intentional and systemic Israeli violence that targets life-sustaining infrastructure, such as water pipes, where Israeli settlers are carrying out very targeted attacks at pumping stations that provide water access to thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank, that already suffer from a disproportionate access to water, in

comparison to their Israeli counterpart. We are seeing intentional targeting of agricultural resources, again, by armed Israeli groups in the West Bank, as well as the military, that has constantly and consistently targeted lands through burning them, through denying access to them, or through destroying such basic things as Palestinian farmers' markets, and that means that even the economic cost of survival has been increasing.

It has been more than a decade since resolution 2334 (2016) was adopted, and it has been more than a year since the decision made in July of 2024 demanding that Israel cease its settlement activities as "rapidly" as possible. But instead we are seeing a rapid expansion of settlements that are being absorbed into State land. There is a tendency, which we have seen and I continue to see repeated, for Israeli representatives to illustrate this expansion as extremist violence or as exceptional cases, but the facts on the ground inform us that they are coordinated and joint activities by the Israeli army, Israeli settler groups and the Israeli judicial system to ensure systemic and relentless ethnic cleansing in the West Bank. These are not therefore accidental. They are intentional, they are pre-meditated, and they are coming from a policy of ethnic cleansing.

As Israeli settlers are creating a hostile environment for Palestinians, who now are too afraid to even walk from their homes to their schools or workplaces due to armed violence, the military, at the same time, continues to ensure that there is no capacity for Palestinians to confront anyone or protect themselves. This is an intentional denial of capacity by the Israeli regime. To add to that, there is the third layer, namely the Israeli court system, which continues to engage in the legitimization and legalization of these practices through a legal framework that is designed to dispossess and displace Palestinians, and it is also designed to continue providing immunity to Israelis. When we saw Yinon Levi, an Israeli settler in Hebron, shoot a Palestinian point-blank and kill him while his child was next to him, he was released the next day, and he carried out terrorizing activities against the community in which he killed the Palestinian. This type of immunity is by design.

What we have seen consistently and continuously is, rather than ceasing settlement activities, Israel has been using strategic ambiguity and diplomatic spheres to perpetuate its crimes, while engineering a state of debate around the issue, consistently claiming pretexts of defence, while, again, the facts on the ground have shown us that, in the past decades, not a single Israeli security measure has actually achieved effectively or efficiently what it claimed to want to achieve in its goals. Instead of accountability, we are seeing impunity being entrenched.

The Israeli regime is not only sustaining Israeli violence, but as we see, it is encouraging it through Hebrew media, which has also been complicit in inciting against Palestinian communities and individuals, and through law. The Israeli Government has adopted a series of laws in the past five years alone, pushing for things such as the death penalty, the absorption of the West Bank into Israeli State land and through the arming of Israeli citizens with military-grade weapons, including automatic and semi-automatic guns and, more recently, drones. This is not just through the Israeli Government. It includes international complicity, whereby United States-based charities are actually fundraising and providing these military-grade weapons to Israeli citizens in the West Bank specifically.

As has been emphasized in this Chamber, and I will emphasize it again, these Israeli acts are not random, but they are organized, State-sponsored crimes. Palestinians in the West Bank are no longer wondering whether a crime will be enacted. Now, it is a matter of "when" rather than "if". Often, these crimes are reported and seen as separate, but they do come together, and together, the different crimes have drained Palestinians physically, psychologically, economically and

politically. What this means is that there is no capacity to organize or even imagine a reality outside of just survival.

There is a clear and evident campaign by the Israeli Government not only to fracture Palestinian society but also to punish the different segments. Here, we are seeing that, even for myself as a journalist, it is becoming increasingly dangerous to continue our profession. It has become so devastating and so dangerous that wearing our press insignia has placed us in the line of danger rather than protecting us. In the West Bank, I have seen my peers, Palestinian journalists specifically and international correspondents, not just attacked by Israeli settlers and the army, but we are being detained arbitrarily, often under no charge and no trial, and we are placed into what is more akin to torture chambers. I have seen several of our peers recently released from Israeli detention, from areas such as Janin north of the West Bank and Ramallah in the centre, come out with skin diseases and more bone than flesh due to a systemic starvation operation being carried out by the Israeli Government against Palestinians. They are sustaining injuries that have impacted the quality of their lives long term.

At the same time, we are seeing targeted attacks on Palestinian medical personnel, whereby doctors are being intentionally detained, and medics are being held up from reaching injured persons. But in the past two years specifically, we have been seeing fewer injuries from the Israeli army and more kill shots. If one observes the medical records, and this has been well documented, a lot of the shots Palestinians are sustaining at the hands of armed Israelis and the Israeli army are to the head and to the chest. These are not intended to “neutralize”, as we have seen in Israeli English-based media, but they are intended to kill. We need to stop sanitizing this violence, because that is what that language has done. We have seen it repeated in this Chamber, which is meant to emphasize justice.

Now, what all of this means is that, on the ground, there is a war being waged on a community that is depleted of socioeconomic and medical capacity to, at a very bare minimum, just stay alive. We are seeing territorial continuity being dismembered, and that is not only a threat to a potential viable solution for Palestinian self-determination, but on a practical and intimate level, it is denying Palestinians access to each other. This is dangerous, because if we approach it holistically, we see that Israel is taking measures to ensure that Palestinians do not exist as a collective population but in certain controlled pockets.

This is why what we see in the West Bank should not only be seen as an issue of settlements or settler violence but as ethnic cleansing and a strategy of obliterating an entire people while replacing them in real time. For decades, we Palestinians and international scholars, as well as humanitarian missions, have documented and reiterated the reality. While I cannot provide an exhaustive briefing in these few minutes, the Council has access to plenty of evidence to recognize and realize the reality on the ground. If the purpose here is to learn, then I believe ignorance cannot be claimed at this point. But if the purpose is to move forward in enforcing justice and international law, then it must begin with a conversation on accountability, because to continue forcing Palestinians to risk their lives to document the violence enacted against them for an activity of pretend justice is also exploitive and criminal. Today, we are at a moment of not only examining the reality of occupied Palestine but investigating the dynamics of this very Chamber in which members sit and what it means for the future.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Barghouti for her briefing.

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

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

The question of Palestine is at the core of the Middle East issue. It is a matter of international fairness that is pivotal to regional dynamics. Today, violence and death persist in Gaza. Tensions grip the West Bank. The foundations of the two-State solution are being steadily eroded. The prospects for resolving the question of Palestine are facing even greater challenges. The international community must reverse this negative trajectory, with robust action to end the suffering of the Palestinian people without delay and give Palestine the justice it deserves.

China would like to highlight three imperatives.

First, peace and stability must return to Gaza. The ceasefire agreement has yet to usher in genuine peace. Israel continues its bombings and strikes, and its military occupation is expanding. More than 1,000 Gazans lives have since been claimed, with, on average, one child killed every day. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is dire. Essentials supplies are scarce, and sanitary conditions appalling, with more than 2 million people struggling to survive amid the rubble. History has repeatedly shown that security is mutual; no country can build its own security upon the insecurity of others. Military occupation and pressure do nothing for lasting peace. We call on the parties, and on Israel in particular, to fully comply with the ceasefire agreement and bring about a genuine lasting ceasefire in Gaza. Israel, as the occupying Power, must fulfil its obligations under international humanitarian law, lift restrictions on humanitarian access and support and secure the delivery of aid by humanitarian agencies such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Secondly, tensions in the West Bank must be defused and brought to an end. Despite strong appeals from the international community, they continue to grow. The occupying Power has accelerated settlement expansion, tolerated settler violence and continued to encroach on Palestinian territory. The economy of the West Bank, under crippling restrictions and a stranglehold, is on the brink of collapse. The Palestinian Authority is facing an acute fiscal crisis. Resolution 2334 (2016) and an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice have made it abundantly clear that the illegal occupation and settlements imperil the viability of the two-State solution and must end immediately. Violating the legitimate rights of Palestinians and undermining the security and stability of the West Bank will only fuel hatred and ultimately backfire. We urge Israel to immediately cease settlement activities, curb settler violence and ensure accountability for attacks in all earnestness. Israel should lift the unjustified restrictions on the West Bank's economy, return the withheld clearance revenues promptly and stop undermining the Palestinian Authority's capacity for governance.

Thirdly, the two-State solution must be fully implemented. The two-State solution is the only viable path to resolving the question of Palestine. It cannot be denied, nor can it be replaced. Gaza and the West Bank are inseparable parts of the State of Palestine. Any arrangements or establishment of new mechanisms must be in line with the principle of Palestinians governing Palestine, respect the will of the Palestinian people and advance, rather than undermine, the two-State solution. The international community should forge greater consensus and reinvigorate the prospects for the two-State solution, reject any attempts to alter Palestine's demographic composition and to redraw its map, oppose any unilateral actions that undermine the foundation of the two-State solution and support the swift establishment of an independent State of Palestine that is based on the 1967 borders, has East Jerusalem as its capital, and enjoys full sovereignty.

The question of Palestine has endured for decades, but the fundamental framework for a solution has long been established. The path to peace lies right at our feet. Political will and courage are needed. War cannot continue forever. Sooner or later, it must give way to mutual understanding and mutual trust. We call on the parties to prioritize the well-being of the Palestinian people and peace and stability in the Middle East and to work together to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine without further delay. China remains committed to making unremitting efforts to that end.

Mrs. Balta (Greece): I would like to thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his briefing and Mr. Itay Epshtain and Ms. Mariam Barghouti for their remarks.

Greece was an early supporter of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which was subsequently enshrined in resolution 2803 (2025). The first phase of the plan marked a welcome step forward, with early positive results. What is needed now is collective determination to translate progress into lasting impact. As Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher reminded us only days ago (see S/PV.10177), the humanitarian reality on the ground remains catastrophic. We note, as did Mr. Alakbarov, the visit of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch and the Latin Patriarch to the Strip — a small ray of hope amid an unimaginably difficult reality. While some progress has been achieved, the gap between needs and delivery remains wide and deeply concerning. The aid entering Gaza, including food of high nutritional value, is insufficient. Restrictions on critical dual-use equipment continue to impede relief efforts. Housing, medical evacuations and healthcare services have yet to reach the levels required to address the immense needs of the civilian population. We call for the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid at scale and for the opening of additional crossings across the Strip.

Hamas and all armed groups must fully disarm as a matter of urgency, and we support Mr. Mladenov's sustained efforts towards this goal. At the same time, it is critical to implement early recovery projects in the entire Gaza Strip. Greece is ready to take part in discussions regarding the Horizon Fund so as to ensure a coordinated, transparent and impactful recovery effort in close coordination with the Palestinian Authority. We look forward to the Palestine Donor Group's meeting in Brussels in a few weeks. We anticipate the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza's timely establishment and the deployment of the vetted Palestinian police forces and the International Stabilization Force in Gaza. Despite operating in extraordinarily dangerous conditions, humanitarian workers continue to deliver life-saving assistance. Their work deserves the fullest protection and unwavering support, in accordance with international humanitarian law. They must never be targeted, and accountability must be ensured in all circumstances.

As our Minister for Foreign Affairs has stressed, Gaza and the West Bank form a single, indivisible territorial unit of a future State of Palestine. We categorically oppose any plans to expand control over, or to annex, parts of the West Bank. The evacuation orders in Khan Al-Ahmar, the Land Registry and Settlement of Rights initiative, the antiquities bill, the plans for construction in the E1 area and the demolitions and evictions in East Jerusalem, particularly in Silwan, are all indicative of an explicit vision of annexation. Equally, the protection of historical, archaeological or religious heritage cannot become a pretext for large-scale land appropriation. We call for an immediate reversal of these trends. They run counter to international law, are contrary to resolution 2334 (2025) and steadily erode the foundations upon which a negotiated settlement to a two-State solution must be built. Of equal concern is the sharp and unprecedented rise in settler violence targeting Palestinians, including Christian communities. Responding to the severity of such

violence, the European Union recently sanctioned extremists responsible for human rights abuses in the West Bank. While we take note of Israel's recent statements aimed at curbing settler violence, words must be matched with accountability, consistent investigations and follow-up on the implementation of those decisions.

Furthermore, we reiterate our call for unhindered access, the preservation of and respect for the status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem — an issue of profound importance for interfaith coexistence.

The stabilization of the West Bank also requires the release of withheld Palestinian tax revenues. This is a prerequisite for reform, institutional resilience and the preservation of the Palestinian Authority's fiscal capacity.

We acknowledge and encourage the Palestinian Authority's ongoing reform efforts under very difficult circumstances, including the recent announcement of presidential elections in 2027 and amendments concerning parliamentary elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. An empowered and reformed Palestinian Authority will be a credible partner for peace.

In closing, as we are approaching the first commemoration of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, the moment calls for renewed political courage and a reinvigorated diplomatic effort. We must restore a credible political horizon for the Palestinian people and advance a meaningful political process leading to the two-State solution, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Ms. Landi (Denmark): We thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov, Mr. Epshtain and Ms. Barghouti for their briefings.

For years, the situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has been steadily deteriorating. The developments on the ground are not new, but the speed with which conditions are worsening has accelerated. The developments have been documented repeatedly before the Council, including through the Secretary-General's quarterly reports on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). The Council also had the opportunity to discuss these developments during the Arria-formula meeting on the West Bank held last month.

Allow me to highlight a few of the most concerning developments.

We are currently witnessing all-time high levels of settler violence against Palestinians. The stories we hear from the ground are brutal, as we also heard from our briefers today, and civilians are being displaced from their communities as a consequence. Reports of Israeli authorities failing to prevent such violence or hold perpetrators to account are deeply alarming. Recently, a seven-month-old Palestinian infant was killed in Hebron by the Israel Defense Forces. This incident is not only deeply tragic but also a clear reminder of the devastating human cost that civilians in the West Bank are paying.

At the same time, settlement expansion is advancing at an alarming pace. Particularly concerning is the advancement of plans to establish settlements in the E1 area east of Jerusalem, where evacuation orders for the Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar have now been issued. If implemented, the E1 plan would cut the West Bank in two and compromise the territorial contiguity of a future Palestinian State, as well as hamper the prospects for a two-State solution.

Denmark is equally concerned about reports of the expected establishment of the first permanent Israeli military presence in Area A, an area that under the Oslo Accords falls under Palestinian civil and security control.

We are also deeply concerned about demolition and eviction orders in East Jerusalem, including in the Silwan neighbourhood, that continue to threaten Palestinian communities and alter the demographic character of the city.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority faces a severe financial crisis, not least due to the withholding of Palestinian tax revenues that Israel collects on its behalf. The consequences are being felt not least in the Palestinian health sector, which is struggling to provide basic assistance due to lack of resources.

An effective and reformed Palestinian Authority remains essential for stability, governance and the prospects for peace. Israel's restrictions on international non-governmental organizations operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the unlawful demolition of the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East further undermine stability and access to basic services for Palestinians.

Taken together, these developments are not isolated incidents. They amount to a systematic consolidation of Israeli control across the occupied West Bank. They change realities on the ground, alter the map and heighten the risk of annexation.

This trajectory must be reversed. All settlement expansions must be halted immediately and any attempt at de facto annexation prevented. We reiterate that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law. Accountability for settler violence must be ensured, and we call on the Israeli authorities to hold perpetrators to account. With strong Danish support, the European Union has introduced sanctions against extremist Israeli settlers and organizations responsible for serious and systematic human rights abuses against Palestinians.

Resolution 2334 (2016) must be fully implemented. Palestinian tax revenues must be transferred without delay. The Palestinian Authority must continue its reform efforts. In this regard, Denmark welcomes the announcement to hold presidential elections.

Denmark's position is clear: Israel's legitimate security concerns must be ensured. But crushing all possibilities for a Palestinian State through illegal settlements, settler violence and financial suffocation is not an acceptable way forward. Lasting security cannot be separated from the two-State solution as charted in the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. It remains the only viable option for long-term peace and security.

Mr. Mukongo (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): The Democratic Republic of the Congo is grateful for the convening of this meeting and expresses its gratitude to Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, as well as to the civil society representatives, for their briefings.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains deeply concerned about the persistent deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and about the fragility of the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. We condemn all violence against civilians. The protection of civilians must remain an absolute priority, in accordance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

My delegation is in particular concerned about the upsurge in violence, the forced displacement of communities and the demolition of homes. In this regard, we recall the importance of fully implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions, notably resolution 2334 (2016), and complying with obligations under international law.

Regarding Gaza, the Democratic Republic of the Congo takes note of efforts to preserve the ceasefire and encourages all parties to exercise restraint to avoid any resumption of large-scale hostilities. We call for adherence to commitments made under existing agreements and continued diplomatic efforts to achieve lasting peace.

We also remain concerned about the humanitarian situation, which continues to take a heavy toll on civilians. As we emphasized in our statement of 18 June (see S/PV.10177), we call for safe, rapid, sustained and unhindered humanitarian access to ensure that aid reaches all those in need.

We commend the efforts of the United Nations and humanitarian organizations, which continue to operate under particularly challenging conditions. The Democratic Republic of the Congo also underscores the importance of increased international support to address the humanitarian needs of affected civilian populations. Such support will help create conditions conducive to lasting peace, regional stability and addressing the legitimate security concerns of all parties.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains convinced that there can be no military solutions to this conflict. Only a credible political process grounded in international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions will make it possible to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. In this regard, we reaffirm our support for the efforts of the Secretary-General, as well as for all regional and international initiatives likely to promote the resumption of a genuine political process in peace and security.

Mr. Waltz (United States of America): I thank our briefers for their comments.

I would like to begin my remarks today by talking about a young girl in Dayr al-Balah. UNICEF calls her Masa. After two years of war, she recently walked into a temporary school. In that school, she received a bag with a notebook, a pen, an eraser, a ruler, pencils and colouring pens. That one bag of school supplies may seem small and without import, but I think it is a very loud reminder that life is starting again in Gaza.

In the Council and in the international community, we continue to have a choice — do we want children like Masa to inherit a new generation of classrooms and have a brighter future or to inherit more tunnels, rockets, bombs and war? Will she and her brothers be made to carry arms for Hamas to hate their neighbours? Is that what they are going to be taught in school with those new school supplies, or will they be allowed to learn basic reading, writing and arithmetic and have a dream of a better future?

We must turn this ceasefire — as imperfect as it is many nights — into a lasting peace. Or Hamas can continue to drag the region back into a cycle of violence. But as we have said here month after month, Hamas cannot remain armed. That is the end of the story — period. Hamas' demilitarization is at the heart of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which was endorsed by the Council in resolution 2803 (2025). I want to thank the mediators, in particular Türkiye, Egypt and Qatar, for their ongoing efforts. Negotiations are happening as we speak to convince Hamas that there is no armed future in its terroristic ruling of Gaza and that the only way the peace plan will move forward is if it disarms.

I have to admit, as an aside, that here in the United States, I did not think I would see former Secretary Hillary Clinton's endorsement of this peace plan, which she recently endorsed in an op-ed as the only viable option forward for any kind of peaceful future for Gaza. She called President Trump's Gaza Plan the "only game in town". She agreed that it all starts with Hamas disarming. As we all know, Hamas started this war with the 7 October 2023 massacre. It has hidden behind civilians. It

has abused schools and hospitals. It has stolen and blocked aid. It has turned literally years' worth and hundreds of kilometres' worth of concrete, fuel generators, international aid that could have been — and should have been — used to rebuild Gaza into the most sophisticated military tunnel network the world has seen in recent memory and kept its hostages and the people of Gaza shackled from below.

Demilitarization must include the irreversible destruction of all military terror and offensive infrastructure, including tunnels and weapon production facilities. Demilitarization should be carried out through a phased internationally verified process, which the High Commissioner has laid out before the Council. But let us not kid ourselves. Hamas does not get to negotiate its way into keeping a terrorist army. I think it is worth highlighting some of the recent United Nations reporting which, frankly, has not often been objective, but in this case it was surprisingly objective. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel examined the killings and acts of bodily and mental harm and documented Hamas-affiliated forces committing serious abuses against Palestinians in Gaza, framing some as war crimes (A/HRC/62/CRP.2). The Commission identified hundreds of individual cases of executions, severe physical violence by Palestinian armed groups, primarily Hamas-affiliated groups in Gaza between 2024 and this year, 2026. The acts included summary extrajudicial executions; kneecapping, which is bone-breaking with metal pipes or cement bricks; beatings; maimings; rape and torture. Some involved public executions. They specifically highlighted two incidents of the killing of 11 men and the public torture of Palestinians in places like the Nasser Medical Complex. Many of these punishments were made public in an effort to terrorize the population of Hamas, and crowds, including children, were made to watch the executions. According to the report, these acts amount to war crimes, murder and torture.

Unfortunately, aside from this report — and I have been monitoring the comments — I have not heard any mention of it today. I have not heard any mention of it in mainstream media in the United States and barely a mention abroad. On a separate note, just this past week, as Gazans and Palestinians protested Hamas' war crimes — according to the United Nations — as well as public executions and torture, they were subjected to an intimidation campaign by Hamas. Hundreds still turned out to protest this rule. That number would easily have been thousands, but this was an industrial-scale campaign of terror, intimidation, interrogation and blackmail against thousands of Gazans, which we just saw unfold over the past few weeks as they were planning to demonstrate against Hamas' violent authoritarian rule. Families were threatened, people were placed under house arrest. The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the same ones responsible for 7 October 2023, were fully mobilized using hospitals and using schools as police stations, yet there was barely a mention. As for the United Nations and many major non-governmental organizations — silence. I barely saw coverage of the people of Gaza once again having the courage to rise up against this abuse.

I want to share just a few more things by way of an update. Morocco, Kosovo and Albania are now participating in the International Stabilization Force, authorized by resolution 2803 (2025). Boots are on the ground. Some are being deployed, and we now have Egypt and Jordan training the first recruits for a new Palestinian police force. The United Arab Emirates has committed \$100 million for continued training, and we thank the United Arab Emirates for that.

Progress is never as quick or as robust as any of us would like to see. Again, I did not think I would be quoting former Secretary of State Clinton here, but I have not heard of a better plan coming from the United Nations or many other Member

States. I appreciate the support we have received in the Council for this effort. We have a long way to go.

The ongoing meetings with the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, the new governance authority, are happening as we speak. Those plans, those governing plans, ranging from education to housing to the restoration of services, are being fleshed out as we speak. I thank the donor countries and the partners on the Board of Peace, including the Office of the High Representative, for their efforts to build on the progress and to increase the delivery of services that the people deserve.

I shall conclude by saying that we, as an international community, must continue to stand against this type of terror. We must use this platform of the Council to call it out when it is happening. But I have to ask: how much longer are we going to accept terrorists murdering Palestinians in Gaza, stealing their aid, hiding behind their children and refusing, under an agreement to which they agreed, to give up the weapons that keep Gaza trapped in misery? From the perspective of the United States, we absolutely will not accept that any longer.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama is grateful for the briefing by Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and takes note of the Secretary-General's latest report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) (S/2026/513), which remains as relevant as ever and has yet to be fully implemented. We also thank Mr. Itay Epshtain, Special Advisor and Senior Humanitarian Law and Policy Consultant at the Norwegian Refugee Council, and Ms. Mariam Barghouti, independent journalist, writer and political analyst, for their briefings.

Far from preserving the conditions necessary for a negotiated political solution, the territorial, administrative and demographic reality of the Palestinian territory continues to undergo progressive transformations. Panama notes with particular concern the approval of new settlements in the West Bank, measures aimed at consolidating administrative control over Area C and the E1 area, and the demolitions and displacement of Palestinian communities, with the consequent impact on the social fabric.

We consistently reject the persistent excessive use of force, violence against the civilian population, including acts of terrorism, and any conduct incompatible with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The protection of the civilian population is and must remain an obligation incumbent on all parties, without exception. The persistence of those dynamics also has repercussions for the Palestinian Authority's ability to exercise effective governance. Its fragile financial situation continues to limit the provision of essential services and undermines that indispensable component in preserving a credible and viable political horizon. We reiterate the call to avoid all unilateral measures and actions that could aggravate tensions on the ground and hamper efforts aimed at achieving a just, lasting and sustainable peace.

The situation in Gaza also cannot be analysed in isolation from the developments taking place in the West Bank. Eight months after the establishment of the ceasefire, the population continues to face enormous challenges in rebuilding the minimum conditions for a life in dignity. Significant limitations persist with regard to the restoration of essential services, while thousands of families continue to suffer from the consequences of accumulated destruction. That reality continues to have an impact on children and young people, whose access to education, healthcare and adequate conditions for development remains severely affected. We encourage efforts to preserve the ceasefire and make progress towards the full implementation of

resolution 2803 (2025), which constitutes an appropriate road map for preventing a deterioration of the situation.

Panama reiterates its support for the work that the United Nations system and its agencies, together with international and local humanitarian organizations, continue to carry out, both in assisting the civilian population and in supporting efforts aimed at preserving stability and laying the foundations for recovery and peace. Those organizations must be able to carry out their work in safety and independence and in full respect for international law, including international humanitarian law. For that reason, we insist on the call to guarantee the protection of humanitarian personnel, as well as their facilities and property, and to facilitate full, safe, rapid and unhindered delivery of vital humanitarian assistance to those who need it.

Gaza and the West Bank are part of one and the same political and territorial entity. The stability of one inevitably depends on the other. Therefore, any effort aimed at lasting peace must address both territories in a comprehensive manner, preserving their territorial contiguity, strengthening a reformed Palestinian Authority and avoiding unilateral measures that continue to further erode the prospects for a negotiated political solution that will allow Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace, security and dignity. The full implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) and other resolutions remains indispensable in order to preserve the conditions that will make that common objective possible.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov, Mr. Epshtain and Ms. Barghouti for their powerful briefings today.

The United Kingdom is clear that a two-State solution remains the best way to bring lasting peace to the region and end the cycle of violence that has scarred generations of Palestinians and Israelis. As we have said numerous times in the Council, the implementation of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, endorsed by resolution 2803 (2025), is an important step forward towards ending that violence. Both sides must meet their commitments, with Israel removing restrictions on humanitarian aid and Hamas decommissioning its weapons.

Today we focus on the West Bank, where Israel's policies are eroding the prospects for peaceful coexistence. I will highlight three areas.

First, settlement expansion continues in violation of resolution 2334 (2016), including the E1 project that aims to cut the West Bank in half and separate East Jerusalem. This is accompanied by demolitions, evictions and the displacement of Palestinian communities. In early June, we saw the approval of over 2,000 settlement housing units across the West Bank, bringing the total approved this year to over 6,000. On 24 June, Israel declared another 465 dunums of private Palestinian land as State land to make way for a settlement outpost. My Prime Minister has been clear that we categorically oppose the expansion of settlements, which are a violation of international law. We join the Council in rejecting any attempt at annexation.

Secondly, as we have heard today from the briefers, violence and lawlessness on the ground remain alarming. According to the United Nations, there have been an average of six attacks every day against Palestinians in the West Bank since the start of 2026. The Secretary-General's recent report (S/2026/513) highlighted the staggering rise in attacks by settlers on Palestinian children, reportedly often supported by Israeli security forces. On 17 June, extremist settlers launched arson attacks on two mosques. These are not isolated incidents but coordinated attacks on civilians, livelihoods and religious sites, facilitated by a culture of impunity.

The Government of Israel must uphold its obligations under international law and take urgent steps to halt this violence and hold those responsible accountable. The United Kingdom, alongside partners, has imposed sanctions on individuals and entities that finance and enable settler violence. As my Foreign Secretary has made clear, we stand ready to take further action if the Government of Israel does not take urgent steps to address the situation on the ground.

Thirdly, economic conditions in the West Bank are deteriorating sharply. Israel has withheld over \$5 billion in Palestinian revenues, placing severe strain on the Palestinian Authority and its ability to sustain essential services, particularly healthcare and medical supplies. The Government of Israel also continues to attack and undermine Palestinian financial institutions, which risks undermining economic stability more broadly, with consequences for livelihoods and regional stability.

To return to where I started, the Council has given its support to the comprehensive peace plan for Gaza. We cannot allow progress towards peace to be undermined by this deeply concerning trajectory in the West Bank. We must redouble efforts to stabilize the West Bank and inject renewed momentum into implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) in Gaza. Both Israel and Hamas must meet their commitments. These are essential steps towards a just and lasting peace in which Israelis and Palestinians can live in security and dignity.

Mr. Brown II (Liberia): We join others in thanking the briefers.

For 10 years, resolution 2334 (2016) has stood as the legal foundation of our collective commitment to a two-State solution. Yet the data before us show accountability too often being replaced by the passive recording of facts that increasingly resemble de facto annexation. True stability is not the freezing of conflict; it is the presence of justice, security and viable governance.

The expansion of the E1 project is not a simple zoning dispute; it is a structural amputation. By severing territorial contiguity between the northern and southern West Bank, it risks constructing a physical veto over the two-State solution. Borders cannot be rewritten by concrete while the Council deliberates in abstractions. As settlements expand and Palestinian communities face displacement, the territorial foundations of a viable Palestinian State are steadily being eroded. International humanitarian law is clear: occupation cannot confer sovereignty or validate irreversible changes to occupied territory. One of the briefers highlighted this point even more clearly. If the geographic integrity envisioned by resolution 2334 (2016) disappears incrementally, the prospect of a negotiated two-State solution will recede with it, to the detriment of the security of both Palestinians and Israelis.

Liberia is equally clear that these developments cannot be viewed apart from the broader security environment. We unequivocally condemn terrorist attacks, hostage-taking, indiscriminate rocket fire, settler violence and all attacks against civilians. Israelis have the right to live in security, just as Palestinians have the right to live in dignity, freedom and hope. These objectives, to us, are not mutually exclusive; they are mutually dependent.

Liberia speaks from the treasury of our own painful national experience. We know what happens when a nation is fractured from within and when lines on a map cease to reflect lived reality. A ceasefire may pause suffering, but only legitimate institutions, territorial integrity and public confidence can preserve peace. Members of the Council may differ on sequence: some emphasize Israel's security; others stress ending the occupation and preserving Palestinian statehood. These priorities need not compete. Security without a credible political horizon will remain fragile; a political horizon without security will remain unattainable.

Liberia, therefore, stands on the side of international humanitarian law. We support the Palestinian Authority reassuming its legitimate, unhindered responsibilities across Gaza and the West Bank, backed by urgent revitalization rooted in legitimacy, accountability, service delivery and administrative and security capacity, which must also include freedom of movement and sustained international support.

To bridge divisions in the Chamber and preserve the framework for peace, Liberia calls on the Council to unite behind three practical imperatives.

First, future reporting on resolution 2334 (2016) should assess whether developments preserve or undermine the territorial contiguity necessary for a viable two-State solution.

Secondly, we encourage greater transparency in investigations, prosecutions and accountability measures for attacks against civilians, including settler violence, terrorism, hostage-taking and violations by any actor. Accountability reinforces confidence that international law applies equally to all.

Thirdly, the international community should strengthen a revitalized Palestinian Authority capable of exercising legitimate responsibilities across Gaza and the West Bank, while supporting renewed political engagement between the parties.

The progressive erosion of a contiguous Palestinian State does not merely prolong suffering; it jeopardizes the broader framework for regional peace. Sustainable regional integration cannot rest upon unresolved occupation, territorial fragmentation and recurring violence. Lasting security depends upon a just political settlement that gives both peoples confidence that peace is durable, lawful and mutually beneficial.

We conclude with one uncomfortable truth. Every road towards regional peace passes through a viable political horizon for both Israelis and Palestinians. A divided map can never yield a united peace. Resolution 2334 (2016) was adopted to preserve the conditions for a negotiated two-State solution. Therefore, history will judge the Council by whether it acted before the conditions envisaged in resolution 2334 (2016) became impossible to restore, let alone implement.

Mr. Mohamed Yusuf (Somalia): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov, Mr. Epshtain and Ms. Barghouti for their sobering briefings.

Nearly 10 years after the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), the findings contained in the Secretary-General's report (S/2026/513) are deeply alarming. Instead of a halt to settlement activity, we continue to witness its acceleration. Instead of preserving the viability of the two-State solution, we are witnessing systematic measures to undermine it. Instead of de-escalation, we are witnessing increasing violence, dispossession, displacement, humanitarian restrictions and, above all, the entrenchment of an unlawful occupation.

These actions are not isolated developments. They form part of a broader pattern that seeks to alter the demographic and geographic character of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to create irreversible facts on the ground. Somalia reiterates that all Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law and constitute a flagrant violation of resolution 2334 (2016). We reject all measures aimed at annexation, settlement expansion, demographic reengineering and any attempt to alter the legal and historical status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

As we heard, there is an unprecedented level of violence in the occupied West Bank. We are especially concerned by the sharp increase in settler violence and the

expansion of military operations against Palestinian civilians. A few weeks ago, Israeli troops opened fire on a car near Hebron in the occupied West Bank, killing 7-month-old Sam Fahd Abu Haikal with a bullet to the face and leaving his mother in critical condition with shrapnel near her heart. Sam's grandmother, Feryal Abu Heikal, who was also in the car, later described it as follows:

"The scene was horrific — to see a 7-month-old baby with a smashed face. What kind of army in the world does this?"

These violations must be investigated, and perpetrators must be held accountable. We reiterate our rejection of collective punishment against Palestinian civilians, in particular children and women. Somalia recalls that the occupying Power bears clear responsibilities under international humanitarian law, including the obligation to protect civilians under occupation.

The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and the deterioration in the West Bank are not separate crises. We call for immediate, safe and unhindered humanitarian access. We further call for the lifting of the economic restrictions imposed by Israel, as well as the release of the billions of dollars in Palestinian tax revenues withheld.

The culture of impunity surrounding these violations continues to fuel instability and further erode prospects for peace. There can be no sustainable peace without ending the occupation. There can be no lasting stability while settlement expansion continues unchecked. Above all, there can be no credible political horizon while the viability of the two-State solution, including the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank under a single Palestinian Authority, is systematically undermined.

The continued failure to implement resolution 2334 (2016) cannot become the status quo. We recall the findings of the International Court of Justice that Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful and that all States have an obligation to refrain from recognizing any situation created by that unlawful presence.

In conclusion, Somalia reiterates its support for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to an independent and sovereign State of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. The authority and credibility of the Council depend on the consistent implementation of its resolutions, including its recently adopted resolution 2803 (2025). Resolutions adopted by the Council cannot be treated as optional, nor can violations of international law be allowed to continue without consequences. The Palestinian people deserve freedom, dignity and self-determination. The region deserves peace.

Mr. Bonnafont (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov, as well as the civil society representatives, Mr. Itay Epshtain and Ms. Mariam Barghouti, for their clear, precise and very informative briefings.

A few days ago, the Council met to address the humanitarian situation in Gaza. That gave my delegation an opportunity to recall, inter alia, our demand that Hamas, which can have no place in the governance of Gaza, be disarmed, and that Israel comply with its own obligations under resolution 2803 (2025). Today, however, our Council is meeting to consider the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), adopted 10 years ago.

Resolution 2334 (2016) is clear: the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal basis. It constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and a major obstacle to the two-State solution. Israel must immediately and completely cease all settlement activities.

Yet, ten years after its adoption, the trends that the resolution was intended to halt have continued, and even accelerated, at an unprecedented pace. Israel is pursuing a drive towards the de facto annexation of occupied Palestinian territories and the forced displacement of their populations. France firmly opposes this.

Four trends are a source of concern.

The first is the acceleration of settlement activity and the advancement of the E1 project. Its implementation would cut the West Bank in two and strike an irreversible blow to the territorial contiguity and integrity of the Palestinian State. Businesses must be aware of the legal, economic and reputational risks posed by participating in the construction of such projects, which carry the risk of being found in breach of international law.

The second is the escalation of settler violence in a climate of impunity. These attacks aim to displace Palestinians, destroy their property and accelerate settlement expansion. Israel, as the occupying Power, has an obligation to protect the Palestinian civilian population and bring the perpetrators to justice.

The third is the incitement towards these acts, through the rhetoric and initiatives of Israeli leaders, such as Minister Smotrich, who promotes the annexation of the West Bank, the expansion of settlements, the recolonization of Gaza and the collapse of the Palestinian Authority. This conduct is irresponsible and incompatible with the prospects for a lasting peace.

The fourth and final trend is Israel's deliberate weakening of the Palestinian Authority. The withholding of \$5 billion in tax revenues undermines its institutions, which should, on the contrary, be strengthened and afforded greater legitimacy. A viable, reformed Palestinian Authority capable of fully discharging its responsibilities remains essential for any credible political prospects.

Resolution 2334 (2016) calls for measures to be taken to reverse negative trends on the ground and to preserve the possibility of a two-State solution. France is taking concrete action to this end at the European level with its partners. It has adopted new sanctions against those responsible for violent settlement expansion. France stands ready to support new proposals should these actions continue. It is actively engaged within the European Union to strengthen the differentiation policy and bolster the restrictions applicable to products from the settlements, in accordance with resolution 2334 (2016) and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of July 2024.

At the national level, we have banned Minister Ben-Gvir, Minister Smotrich and several violent settlers from entering our territory. We are prepared to take further measures if necessary.

Finally, the situation in the West Bank cannot be separated from that of Gaza, as both are integral parts of Palestine. The drive towards annexation and the blockade of humanitarian aid compromise the progress promised by the ceasefire agreement, President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, 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. They fuel the humanitarian catastrophe and regional instability and threaten Israel's security as well. We call for the full implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) — that is, I repeat, among other things, the disarmament of Hamas and Israel's withdrawal from Gaza. Developments on the ground must not lead the Council to abandon the political objective. On the contrary, these developments make our collective mobilization to preserve a two-State solution and guarantee the legitimate rights of

the Palestinian people and Israel's security, in accordance with the New York Declaration, all the more urgent. France will continue to work towards this end.

Ms. Pavluta-Deslandes (Latvia): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov for his briefing and the civil society organization representatives Itay Epshtain and Mariam Barghouti for their informative contributions.

The Secretary-General's quarterly report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) (S/2026/513) vividly depicts a bleak picture. The humanitarian, human rights and security situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continues to severely deteriorate. Israel's accelerated settlement expansion, including in the E1 area, coupled with the entrenchment of its civil authority and administrative control, deliberately fragments the West Bank and undermines the viability of a two-State solution.

Increasingly, Palestinian families are being forcibly and unlawfully evicted from their homes, with properties being demolished to make way for new settlements, which are illegal under international law, and for settlement outposts, which are also illegal under Israeli law. The annexation narrative and the glorification of violence expressed by some leaders and Government officials are unacceptable, as they create a breeding ground for extremism and greater polarization.

At today's briefing, we heard once again of the devastating toll on Palestinian civilians. The casualties are not just numbers. Every life lost, whether Palestinian or Israeli, represents a human tragedy, leaving behind families and communities burdened by immense suffering, grief and loss. Across the West Bank, expanded checkpoints and roadblocks continue to make it increasingly difficult for the Palestinians to access their workplaces and basic services, including schools and hospitals. It is unacceptable that humanitarian aid workers and life-saving services on multiple occasions have been hindered from reaching those in need.

We have witnessed deeply alarming access restrictions to the holy sites in Jerusalem during Ramadan, Passover and Easter, the expropriation of land containing places of worship and the recent arson attacks targeting mosques north of Ramallah. Israel has to respect the historic status quo arrangements governing the holy sites in Jerusalem. The protection and safety of all religious communities must be ensured.

We strongly condemn violent settler attacks and forcible displacement and annexation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. We call on Israel to ensure accountability for the committed assaults and killings, stop the settlement policy, fully respect all its legal obligations and prior commitments, and abide by international law and Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016).

A just and lasting peace requires that Gaza and the West Bank be treated as one unified entity, governed in the future by a single legitimate and reformed Palestinian Authority. The measures applied to prolong the Palestinian Authority's fiscal crisis and destabilize the Palestinian economy are deeply concerning.

We call on Israel to ensure that the Palestinian banking sector can operate unobstructed and to release withheld tax revenues, allowing the Palestinian Authority to meet its budgetary obligations, pay public sector salaries and provide essential services. At the same time, the Palestinian Authority must take responsibility for fulfilling the commitments it has undertaken and continue its comprehensive institutional and societal reform agenda, addressing radicalization, while ensuring safe and dignified living conditions for Palestinians.

We commend the Board of Peace and the mediators for their efforts in advancing the implementation of the President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2803 (2025).

All parties must abide by the commitments they have made. In order to end the harm to the people of Gaza and any further security threats to Israel, Hamas and other non-State armed groups must accept the road map for monitored and verified disarmament and relinquish power.

There can be no sustainable peace or stability while armed groups continue to operate outside legitimate governance structures and pursue violence as a political tool. The Gaza ceasefire must be fully respected, and the so-called yellow line demarcation must be pulled back to where it was upon reaching the ceasefire agreement. The deployment of the International Stabilization Force and the Palestinian police and the early recovery of Gaza through the work of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza are much awaited. Unimpeded humanitarian access at scale must be ensured to the civilian population in Gaza urgently and unconditionally, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Finally, a political solution, encompassing Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is the only way to a sustained peace, based on a two-State solution, as defined by Security Council resolutions and the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. Addressing the security and the legitimate aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians requires renewed momentum in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Plan and genuine engagement by all parties. Latvia reaffirms its commitment to this shared objective

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his detailed assessment of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in the context of the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). We have thoroughly studied the Secretary-General's written report (S/2026/513) on this matter. We have also listened carefully to the civil society representative.

Regrettably, what we have heard today gives us no cause for optimism. The Israeli authorities have been consistently pursuing a policy of consolidating their administrative and legal control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The pace and scale of settlement construction and expansion have long since broken all records. Unprecedented decisions have been taken to proceed with construction in the E1 area and to revise the legal status of Areas A and B, in violation of the Oslo Accords. These steps are creating irreversible facts on the ground and further shrinking the territory under Palestinian control. Russia's position is unequivocal: Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal, and Israel must immediately halt all settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

We have already grown accustomed to reports confirming a grim reality: resolution 2334 (2016), adopted in this Chamber nine and a half years ago, is not only being ignored but is being openly violated. However, it is impossible to grow accustomed to manifestations of violence in the West Bank, which at times take on the most horrific forms. It is impossible to look without tears at the photographs of happy parents holding their smiling seven-month-old son, Sam Abu Haikal, knowing that he was killed by bullets fired by Israeli soldiers who believed that the approaching car carrying his family posed a threat to them. As Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher said, children die in large numbers when they begin to be viewed as "collateral damage". Under no circumstances should the killing of children become an everyday reality; otherwise, humanity is doomed.

We note the statement by the Israel Defense Forces that an investigation into the incident has been launched. We call for those responsible to be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law. The same approach should apply to all other incidents of

violence in the West Bank, regardless of whether they involve settlers, Israeli security forces or Palestinians. No one should be above the law. Regrettably, as noted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2026/513), the number of daily attacks by settlers has risen to an unprecedented level, with many of them occurring in the presence of Israeli security personnel. Based on the Secretariat's data, one can only conclude that settler violence has become systematic in nature and that the judicial and law enforcement system is not taking meaningful steps to address the problem.

At the same time, we share the concern expressed by Secretary-General António Guterres regarding legislative measures expanding the grounds for the application of the death penalty in the West Bank. We call on the Israeli authorities to reconsider that decision.

The situation in Gaza is no better. The process of implementing the ceasefire arrangements in the Gaza Strip agreed last October between Israel and Hamas continues to stall. Security Council resolution 2803 (2025), which endorsed President Trump's peace plan for a settlement in the Palestinian enclave, unfortunately remains on paper only. There is no basis for speaking of the advent of a lasting peace. Reports continue to emerge of new operations by the Israel Defense Forces in Gaza, resulting in further civilian casualties. Reports of the arbitrary expansion by Israel of the territory under its control are alarming. Significant restrictions on the import and delivery of humanitarian aid remain in place.

The International Stabilization Force has yet to be established. No agreement has been reached on a mechanism for the disarmament of Hamas. There is still no clear prospect for the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from the enclave. Nor has any specific timeline been set for the transfer of administrative authority to the Palestinian technocratic body, the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, which is still unable to move from Cairo to the Gaza Strip. Obviously, there is currently no talk of any practical steps to begin reconstruction work in the Gaza Strip. In essence, the United States Administration's peace efforts on the Palestinian track have been put on hold.

Against this backdrop, the achievement of understandings between the United States and Iran and the easing of tensions across the Greater Middle East offer hope that the stalemate on the Palestinian-Israeli track may yet be overcome. A negotiated solution is the only viable formula, since military means alone cannot fully address the legitimate security concerns of the parties concerned. Indeed, for all the difficulties in advancing the agreements brokered by the United States, Qatar, Egypt and Türkiye, without a diplomatic solution, the human toll would have been far greater, and Israeli hostages would have continued to languish in the dungeons of Gaza. However, we must not be content with what has been achieved. We should continue vigorous efforts to bring the parties closer together, while relying on a universally recognized international legal framework.

We remain convinced that the two-State solution to the Palestinian question is still feasible. A comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would guarantee lasting peace for all the peoples of the region, whereby the State of Palestine, within the 1967 borders and with its capital in East Jerusalem, would coexist in peace and security with Israel. Russia stands ready to contribute in every possible way to international efforts aimed at achieving such an outcome.

Ms. Alalawat (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank the briefers and take note of the Secretary-General's quarterly report (S/2026/513) of 23 June on the latest developments concerning settlement policy in the Palestinian territories. We would like to address the following three points.

First, recent developments in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, reflect an unprecedented escalation of settlement activities that lack any legal legitimacy and constitute a violation of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, foremost among them resolution 2334 (2016), which affirmed that the establishment of settlements in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, violates international law. These practices also constitute flagrant violations of the rights of the Palestinian people and a major obstacle to the realization of the two-State solution and to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. Against this backdrop, the Kingdom of Bahrain reiterates its call for commitment to the path of peace and for efforts to reach common understandings rather than impose unilateral measures. It calls for the immediate and complete cessation of all settlement activities throughout the Palestinian territories and for compliance with all legal obligations in that regard.

Secondly, the escalating tensions in the West Bank risk undermining what has been achieved through political, security and humanitarian efforts. The unprecedented and unchecked increase in settler violence, the unlawful targeting of innocent people, the storming and closure of mosques and the violation of Islamic and Christian holy sites all increase the seriousness of the situation, lead to further escalation and undermine the gains achieved through those efforts. The Kingdom of Bahrain therefore calls for upholding a discourse of peace that unites peoples and for putting an end to everything that fuels tensions, creates an environment conducive to hatred and extremism and undermines the gains that have been made.

On the occasion of the International Day for Countering Hate Speech, observed on 18 June, we recall, in this context, the Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration on Freedom of Religion and Belief, in particular its fifth paragraph, which calls for promoting and spreading goodness and rejecting anything that calls for division and hatred.

Thirdly and finally, what is happening in the West Bank also prompts us to address developments in Gaza. In this context, we recall the emergency meeting of the Security Council held on 18 June, at which deep concern was expressed about the inability to ensure adequate, immediate and sustained humanitarian support in Gaza, where more than 2 million Palestinians continue to face extremely difficult humanitarian conditions amid continued restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid and the deterioration of living conditions and basic services.

In this context, the Kingdom of Bahrain calls for support for the Palestinian Government and stresses the importance of complementarity among all United Nations and international efforts and initiatives related to the Palestinian question. We also reiterate our support for the efforts made by the Board of Peace to implement resolution 2803 (2025). We look forward to the full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and to the second phase of the Plan, especially as the success of the efforts of the Board of Peace in Gaza will have a positive effect on developments in the West Bank.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms that the success of the peace process begins with the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State along the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel, based on the principle of a two-State solution in accordance with the principles of international law, the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, thus enabling the brotherly Palestinian people to attain their legitimate rights to create a stable regional environment characterized by regional integration for the benefit of all the peoples of the region.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): We would like to thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov for his briefing. We also appreciate the statements made by Mr. Epshtain and Ms. Barghouti.

One thing is striking from the briefings this morning and the statements made by Council members. There could not be more expressions of concern regarding the flagrant violations of international law and more calls for accountability in the context of the grave consequences emanating from an ever-expanding and entrenching occupation. That is because the situation across the Occupied Palestinian Territory remains dire and is showing no signs of abating. As we have heard, the West Bank is witnessing its largest and deadliest wave of settlement expansion and the highest sustained levels of settler violence ever recorded.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2026/513) documents that 4,750 housing units were advanced or approved during the reporting period, including 34 settlements approved in a single Cabinet decision, the highest to date. Israel's newly launched online land registration platform in Area C systematically facilitates the dispossession of Palestinian property under the guise of bureaucratic procedure. The controversial and illegal E1 project is the strategic linchpin that would carve the West Bank into isolated enclaves, targeting the viability of a contiguous Palestinian State. Alongside this, legitimate institutions of governance are being choked and suffocated by Israel, which is withholding revenues from the Palestinian Authority.

What we are witnessing, therefore, is not a series of isolated incidents but a deliberate and systemic pattern. This is an ecosystem of occupation in which settlement expansion, annexation, demolitions, forced evictions, displacement and revenue-withholding are mutually reinforcing, enabled by both brute military force and a legal juggernaut designed to legitimize the illegitimate. This is not chaos. It is a calculated framework to entrench illegal Israeli occupation. In this context, on 18 June, the Foreign Ministers of the group of eight Arab-Islamic countries, of which Pakistan is a part, condemned in the strongest terms the continued and escalating settler violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including recent attacks on various mosques. The Ministers affirmed their total rejection of these deplorable attacks, as well as the continued illegal Israeli measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

In Gaza, while the Board of Peace has overseen improvements in humanitarian conditions, the situation remains dire. Widespread hunger, severe shortages of clean water and medical care, inadequate sanitation and the unchecked spread of disease have left more than 90 per cent of the population living in catastrophic conditions. Despite the ceasefire, close to 1,000 Palestinians, including women and children, have been killed. The recent report of the International Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (A/HRC/62/CRP.2), is a scathing indictment of the deliberate targeting and killing of Palestinian children by the Israeli occupation forces. There must be accountability for this.

All these grave developments need to be seen in the context of continuing statements by Israel rejecting the idea of a Palestinian State and hence the two-State solution. It is absolutely clear where the problem lies. In our view, a piecemeal approach will not work. It is time for the Council to undertake a holistic assessment of the situation across all of the Occupied Palestinian Territories and firmly tackle the obstacles to peace.

In this regard, the Council must first compel Israel to immediately and completely cease all settlement activities, which constitute a flagrant violation of international law.

Secondly, all attempts at annexation of land, demolitions, forced evictions and displacements of Palestinians must be halted and reversed. The Palestinian population must be protected from settler violence, and all perpetrators must be fully held to account. The Council must reiterate its firm rejection of forced displacement.

Thirdly, the Council must bring pressure to bear on Israel, the occupying Power, to release, without further delay, the revenues of the Palestinian Authority in order to address the mounting fiscal crisis.

Fourthly, the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and resolution 2803 (2025) must be fully implemented.

The General Assembly's endorsement of the New York Declaration last year charted a pathway towards Palestinian statehood, and, in parallel, the efforts led by the United States, supported by the Arab-Islamic countries, have advanced the comprehensive peace plan. These initiatives, including the Board of Peace, under resolution 2803 (2025), must translate into action — a permanent ceasefire across the Occupied Palestinian Territories, a surge in humanitarian aid, rebuilding of Gaza and a definitive end to all illegal settlement activities. Our ultimate goal is the end of occupation. The establishment of an independent, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine along pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital, remains the only guarantee for lasting peace in the region.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Colombia.

I thank Deputy Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov for his briefing. I also wish to thank Mr. Itay Epshtain and the journalist Mariam Barghouti for sharing their valuable contributions with the Council. I welcome the delegations joining us at today's meeting.

This is probably the most critical moment that the Occupied Palestinian Territory has experienced in decades. The speed, scope, breadth and nature of the measures taken by the Government of Israel are leaving less and less room for ambiguity. They are measures that seek to consolidate de facto and de jure annexation, permanently and irreversibly altering the demographic and territorial character of both Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This is not a combination of isolated incidents, but an architecture of occupation aimed at fragmenting Palestinian territory, making territorial continuity unfeasible and excluding the possibility of a sovereign, contiguous and viable Palestinian State.

Resolution 2334 (2016) is not only being violated but also being openly challenged. It is clear that any excuse is valid for the Israeli regime: the well-known, dualistic premise of its security; the supposed protection of the environment and archaeological sites; and bureaucratic and administrative pretexts. There is no need to speculate on the aim of the adopted policies, because representatives of the Israeli Government openly proclaim their intention to continue expanding their campaign of occupation, genocide and ethnic cleansing.

In Gaza, continued ceasefire violations and the advance of the Israel Defense Forces, which control almost 60 per cent of the Strip, continue to push the population into an increasingly small and fragmented portion of the territory. Moreover, the humanitarian situation is still catastrophic, and reconstruction remains an unfulfilled promise.

Meanwhile, the West Bank is experiencing the worst displacement crisis since 1967. As authorities and settlers attack places of worship in Muslim and Christian communities, the decision to build a military museum in the illegally confiscated compound of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in

the Near East is a defiant and symbolic move. It is an attack on the mandate of the United Nations, the rights of refugees and the very memory of the Nakba. The destruction of the Palestinian economy, increasing settler violence, daily evictions and confiscation and vandalization of Palestinian goods and property impose conditions that international law recognizes as constituting genocide. The heartbreaking testimonies of entire communities and neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem being displaced from their homes, where they have lived for generations, demonstrate that we are facing a system of apartheid.

The sustained progress of measures that this Council has rejected, that the International Court of Justice has declared incompatible with international law and that the international community has repeatedly condemned has been made possible by the impunity with which Israel has been allowed to act. The lack of accountability and the silence of the Council regarding the very serious situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is undermining in an increasingly worrying manner the credibility of this organ, the effectiveness of international law and confidence in the multilateral system itself.

Colombia maintains the hope that this Council will find, before it is too late, the legal, political and moral clarity necessary to act in accordance with the principles it claims to defend. May it still succeed in sending an unequivocal signal to those who expect protection, justice and dignity from the United Nations that international law is not applied selectively, that the protection of human life does not accept hierarchies and that, for this Council, some lives are not worth more than others.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Mansour (State of Palestine): Allow me, at the outset, to thank the three briefers — Mr. Alakbarov, Mr. Epshtain and Ms. Barghouti — for their briefings, to thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting and to thank all of my colleagues, the members of the Security Council, who spoke very clearly and loudly, demanding the implementation of a resolution that the Council adopted in the year 2016, namely resolution 2334 (2016). It is one of the Council's resolutions. It is mandatory that it be implemented and for Member States to abide with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations to honour and respect and implement a resolution adopted by the Security Council. That is also applicable to all resolutions adopted by the Security Council.

Resolution 2334 (2016) could be summarized in two words: no annexation. It is an expression of the prohibition of the acquisition of land by force — a peremptory norm of international law and a principle enshrined in the United Nations Charter, a principle reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice in its 2024 advisory opinion, in which the Court concluded:

“The sustained abuse by Israel of its position as an occupying Power, through annexation and an assertion of permanent control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory and continued frustration of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, violates fundamental principles of international law and renders Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory unlawful” (*A/78/968, para. 261*).

Israel has decided to entrench its occupation rather than bring it to an end, whether in the Gaza Strip, where it has unlawfully seized control over 70 per cent of the Gaza Strip, or in the West Bank, where it has effectively annexed more than 60 per cent of the West Bank and all of East Jerusalem. This is not only illegal. It is also

contrary to President Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and resolution 2803 (2025), which explicitly states that there should be no occupation and no annexation, and it is aimed at blocking the promised pathway for Palestinian self-determination and independent statehood. Prime Minister Netanyahu declared once again in recent days, "Between the sea and the Jordan River, there is no room for two States." So, what is Netanyahu proposing exactly? A one-State solution with equal rights for all those living between the river and the sea? Or genocide, ethnic cleansing and apartheid? The answer is clearly obvious.

The Israeli Government has multiplied measures to steal Palestinian land. Israeli colonial plans in the E1 area amount to a death penalty for the Palestinian State and the prospects for peace in our region. Israel is extending its unlawful control over Palestinian land and Palestinian lives through military, legislative and administrative measures, removing communities by armed force or by manipulating the registration of land and seizing land under environmental, religious or military pretexts. The so-called sovereignty road, known worldwide as the apartheid road and now rebranded by the Israeli Government as the fabric of life road, is designed to normalize colonization and annexation and the confinement of Palestinians into increasingly narrow areas, surrounded by settlers and occupation forces. Israel is deliberately fragmenting Palestinian land and isolating communities, including through the deployment of 1,000 Israeli checkpoints and roadblocks, while ensuring free movement for Israeli settlers in Palestinian land. Israel is dismantling the historic status quo through repeated assaults against the sanctity of the holy sites and by asserting control over them.

These policies come at a heavy price for Palestinian communities and Palestinian families, who are being terrorized by Israeli occupation forces and settlers with constant attacks, demolitions of their homes and their forcible removal from their ancestral land. From Batn al-Hawa to Khan al-Ahmar, from Al-Khalil/Hebron to Nablus, in the extensively destroyed refugee camps of Tulkarem, Nur Shams and Jenin, Palestinian communities are targeted everywhere and safe nowhere. Palestinian civilians are denied their most fundamental and their most basic rights and are deprived of the protection they so desperately need.

It should be clear that all those taking part in this illegal occupation and unlawful annexation — whether the Israeli Government and its officials or foreign Governments, financial institutions, businesses, entities or individuals — are liable and should be held accountable. The International Court of Justice has clearly identified not only Israel's obligations but also, and just as importantly, the obligations of third States and other parties under international law, including the obligations of non-recognition, non-assistance and distinction and to respect and ensure respect for international law, promote the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to ensure that any impediment resulting from Israel's illegal occupation to the exercise of this right is brought to an end. In this regard, we warn countries, businesses, entities, financial institutions and individuals against undertaking any action that amounts to recognition of, or assistance to, Israel's illegal occupation and annexation of Palestinian land, including East Jerusalem, and we call on all States to uphold their obligations.

Israel's attack against the Palestinian Authority (PA) is an integral part of its attack against Palestinian presence in our ancestral land and against the independence of the Palestinian State. The withholding of Palestinian tax revenues is not only illegal and part and parcel of stealing our resources, whether financial or natural, it is also aimed at the collapse of the PA and, as such, constitutes a threat to peace and security, given the political, social and human ramifications and the impact on regional stability. It must end.

In conclusion, the international community as a whole rejects annexation of Palestinian land. This was evident in the expressions of the Council, including at the recent closed meeting when the 15 members stated clearly that they are against annexation, the national statements today rejecting annexation, the resolutions of the Council, the European Council's conclusions, the joint statement by the United States and the Gulf Cooperation Council adopted a few days ago and, as the Ambassador of Pakistan has reminded us, the latest declaration of the committee of eight Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Arab and Muslim countries. And yet annexation is under way at a faster pace than ever, more publicly than ever. Israel is defying the international community and is denying international law. Annexation is an act of war. It kills all peace efforts. It cannot be bargained with. It must be stopped. The time for condemning and rejecting annexation is over. Now is the time to end it once and for all and to choose resolutely the path of Palestinian self-determination and independent statehood and respect for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the States of the region, including Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, towards shared peace, security and prosperity in our region.

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

Mr. Danon (Israel): The Council meets today under resolution 2334 (2016), and every three months, the Secretary-General's report follows the same pattern: Israel is condemned again and again and again; members from the Hamas-run Gaza Ministry of Health are quoted as fact; the numbers from their accusations against Israel are accepted first and examined later, if at all.

I would like to thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov for his briefing but just look at the other briefers invited here today. This time the presidency made an extra effort. It found some of the most radical anti-Israel voices it could find. These are not neutral experts — definitely not. If Council members look at social media, Mr. Itay Epshtain even compared President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu to Hitler a few months ago. Those are the briefers whom Council members chose to bring, and they are supposed to be objective, neutral briefers. That is unfortunate.

Since 7 October 2023, the Council has heard the same accusations against us again and again — accusations against Israel, that we are intentionally killing civilians, that Israel intentionally targets doctors, aid workers and journalists. Time and again, I have come here and said clearly that Israel does not target civilians. Israel does not target journalists. Israel targets terrorists. But many of those present in the Chamber today chose to repeat the same accusations. That is the United Nations on anti-Israel autopilot. This is how it works: a claim is made against Israel, the United Nations repeats it, and then the world condemns it. Then, when the truth comes out — it takes time, sometimes weeks, months or years — there is no apology, no correction, no retraction. They move on. We will not move on. We will put the truth on the record.

Let me show the Council a few examples. This is Mohamed Naser Abu Huwaidi. He was eliminated in Gaza on 23 December 2023. After that, UNESCO condemned Israel. Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO's Director-General, told the world that Abu Huwaidi was a journalist for the *Al-Istiklal* newspaper. But earlier this year, it was not us but the Palestinian Islamic Jihad themselves who exposed the truth. They confirmed that Abu Huwaidi was serving in their military wing. Was he a journalist or a terrorist? UNESCO's condemnation was public. Its correction is still missing. And this is not just one name or one example. This is the machine. Even the Committee to Protect Journalists has removed eight Palestinian journalists from its database and is now reviewing the rest because Hamas and Islamic Jihad exposed the truth. Those so-called journalists were their own fighters, terrorists.

Just last week, here in New York, the same propaganda campaign was repeated by New York City's mayor. Mr. Mamdani stood before a crowd. First, he compared the American Israel Public Affairs Committee to monsters that move dark money. That is the language that he used. Then he went on to talk about Gaza. He accused Israel of killing thousands of civilians. He said that Israel killed an Al Jazeera journalist, Ahmad Wishah. Mr. Mamdani, we have a video with evidence that Ahmad Wishah, the one that he condemned us for eliminating, is a Hamas terrorist, a sniper in Hamas' military wing. We have a video in which he can be seen, armed in the streets of Gaza. Was he a journalist or a terrorist? Council members should tell us. This is the machine. Hamas makes a claim, the non-governmental organization ecosystem, rapporteurs and briefers all repeat the lies, and then a United Nations report rubber-stamps it, the world media broadcasts it, and Israel is condemned before the facts are even checked.

We see the same pattern with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In October 2024, the Secretary-General himself condemned, in a statement, an Israeli strike that eliminated Mohammad Abu Itiwi, an UNRWA employee. I think that it was over the weekend, late at night, that the Secretary-General put out that statement. He called Abu Itiwi "another one of our UNRWA colleagues". But who was that colleague about whom the Secretary-General put out such an emotional statement? He was a Hamas Nukhba commander, a terrorist involved in the 7 October 2023 massacre near Re'im. Was he an UNRWA worker or a terrorist? Again, Council members should tell us.

This is not a one-off. For years, Israel warned the Council that Hamas has infiltrated UNRWA. For years, the Council ignored it. Now UNRWA itself has fired 70 employees over security concerns. Security concerns about what? About Hamas. And still, this report condemns Israel. That is the problem. The obstacle to peace is not Israel. It is the radicals. It is Hamas. If the Council will not listen to Israel, then it should listen to the Gazans risking their lives to say it. On Friday, Palestinians in Gaza called for a day of rage against Hamas. But the protests could barely take off. Why? Because Hamas sent armed men into the streets, it threatened protesters as collaborators, and it warned them that they could be executed. That is Hamas rule, and they are not only terrorizing Gazans. Hamas is directing terrorism across the region, including in Judea and Samaria. Days ago, we exposed a Hamas network in Turkey, planning attacks against Israelis in Judea and Samaria and other parts of Israel. In the past year alone, we have stopped dozens of Hamas-planned terror attacks. The Council should be focused on pressuring Hamas to stop rebuilding its terror machine and disarm.

The same is true in Lebanon. Over the weekend, Israel and Lebanon reached a historic framework agreement after direct negotiations by the United States. We want to thank the United States for mediating the talks. This is bad news for Hizbullah, bad news for Iran and good news for the people of Lebanon and the people of Israel. How do we know that? We know that because Hizbullah condemned it and Iran condemned it; they called it a disgrace. Now they are even threatening the Lebanese Ambassador who signed the agreement in Washington, D.C. last Friday because they are afraid. And they should be afraid, because this agreement points to a future — hopefully, by God's will, inshallah — in which Lebanon is not controlled by terrorists, a future in which Iran does not decide Lebanon's fate. But the framework alone is not enough. The implementation is what counts. The Lebanese Armed Forces must deploy, Hizbullah must be removed, and Iran must be pushed out from Lebanon. Israel does not want to remain in Lebanon. We are there for one reason: to protect our people from Hizbullah. I therefore ask the Council today to put its pressure where it belongs: on Hizbullah to disarm, on Hamas, not on us.

The irony is impossible to ignore. Today, as we speak, the United Nations opens its High-level Conference on Counter-Terrorism. The Secretary-General will speak, ministers will speak, and counter-terrorism chiefs will gather. Everyone will talk about fighting terror. But when Israel actually fights terror, we are condemned for that. That is hypocrisy. We have lived the consequences of terror. Today, Rachel Goldberg-Polin will address that Conference. She will speak as a mother whose son, Hersh, was taken hostage by Hamas and murdered in a terror tunnel in Gaza. The Council should listen to her. It should listen to the victims of terror. It should listen to the country fighting terror day and night.

Before I conclude, I was here in the Chamber 10 years ago. I was actually sitting in the same chair 10 years ago when resolution 2334 (2016) was adopted. I warned my colleagues that the resolution would not bring peace (see S/PV.7853). I said it would be a victory for terror. I wish I had been wrong, but I was not. It became exactly what we warned. It is another weapon against Israel, a distraction from the terrorists blocking peace. This report makes the same mistake, trying to pressure Israel, excusing rejectionism, ignoring the Palestinian terrorist organizations blocking peace. So today, do not repeat the mistake. Put the pressure where it belongs: on Hamas, on Hizbullah, on Iran.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.