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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Kabengele Lukundula.	(Democratic Republic of the Congo)
<i>Members:</i>	Bahrain	Mrs. Janahi
	China	Mr. Zheng Minghao
	Colombia	Ms. Solano Ramirez
	Denmark	Ms. Ibrahim
	France	Mrs. Prigent
	Greece.....	Mrs. Marinou
	Latvia.....	Ms. Berzina
	Liberia	Mr. Farcarthy
	Pakistan.....	Mr. Rashid
	Panama	Mr. Barrios La Fontaine
	Russian Federation	Mr. Glukhov
	Somalia	Mr. Ibrahim
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.....	Ms. Andrews
	United States of America.....	Ms. Postel

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting resumed at 3 p.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

Flashing lights on the collars of the microphones will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Soberón Guzmán (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We support the statement delivered by the representative of Senegal in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the statements to be delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations.

Since the most recent open debate on this issue (see S/PV.10146), to date, United States military attacks against the Islamic Republic of Iran have expanded the conflict and plunged the region into a perilous escalation of tensions. We strongly condemn the use of force, which constitutes a flagrant violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We unequivocally reaffirm the principle of respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations in the region, including the Arab Gulf States, while calling for good neighbourliness and restraint to be safeguarded at this critical juncture.

The persistence of Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and other occupied Arab territories, the disproportionate and sustained use of force and the lack of accountability for grave violations of international law, with the political, military, financial and diplomatic backing of the United States, continue to fuel a dangerous spiral of violence with profound repercussions for peace and security at the regional and international levels. Cuba condemns in the strongest of terms the continuation of these illegal Israeli practices that continue to claim the lives of Palestinian civilians, including women and children. Equally unacceptable is the use of starvation as a method of warfare, the deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure vital to the population's survival and the obstacles imposed on humanitarian relief. Israel's actions constitute a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law and contravene countless Security Council and General Assembly resolutions that reaffirm the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. It will not be possible to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East without a comprehensive and definitive solution to the Palestinian question that ends the genocide against this noble people. Palestine must be admitted as a full Member State of the United Nations, without further delay. The inalienable right of the Palestinian people to an independent and sovereign State within pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the two-State solution must be exercised as a matter of urgency. Likewise, the refugees' right of return must be guaranteed.

We denounce the attacks by the Zionist regime of Israel in southern Lebanon. These actions are a flagrant violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, against a sovereign State. Israel must cease its aggression against Lebanese territory and respect its sovereignty and territorial integrity — prerequisites for peace and stability in the Middle East.

We renew our appeal for the immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the Syrian Golan and all occupied Arab territories.

The dangerous escalation of the conflict in the Middle East confirms that coercion and the abhorrent doctrine that seeks to impose peace through force only breed

instability and deepen the suffering of the people. We have repeatedly cautioned against the danger posed by these practices to the Latin American and Caribbean region. Cuba, a country of peace that poses no threat whatsoever to the United States or any other nation, is suffering the consequences of a policy of economic strangulation, sustained by a blockade imposed by the United States that has lasted almost 70 years, including a harsh energy embargo, the effects of which are tantamount to a naval blockade. This act of war and genocide is inflicting conditions on the population of Cuba that threaten its integrity and existence and constitutes cruel and indiscriminate collective punishment. On top of this come further criminal extraterritorial measures and repeated threats of military aggression from the highest echelons of the United States Government, with total impunity and in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the tenets of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace. These threats are echoed in the public domain, hinting at dangerous options and preparations for war. The Security Council, which bears primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, should act decisively and in strict compliance with its mandate to prevent United States military aggression against Cuba, which would entail incalculable consequences, not only for Cuba and the United States, but also for the region as a whole.

Our collective aspiration must be an international order free from blockades, unilateral coercive measures, hegemonism and bids for domination — a just international order that guarantees peace and development for all peoples.

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

Ms. Sarı (Türkiye): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his comprehensive presentation.

The realization of the two-State solution is indispensable to the peace, security and stability of the wider Middle East. The international community has affirmed this unequivocally, most recently at the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. It is likewise a central pillar of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which underscores Palestinian self-determination and statehood and rejects annexation. Yet for too long, expressions of concern have outpaced concrete action, while developments on the ground have moved steadily away from peace. The Palestinian people are entitled to a full and lasting peace rather than intermittent conflict. The Comprehensive Plan and resolution 2803 (2025) should therefore serve as our guiding framework. The successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is the only viable way to stabilize Gaza. Along with this, sustainable peace and stability in Gaza rests on four indispensable elements.

First, full, sustained and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza must be ensured. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East is an indispensable partner in this regard.

Secondly, a durable ceasefire cannot coexist with continued occupation. Sustainable peace requires the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

Thirdly, reconstruction efforts must commence immediately, enabling Gazans to rebuild their homes, their communities and their future.

Fourthly and most fundamentally, a credible and irreversible pathway towards the two-State solution must be advanced. Anything less than the establishment of an independent, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital will postpone the next crisis rather than resolve this one.

My delegation feels obliged to respond to the allegations directed at my country, the official name of which is Türkiye. These words carry limited weight coming from a delegation with one of the worst records of compliance with international law.

Türkiye is of the view that a lasting settlement requires engagement with all parties involved in the conflict, whose continued participation remains essential to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Ignoring this reality will not help stabilization in Palestine. The mediation efforts of Türkiye, the United States, Qatar and Egypt brought an end to hostilities in Gaza. These efforts must now be followed by sustained political action.

Israel's actions in the occupied West Bank are converting the threat of annexation into a de facto reality. Similarly, Israel's aggression in Lebanon and Syria remains a matter of serious concern. Türkiye condemns the rising settler violence in the occupied Palestinian territories. The killing of four Palestinians on 24 July is a direct consequence of the persistent impunity granted to Israel. We also condemn in the strongest terms the storming of Aqsa Mosque by Israeli officials. We reject these acts that violate the historical and legal status of the holy sites in Jerusalem and desecrate their religious prominence.

In conclusion, we renew our call on the Security Council to ensure the full implementation of the ceasefire and the Comprehensive Plan, take concrete steps to halt settlement expansion, forcible displacement and other unlawful practices in Occupied Palestinian Territories and ensure accountability for the crimes committed. We urge the international community to move beyond rhetoric and take concrete steps to secure a just peace for all peoples of the region.

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

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for convening this open debate. We commend the wise leadership of the Democratic Republic of the Congo of the work of the Security Council this month. I would also like to thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his valuable briefing.

In line with the consistent and unwavering commitment of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chair of the Al-Quds Committee, and his continued concern for the situation in the Palestinian territories, we renew our call for further mobilizing the international community to extricate the Middle East from the cycle of crises and achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region. His Majesty the King emphasized this in his letter of 25 November 2025 to the Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in which he wrote:

“I reaffirm the Kingdom of Morocco's unwavering commitment to defending the Palestinian cause and contributing actively and effectively to finding a just solution to it, since the settlement of the Palestinian issue is the core element for achieving peace and stability in the Middle East region.”

In this context, the Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the announcement by the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. Donald Trump, of the beginning of the implementation of the second phase of the ceasefire in Gaza in early 2026. The Kingdom also reiterates its deep appreciation for the tireless efforts and personal engagement of His Excellency President Donald Trump, which paved the way for this promising outcome. We value the tireless efforts of all mediators and call on all parties to fully implement this agreement so as to allow for the rapid and adequate delivery of humanitarian aid and for the urgent reconstruction process to begin. In the

light of the dire humanitarian conditions and the pressing needs of the Gaza Strip, we must focus on a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian question. The Kingdom of Morocco stresses the importance of halting settlement activity, annexation plans and any storming of the holy Aqsa Mosque.

The Kingdom of Morocco, whose Head of State, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, is Chair of the Al-Quds Committee, reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the two-State solution as the main pillar for achieving a just and lasting peace in the region through the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian State along the borders of 4 June 1967, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital and Gaza as an integral part thereof, living side by side with the State of Israel in security and peace.

The Kingdom of Morocco is fully ready to actively contribute to all agreed tracks and processes to safeguard the rights of the Palestinian people and achieve stability in the Middle East.

The Kingdom of Morocco reaffirms its commitment to achieving peace in the Middle East and its continued support for the realization of a two-State solution. Against that background, His Majesty King Mohammed VI accepted the invitation of President Donald Trump's invitation for the Kingdom of Morocco to join the Board of Peace as a founding member. This is an initiative aimed at contributing to peace efforts in the Middle East. We will adopt a new approach to resolving conflicts around the world and helping to strengthen international support for Gaza. Morocco has announced its readiness to deploy members of the Moroccan police force to train police in Gaza and to deploy officers from the Royal Armed Forces to lead the force and establish a field hospital to provide emergency medical services. We will also launch a comprehensive programme to combat hate speech and promote the values of coexistence and peace.

Morocco reaffirms its firm commitment to defending the holy sites, especially the holy Aqsa Mosque, which holds a special place in the heart of His Majesty King Mohammed VI. As Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, the King's commitment is reflected in the initiatives, programmes and projects carried out by the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency, the executive arm of the Al-Quds Committee, which are aimed at preserving the historical and legal status of Jerusalem, protect its identity and support the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people and their right to establish their independent State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, within the 1967 borders.

In conclusion, Morocco reaffirms its full solidarity with its brotherly Arab States in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and its support for any legitimate measures they take to protect their security and ensure the peace of mind of their citizens and residents. The Kingdom of Morocco stresses that the security of its fraternal Arab States in the Gulf is essential to its own security.

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

Mr. Kössler (Austria): The situation in the wider Middle East remains dangerously fragile, with many violent incidents despite much-welcomed ceasefire agreements. At the outset, we call upon all actors to prioritize diplomatic solutions, exercise restraint and refrain from further violence. We welcome all efforts to find diplomatic solutions, including by Oman, Pakistan and many others, including the parties themselves, as we urgently need de-escalation and the resumption of free navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

As all those situations are linked, allow me to focus on three.

First, with regard to the Palestinian question, Austria supports and welcomes the effort to implement the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and resolution 2803 (2025), which remains a challenging task. While important progress has been made,

we call for full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access into and throughout Gaza and for safe working conditions for all humanitarian agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. We reiterate that Hamas cannot have a future in Gaza and that it and all other non-State armed groups must be disarmed. We regard the swift deployment of the International Stabilization Force to Gaza as an important step in creating the conditions for stability and recovery. At the same time, humanitarian assistance and interim arrangements do not replace a sustainable political solution. Peace will be achieved only through a negotiated two-State solution based on international law in which two States — Israel and Palestine — live side by side in peace and security. Austria has embraced the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and is therefore particularly concerned by the continued expansion of settlements in the West Bank, annexation plans and ongoing settler violence.

Secondly, with regard to Syria, as discussed in a recent Arria formula meeting, Austria supports the peaceful transition towards a stable and inclusive political system in Syria. Respect for human rights and the protection of all ethnic and religious groups, as well as women's rights, are of utmost importance. We welcome the recent inaugural sessions of both the People's Assembly and the Constitutional Court as positive steps. On the economic front, we see steady progress towards recovery and reconstruction. We welcome the lifting of most sanctions, as well as the recent announcement by the President of the United States regarding the removal of Syria from the list of State sponsors of terrorism. Austria stands ready to work together with the Syrian Government towards rebuilding the country. The population of Syria needs economic perspectives, including for their safe return. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria must be respected by all actors in the region.

Thirdly, with regard to Lebanon, we welcome the Lebanese Government's decision to declare Hizbullah's military activities illegal. The trilateral framework agreement of 26 June marks a significant outcome of the direct diplomatic engagements between Israel and Lebanon facilitated by the United States. We welcome the efforts of the two countries to re-establish Lebanese sovereignty in southern Lebanon.

As a troop-contributing country to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Austria urges all parties to respect UNIFIL's mandate and to guarantee the safety and security of our peacekeepers. We call on the Council to ensure transparent, comprehensive and timely planning regarding UNIFIL's drawdown and regarding a suitable follow-up setting with the clear involvement of the United Nations.

Let me close by reiterating that Austria stands ready to support all efforts aimed at de-escalation through diplomacy, dialogue and respect for international law.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Weiler.

Mr. Weiler: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina align themselves with this statement.

The European Union expresses grave concern about the humanitarian situation in Gaza. It calls on Israel to allow full, immediate, safe and unhindered access and sustained distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale into and throughout Gaza, including via the Cyprus maritime corridor, and to enable the United Nations and its agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and humanitarian organizations to work independently and impartially. It also calls on Israel to reopen Gaza border crossings, as well as the medical corridor between Gaza and the West Bank, allow access for international media and reverse its decision regarding the law on the registration of non-

governmental organizations. The European Union recalls the need to always ensure the protection of civilians, including humanitarian workers, as well as civilian infrastructure.

The European Union expresses concern about the lack of progress in the implementation of the ceasefire and all other provisions of resolution 2803 (2025) and reiterates its call to all actors to fully implement them. We call for the permanent disarmament of Hamas and other non-State armed groups, the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and the deployment of the temporary International Stabilization Force. The EU will continue contributing to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, in accordance with resolution 2803 (2025), including through the European Union Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point and the European Union Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories.

The European Union will also continue to support the Palestinian Authority and its reform agenda, including the holding of elections, so that it can securely and effectively take back control of Gaza. We call again on Israel to urgently release all withheld clearance revenues and extend correspondent banking services between Israeli and Palestinian banks. In this regard, we thank all partners who joined us at the Palestine Donor Group in Brussels and look forward to building on the successful meeting.

The European Union expresses grave concern about the deteriorating situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, reiterating its condemnation of the expansion of illegal settlements and settler violence. It urges the Government of Israel to reverse the expansion of settlements, including in the E1 area, to abide by its obligations under international law and to protect the Palestinian population of the occupied territories, as well as to ensure the preservation of and respect for the status quo of Jerusalem's holy sites. The European Union is looking into possible further measures against actions undermining the two-State solution.

The EU is fully committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the two-State solution, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. The New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution provides a political framework to guide these efforts. The meetings of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution demonstrate our commitment and underline the necessity to link the implementation of the Gaza peace plan and the two-State solution agenda.

The EU deplores the resumption of hostilities between the United States and Iran and the ensuing loss of life and condemns Iran's actions disrupting freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, as well as its indiscriminate strikes on neighbouring countries. We express our full solidarity with the countries affected.

Recent threats by the Houthis to impose a maritime blockade on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia constitute a dangerous escalation. The attacks on oil tankers in the Red Sea are unacceptable and illegal and further inflame an already volatile situation in the region. It is crucial that all actors across the region implement resolution 2817 (2026) and refrain from actions that endanger the prospect of a negotiated solution. We commend Pakistan, Qatar and other regional partners for their mediation efforts. We stand ready to support future negotiations through our economic leverage, sanctions framework, nuclear expertise, maritime security engagement, direct channels with Iran and deep partnerships with the Gulf and other regional countries.

Freedom of navigation and safe transit passage through the Strait of Hormuz must remain unconditional, unrestricted and fully consistent with international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We are engaging with Gulf and other regional partners on the day after. Based on our experience in

Europe in establishing cooperation mechanisms, we welcome regional initiatives and stand ready to support and contribute to a comprehensive, long-term regional solution.

The EU also welcomes the framework agreement signed by Lebanon and Israel in Washington. We urge all actors to adhere to the agreement and to implement their commitments, including through the newly established trilateral Military Coordination Group. We call for a permanent end to hostilities and full respect for international law, including international humanitarian law, and reiterate that any lasting solution must be anchored in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). We call on Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanon and on Hizbullah to fully disarm in order to ensure a State monopoly over arms across the whole territory.

The EU stands ready to support the implementation of the framework agreement and to provide further support for the Lebanese Armed Forces and the internal security forces, including through a possible EU mission. The EU recalls the importance of a continued United Nations presence in Lebanon in the period following the withdrawal of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, and the EU reaffirms its readiness to contribute in that regard in 2027.

Finally, let me turn to Syria. The European Union is committed to supporting a peaceful and inclusive transition in Syria that enables the participation of all Syrians without distinction and upholds their human rights without discrimination on any ground. The recent formation of the People's Assembly in Syria marks another welcome step in the country's political transition. The EU stands ready to engage with the Assembly both to support capacity-building and good governance and to work together towards achieving common goals. In this regard, the EU encourages the strengthening of cooperation between the Syrian transitional Government and all United Nations bodies.

For the transition to succeed, Syria must remain insulated from regional hostilities. The EU urges all external actors to fully respect Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity in accordance with international law. And the EU calls on Israel to respect the demilitarized buffer zone and to uphold the terms of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces.

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

Mr. Vasconcelos (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are meeting once again at a time when the Middle East continues to suffer on multiple fronts and remains beset by growing tensions.

First, freedom of navigation remains under threat, whether as a result of Houthi attacks against commercial vessels in the Red Sea or of the new escalation in the Strait of Hormuz, with all its economic and humanitarian implications.

It is essential that the Security Council foster the resumption of dialogue between the parties and help ensure compliance with the provisions of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to move towards a permanent ceasefire. It is equally imperative to protect civilians in conflict situations in accordance with international humanitarian law. We reiterate our support for the decision recently adopted by the International Maritime Organization, which reaffirms that the right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation must not be threatened, denied or suspended. The decision also reaffirms the importance of arrangements between the littoral States that guarantee the free passage of all ships through the international traffic separation scheme.

With regard to the situation between Israel and Palestine, Mexico notes progress towards the transfer of governance to the National Committee for the Administration of

Gaza, in coordination with the Palestinian Authority. We take note of the dissolution of the emergency committee of the Gaza government as a step towards a unified Palestinian Government.

Nevertheless, the continuation and expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including the E1 project, have grave consequences for the territorial contiguity of the Palestinian State. Gaza must not be annexed, and the same principle must also apply to the West Bank.

On 20 April, the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union published the final damage assessment for Gaza, which sets out a devastating reality: \$71.4 billion is required to meet reconstruction needs following the destruction of or damage to approximately 372,000 homes, compounded by an economic contraction of 84 per cent. It is imperative to move forward with the reconstruction of Gaza. The agony of the Palestinian people must end.

As a co-Chair of one of the working groups of the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, Mexico stresses the importance of promoting narratives of peace that bring about profound changes in Israeli and Palestinian societies. For any political or security solution to be sustainable, there must be a transformation that prioritizes peaceful coexistence and a shared understanding of the history of those territories and that, above all, overcomes hatred and violence.

Finally, we also welcome the appointment of Mr. Jean Arnault as United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon. We hope that the new round of direct negotiations between Israel and Lebanon will help advance the implementation of the framework agreement reached in June, in particular the road map for the gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon, the disarmament of armed groups, the deployment of the Lebanese Army in the areas vacated by Israeli forces and the entrenchment of the ceasefire.

The international community and the United Nations must support all initiatives and all diplomatic efforts to help the parties negotiate constructively to achieve a permanent ceasefire and lasting stability. Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations provides concrete means for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

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

Mr. Parvathaneni (India): India thanks the Democratic Republic of the Congo for convening today's open debate. I also thank the briefer for his insightful remarks.

The Middle East, which is West Asia, is a region of immense importance to India. Our stakes in the security and stability of the region are high. India's trade and energy supply chains are strongly linked to this region. With annual bilateral trade of approximately \$180 billion, cumulative foreign direct investment of more than \$31 billion and remittances of more than \$52 billion from the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf alone, these linkages have direct implications for our economy and energy security. Approximately 10 million Indians live and work in the Gulf region. Their safety and well-being are a key priority for us.

After a brief pause in the ongoing conflict in the region, there has been a worrying resumption of attacks and an escalation of hostilities. This is deeply concerning, and India calls for an immediate de-escalation of tensions. We strongly condemn the recent attacks on several vessels — the *GFS Galaxy*, *MT Al Bahiyah* and *MT Mombasa* among them — during their transit through the Strait of Hormuz this month. Several Indian citizens were injured, including some seriously, one Indian tragically lost his life, and one is missing in these attacks. India has consistently condemned acts of violence targeting seafarers and disrupting free and safe navigation through international

waterways like the Strait of Hormuz. India strongly advocates a return to dialogue and diplomacy in the interests of peace, security and stability in the region. The targeting of commercial shipping and civilian infrastructure in the region must end, and free and unimpeded navigation and commerce through the international waterways in the region, in keeping with international law, must be restored at the earliest.

(spoke in Arabic)

The world's focus on the Strait of Hormuz must not distract us from the tragic humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. The loss of civilian lives and the destruction of civilian infrastructure are pressing concerns requiring immediate and urgent action by the international community. We must continue to fully support ongoing efforts by fully implementing Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2803 (2025).

India is firmly committed to efforts that make a tangible impact on the daily lives of Palestinians. India's development assistance to Palestine totals approximately \$175 million. This assistance has taken various forms, including development projects, humanitarian assistance, contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other forms of assistance. India is one of UNRWA's leading donors, and we have given the Agency operational flexibility in the use of our contributions. Earlier this month, at the Palestine Donor Group meeting in Brussels, India announced its commitment to establish a specialized hospital, a prosthetics centre and a vocational training institute in Palestine. India's ongoing projects also include the construction of the Palestinian Institute of Diplomacy.

While we work to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of the Palestinian people, we must also press ahead towards a sustainable and lasting political solution. India's steadfast and long-standing support for the two-State solution is well-known to all. India believes that a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace with Israel, within secure and recognized borders, is essential to a comprehensive and lasting solution.

(spoke in English)

On Lebanon, the blue helmets serve in challenging circumstances. United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) peacekeepers act pursuant to Security Council mandates and must therefore never become targets. They serve the cause of international peace and security. India has strongly condemned all attacks on UNIFIL peacekeepers. Their safety and security are a priority. The sanctity and inviolability of United Nations premises must be fully respected. Furthermore, it is important to be ready for a post-UNIFIL scenario, and in this context, the Lebanese Armed Forces must receive requisite support and assistance.

As regards Syria, we stress the importance of a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process in line with resolution 2254 (2015). The principles of the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic must remain central to all efforts. We also reiterate our support for ongoing efforts in finding long-term solutions.

When it comes to Yemen, India reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Yemen and its rejection of any interference in its internal affairs. We further condemn attacks by Houthis on maritime navigation. The protection of the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Southern Red Sea is a shared international responsibility and is a global interest.

The people of the Middle East need normalcy and lasting peace. As a Member State guided by our civilizational doctrine of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam, or the whole world is one family, India is committed to global well-being and a more secure, stable and prosperous world. India will continue to be driven by this approach.

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

Mr. Andreassen (Norway): Let me start by expressing Norway's deep concern at the current instability in the Middle East. Recent developments have once again demonstrated how quickly tensions can escalate. We urge all parties to exercise maximum restraint, to respect international law and to prioritize dialogue over confrontation.

In the context of rising regional tension, we cannot forget the situation in Palestine. Despite the ceasefire in Gaza, civilians are still being killed. The humanitarian situation remains desperate. Far too little medicine, essential goods and emergency aid are reaching an already severely affected civilian population. Despite improvements since the ceasefire, acute food insecurity remains widespread. Furthermore, Israel has voiced ambitions to control up to 70 per cent of Gaza, and an earthen barrier to entrench the division of Gaza is being constructed. This underlines the importance of moving forward with the implementation of the 20-point plan and resolution 2803 (2025). Norway reiterates that international humanitarian law must be respected by all parties. Humanitarian assistance must reach those in need safely, rapidly and without obstruction.

The situation in the West Bank is equally concerning. Military operations, continued settlement expansion, extreme levels of settler violence, demolitions and displacements undermine trust and threaten prospects for lasting peace. Such developments are in breach of international law and further erode the foundations for the two-State solution.

The Palestinian authorities worsening fiscal crisis, caused in large part by the continued withholding of revenues that belong to Palestine and by other economic restrictions, are bringing essential public services to the brink of collapse. We call on Israel to urgently release revenues that rightfully belong to the Palestinian people. In this context, we cannot ignore Israel's extensive use of administrative detention without formal charge. Thousands of Palestinians are being detained in Israeli prisons without charge or trial. Human rights organizations describe prison conditions for Palestinians as severe and life-threatening, citing inadequate food, denial of medical care and abuse. We urge Israel to uphold its human rights obligations towards detainees under international law, including by granting the International Committee of the Red Cross immediate access to all detention facilities, as stipulated in the recent Israeli Supreme Court ruling.

We need renewed efforts to ensure the strengthening of Palestinian institutions, concrete and timely recovery and reconstruction and respect for international law and accountability. Norway remains firmly committed to the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mrs. Elardja Flitti, Chargée d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of the League of Arab States to the United Nations.

Mrs. Elardja Flitti (*spoke in French*): I commend you, Madam President, for presiding over the Security Council this month with wisdom and a sense of responsibility.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Before I begin, I would like to thank Mr. Alakbarov for his comprehensive briefing.

The League of Arab States aligns itself with the statement delivered by His Excellency the Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on this agenda item.

Allow me to deliver this statement to the Council on behalf of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States regarding the grave developments taking place in the region and the need for responsible international action to end the aggression, prevent the expansion of the conflict and safeguard the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Arab States.

“The Middle East region is experiencing an extremely perilous phase, in which circles of confrontation are expanding and crises are intertwining in a way that threatens international and regional peace and security. Current developments have confirmed that the region’s security is indivisible and that stability cannot be achieved while occupation continues, while force is used and while interference in the internal affairs of States continues and their lands, waters and airspace are turned into arenas for settling scores.

“The Palestinian issue remains unresolved and lies at the heart of the dearth of security and stability in the region. There can be no peace while the Israeli occupation, settlement activity, annexation and displacement continue, and there can be no stability while the Palestinian people are denied their legitimate right to self-determination and to establish their independent and sovereign State with East Jerusalem as its capital. In the Gaza Strip, the urgent priority is the full and faithful implementation of resolution 2803 (2025). This must guarantee a cessation of hostilities, a consolidation of the ceasefire, the flow of humanitarian aid and a transition to the second phase, which includes Israel’s full withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the commencement of recovery and reconstruction efforts. Obstructing the implementation of this fundamental resolution or applying it selectively could undermine the truce and plunge the region back into a cycle of violence. The United States Administration bears a special responsibility to ensure that the peace plan, which was launched by President Trump in October 2025 and endorsed by the Arab League, is implemented. The Arab League and the Security Council must work for the reconstruction of Gaza and usher in a political path for the establishment of a Palestinian State based on the two-State solution. We also underscore the need to confront Israel’s evasiveness and stalling tactics, which are aimed at eviscerating the plan and perpetuating the status quo, amid the immense human suffering of nearly two million Palestinians, many of whom live in tents and lack food and basic healthcare and education services.

“In the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem, settlement activity and the confiscation of Palestinian land and property continue apace in the absence of effective enforcement of resolution 2334 (2016). This state of affairs is undermining the two-State solution and imposing a de facto annexation. The escalating settler attacks, including the killing of civilians and the burning of homes and places of worship, signal an imminent flare-up and reflect a systematic policy of forced displacement, which the occupying Government unfortunately seeks to enable and encourage. This requires urgent action by us and by the Security Council to protect the Palestinian people. This protection is necessary to put an end to the terrorism by settlers against unarmed Palestinian civilians.

“To maintain security in the Middle East, we must adopt a comprehensive approach to addressing the root sources of tension, based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, by supporting their national institutions; rejecting occupation, division and foreign interference; and relying on political solutions and international law. In this context, the League of Arab States condemns in the strongest terms the

Iranian attacks that have targeted a number of Arab States and considers them a flagrant violation of their sovereignty, of international law and of the principles of good neighbourliness. We also condemn the targeting of commercial vessels and the threat to freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait, which have serious repercussions for energy security, supply chains, food security and the international economy. We further call for the guarantee of safe passage through these corridors. To put an end to this crippling crisis and the restoration of stability in the region, the League of Arab States calls for a quick return to the understandings reached between the United States and Iran, the resumption of negotiations, the de-escalation of tensions, the cessation of attacks and violations, and a return to diplomacy with full respect for international law and international legitimacy.

“In conclusion, the crises in the region, despite their differences, reaffirm one immutable truth: namely, that there can be no stability under occupation, no security when there are violations of State sovereignty and no future when the State’s institutions are weakened or divided. We therefore call upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and ensure the full implementation of its resolutions without selectivity or delay, to protect unarmed civilians, to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and to support just and lasting political solutions.”

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

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): Japan thanks the Democratic Republic of the Congo for creating this opportunity.

The situation across the Middle East remains volatile and precarious with multiple crises unfolding simultaneously. The pursuit of diplomatic solutions is more essential than ever.

Despite the momentum towards a possible ceasefire generated by the mediation efforts of many countries, Japan is deeply concerned by the recent escalating exchange of attacks.

Our immediate priority must be to de-escalate tensions and restore regional stability, including by ensuring free and safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. Negotiations should continue with a view to addressing various issues, including the Iranian nuclear issue, one by one. Vessels should be able to transit the Strait without being subject to tolls or any other additional costs. There is no rationale for or legitimacy in taking the global socioeconomic situation hostage by disrupting peaceful passage through the Strait, which has long served as a global public asset.

Japan will continue to make every effort to foster an environment conducive to dialogue between the parties, in close coordination with the international community.

We welcome the trilateral framework agreed between Lebanon, Israel and the United States, as a meaningful step towards lasting peace. We reiterate our call for respect for Lebanon’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1701 (2006).

Hamas’s recent announcement regarding its preparations for the transfer of administrative responsibility to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG) and Israel’s approval of the deployment of the International Stabilization Force and the NCAG in Gaza are positive steps towards the operationalization of the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan, in line with resolution 2803 (2025). At the same time,

Israel is also required to withdraw its forces from Gaza and facilitate unhindered humanitarian access.

We are also gravely concerned by the deteriorating situation in the West Bank, particularly the escalation of settler violence against Palestinian civilians, and reiterate our call on Israel to take the necessary measures.

As part of our initiatives to expand our assistance network towards achieving peace through a two-State solution, Japan co-hosted a ministerial meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD) last week. CEAPAD's approach is to leverage the resources and development expertise of East Asian countries to contribute to Palestinian State-building.

Japan will continue to play a constructive role in advancing diplomatic efforts towards peace and stability in the Middle East.

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

Ms. Jiménez de la Hoz (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since the most recent open debate on the situation in the Middle East (see S/PV.10169), the situation in the Middle East has deteriorated drastically. The international community must therefore assume its responsibility to reverse the course of a situation whose deterioration threatens global stability on several fronts: the open conflict in the Gulf; the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and the threat to the Bab al-Mandab Strait; the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the violations committed by the occupying forces in the West Bank; and the still fragile situation in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. We must join forces to demand compliance with international law and international humanitarian law.

There is no military solution to these conflicts. We remain fully committed to efforts within the multilateral framework. Spain advocates diplomacy and dialogue as the only viable and effective path to resolving disputes; supports the commendable work of regional mediators, which is often under attack; and calls for the immediate and permanent cessation of military operations on all fronts. Only in this way will we be able to move towards a sustainable and lasting peace.

In this regard, allow me also to emphasize the importance of women's full and effective participation in negotiation processes.

Respect for international law is the only way to resolve all outstanding issues with Iran, including the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz and the nuclear issue. We therefore express our deepest concern at this new escalation of violence. We reiterate our condemnation of Iran's indiscriminate and unjustified attacks against neighbouring States and urge the parties to cease all military operations and to fully guarantee freedom of navigation in accordance with international law, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and resolution 2817 (2026). The arbitrary blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and the threats against Bab al-Mandab constitute an unacceptable violation of free and safe navigation. They breach the rules that govern us as an international community and pose a threat to global security and prosperity.

The events in Iran must not overshadow the alarming situation in Palestine, which is deteriorating by the day in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Spain is fully committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the implementation of the two-State solution in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2803 (2025). We reiterate the need to strengthen the Palestinian Authority, our indispensable and sole partner with legitimacy, in order to ensure the viability of a genuine, sustainable peace that meets the aspirations of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. With regard to Gaza, we once again emphasize before the Council the urgency of implementing resolution 2803 (2025), condemning

the Israeli army's expanded military presence in the Strip and stressing the imperative need to address the humanitarian catastrophe afflicting the more than 2 million inhabitants of Gaza. We reiterate our call for the Israeli Government to allow the entry of large-scale humanitarian aid and to ensure the protection of the work of the United Nations, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Amid the worst financial crisis the United Nations system has faced in 2026, Spain has made contributions to UNRWA totalling €15 million.

We take this opportunity to condemn once again the passing of the law on the death penalty in Israel and the State of Palestine, the terms of which are discriminatory against the Palestinian population. This discrimination is extremely serious, as it enshrines legal inequality between persons and eliminates the most basic guarantees of due process in a matter that directly affects the fundamental right to life. It is an attack on the principles of human dignity and equality.

With regard to the West Bank, we strongly condemn the accelerated expansion of Israeli settlements and the continued proliferation of settlement outposts, alongside an increase in settler-related violence committed with impunity and arbitrary restrictions on Palestinians' access to their land. We demand accountability for those violations, which threaten the viability of the State of Palestine while violating international law.

With regard to Lebanon, we recognize and support the courageous decisions taken by the Lebanese Government in defence of full respect for its national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and reiterate our commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Spain reiterates its firm support for the institutions and people of Lebanon. We will continue to support all efforts to move towards lasting stability, with full support for strengthening the Lebanese Armed Forces, bilaterally and together with European partners, so that they can consolidate control over all Lebanese territory.

In that context, we welcome the signing in Washington, D.C., on 26 June of the trilateral framework agreement between Lebanon, Israel and the United States, which should serve as a first step towards a comprehensive and just peace, in accordance with the principles mentioned earlier.

Spain reaffirms its unwavering support for the work of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), in which it has maintained a substantial contingent for 20 years. We recognize the fundamental role played by the blue helmets, condemn the unacceptable attacks against mission personnel and extend our deepest condolences over the recent deaths. We demand a comprehensive investigation and recall that those attacks constitute a grave violation of international law.

We welcome the options presented by the Secretary-General for the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) once UNIFIL's mandate ends. Spain will continue to work actively with troop-contributing countries and the members of the Security Council to ensure an orderly transition and contribute to efforts to achieve stability along the Blue Line following UNIFIL's withdrawal.

Finally, with regard to Syria, we stand at a crucial juncture for the country and its people. Alongside the challenge of rebuilding and consolidating legitimate and democratic institutions after decades of conflict, worrying internal and external pressures persist, as do a profound humanitarian crisis and major security challenges within the complex regional geopolitical situation. We support a peaceful and inclusive political transition process that guarantees full respect for Syria's

independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we will continue working with the transitional Government and Syrian society to move in that direction.

In conclusion, I wish to stress that the situation in the Middle East is bleak today. We cannot look away or allow ourselves to be distracted by distorted narratives. The Security Council must act, and it must do so urgently. We, the Member States of the United Nations, have a responsibility and a moral obligation to use all the mechanisms at our disposal to restore peace and stability in the Middle East.

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

Mr. Darzi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Despite the ceasefire that has been declared, Gaza remains devastated and under siege. Israel, the occupying regime, continues to violate the ceasefire through ongoing military attacks and severe restrictions on humanitarian access. It is further deepening the suffering of civilians. At the same time, the Israeli regime continues its illegal settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, in clear violation of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Israel's repeated acts of aggression against Lebanon and continued violations of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity further threaten regional peace and security. The continued unlawful actions of the Israeli regime pose a grave threat to international peace and security.

Against this backdrop, Iran reiterates that any credible solution must ensure a permanent ceasefire, unhindered humanitarian access, the full withdrawal of Israeli occupying forces and full United Nations membership for the State of Palestine. Humanitarian assistance and Gaza's reconstruction must never be conditioned on political or military objectives. Accountability is indispensable.

The Israeli regime, together with those that enable its atrocious crimes through political, military and economic support, must be held responsible for grave violations of international humanitarian law. The issuance of arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court on 21 November 2024 against the criminal Prime Minister of the Israeli regime for the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity is a clear reminder that no one is above international law.

I must also respond to the baseless allegations levelled against my country, particularly by the representative of the United States. I categorically reject all those unfounded and politically motivated accusations.

The representative of the United States has once again resorted to lies, disinformation and a campaign of distortion in a desperate attempt to justify the United States' unlawful acts of aggression against Iran. These allegations are part of the longstanding hostile policy pursued by the United States and the Israeli regime against Iran to advance their political and military objectives, conceal their unlawful actions and malicious activities in the region, and justify the destabilizing United States military presence in the region.

However, the facts are clear and cannot be denied. The United States is the aggressor. Through its acts of aggression against Iran, the United States has violated the Charter of the United Nations and fundamental principles of international law, including the peremptory prohibition on the use of force and the prohibition of aggression.

By deliberately targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, medical facilities, bridges, sports facilities and other essential infrastructure, the United States has committed grave violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes. The attack on the Minab school is a tragic and undeniable example of those crimes. The President of the United States and other senior officials have openly acknowledged the commission of these heinous crimes

and have even expressed pride in them. Such statements constitute further evidence of their responsibility.

The United States bears full international responsibility for its internationally wrongful acts. Those responsible for these grave crimes will, sooner or later, face accountability before competent international judicial bodies. No one is above international law, and there will be no impunity. The international community and the Security Council must not allow these crimes to be normalized. Silence and impunity will only encourage their repetition.

In conclusion, we reiterate that all of Iran's measures are defensive, necessary and consistent with international law. The root causes of the current situation are clear. The United States' ongoing unlawful actions pose a serious threat to regional stability, freedom of navigation and the security of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. The Islamic Republic of Iran has exercised and will continue to exercise its inherent right of self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, to protect its people and to defend and safeguard its sovereignty, territorial integrity and vital national interests against acts of aggression by the United States.

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

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): I would like to thank the Democratic Republic of the Congo for convening this timely debate on the situation in the Middle East.

We are deeply concerned with the recent escalation of the situation in the Persian Gulf. Once again, current events demonstrate that energy security and freedom of navigation must remain central to the resolution of the conflict and the regional peace solution. In that context, we are concerned about the Houthis' ability to threaten the fragile balance of maritime traffic in the Red Sea.

With that in mind, we note with interest the decisions taken by countries in the region to develop alternative strategic transport and energy corridors — including oil and gas pipelines, as well as railway networks — in anticipation that the long-term operation of the Strait of Hormuz will remain subject to periodic disruptions.

We remain equally concerned by the growing use of disinformation and the continued targeting of civilian infrastructure, trends that have come to define contemporary conflicts, from the Middle East to Ukraine.

This state of “no peace, no war” cannot endure indefinitely. Geography cannot change, but political choices can, and meaningful dialogue remains the only path to a lasting resolution. Poland commends the efforts of all mediators and remains firmly committed to supporting diplomatic de-escalation. Two issues remain central: the full opening of the Strait of Hormuz and control over Iran's nuclear programme, requiring full Iranian cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. Let me repeat: nuclear safety, maritime security and freedom of navigation remain essential to international stability.

Recognition of the Palestinian people's aspiration for statehood and support for the two-State solution remain key elements of Poland's Middle East policy, consistently reflected in our voting at the United Nations and grounded in the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, of September 2025. In this context, Poland shares the international community's alarm over escalating tensions in the West Bank. We urge Israel to protect civilians, ensure unhindered humanitarian access and hold perpetrators accountable. We also oppose the death penalty in all circumstances and call on Israel to maintain its moratorium on executions. Poland remains gravely concerned by actions targeting the

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, whose work is indispensable for millions of refugees.

More broadly, let me underline that the protection of civilians remains a matter of the highest importance for Poland. We call for full respect for international humanitarian law and for holding accountable all those responsible for its violations, including attacks on humanitarian personnel. This issue carries particular weight for us. In April 2024, a Polish citizen was among the World Central Kitchen volunteers killed in an attack in Gaza. We once again demand an immediate and full end to attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, and safe, unhindered humanitarian access everywhere, whether in the Middle East, Africa or Ukraine.

Our commitment extends beyond words. Before I conclude, allow me to highlight Poland's humanitarian and development support for the region. Poland actively supports humanitarian projects through Polish aid, non-governmental organizations and various United Nations agencies, with a particular focus on initiatives implemented in Lebanon, Palestine and Syria. Our priorities include strengthening local resilience by ensuring access to healthcare, mostly through mobile clinics, supporting local entrepreneurship, reinforcing local administration and civil defence, enhancing preparedness and response to natural disasters and expanding access to renewable energy. Our commitment to the people of this region remains steadfast.

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

Ms. Karadjova (Bulgaria): Bulgaria remains deeply concerned by the continuing instability across the Middle East and its serious implications for regional and international peace and security.

In this regard, Bulgaria expresses its strong support for the efforts of High Representative Nikolay Mladenov and the Board of Peace towards the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and resolution 2803 (2025). We welcome the Office's efforts to support the implementation of the ceasefire arrangements, facilitate effective governance, advance recovery and reconstruction in Gaza and coordinate international efforts in support of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. Strengthening this mechanism remains essential to translating political commitments into tangible results on the ground.

We underline the importance of the permanent disarmament of Hamas and all other non-State armed groups. Hamas cannot be part of the future governance of Gaza. We join the call for immediate, safe and unimpeded access and sustained distribution of humanitarian assistance, at scale, into and throughout Gaza. The deterioration of the situation in the West Bank, including the increase in settler violence and settlement activities, is a source of serious concern that needs to be addressed.

Bulgaria remains committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the two-State solution, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, whereby two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders. We welcome the trilateral framework agreement signed by Lebanon, Israel and the United States in Washington on 26 June, which offers an important opportunity to advance de-escalation, restore Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and move towards more sustainable security arrangements. The situation in Lebanon nevertheless remains fragile. The full disarmament of Hizbullah and other non-State armed groups remains essential for lasting peace and security. Bulgaria reaffirms its support for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as for the efforts of the Lebanese authorities to strengthen the Lebanese Armed Forces and extend State authority throughout the entirety of Lebanese territory. The implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) in its entirety continues to be of key importance.

With regard to Syria, Bulgaria remains firmly committed to supporting a peaceful, inclusive, Syrian-led and -owned transition that upholds human rights and guarantees the participation of all Syrians without distinction. For this transition to succeed, Syria must be insulated from regional hostilities. We call on all external actors to fully respect Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

On Iran, we express cautious hope that the halt in military strikes will create a new window for a ceasefire that could pave the way for the resumption of diplomatic engagement, with the aim of reopening the Strait of Hormuz in accordance with international law and, ultimately, reaching a negotiated solution to the outstanding issues related to Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

Bulgaria is concerned that the periodic resumption of military escalation between the United States and Iran increases the unpredictability of the situation and the risk of miscalculation, and calls on all parties to exercise maximum restraint. We condemn the unilateral attacks of Iran against countries in the region, as well as the disruption of transit passage through the Strait of Hormuz. We underline the need to fully ensure freedom of navigation, as well as free and safe passage of vessels through the Strait of Hormuz, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We also underline the importance of safeguarding maritime routes and freedom of navigation throughout the wider region, including in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab strait. The recent threats by the Houthis are unacceptable and must be categorically rejected.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Ms. Shaheen (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): Madam President, we welcome the efforts you made to organize this important debate, and we also thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov for his valuable briefing.

In the light of recent developments in Gaza and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the United Arab Emirates would like to emphasize the following points.

First, progress must be made towards the full implementation of resolution 2803 (2025), including consolidating the ceasefire in Gaza, ensuring Hamas' disarmament and creating the conditions necessary to enable the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza to begin its work. We call for the swift deployment of the International Stabilization Force and Israel's complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, and for the Palestinian Authority, following its reform, to be put in a position to assume its full responsibilities in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. We underscore our opposition to any attempts to displace the Palestinian people or to impose new facts on the ground in the Strip, which would undermine the prospects for peace.

Secondly, despite the relative improvement in food security indicators in Gaza, the humanitarian situation remains critical. Acute food insecurity persists, with approximately 70 per cent of the population lacking adequate shelter and water and sanitation services continuing to deteriorate. My country stresses the need to reopen all crossings to ensure the flow of aid and support early recovery. The United Arab Emirates continues to provide humanitarian aid through Operation Chivalrous Knight 3, alongside other initiatives to support the resilience of Palestinian society, including pest control and epidemiological risk reduction projects, as well as the holding of mass weddings and a ceremony to honour outstanding students, in partnership with the United Nations and other humanitarian partners.

Thirdly, my country condemns the recent developments in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, specifically the increase in settlement activities and unilateral measures, including the E1 plan, the demolition orders for Khan al-Ahmar and land reclassification measures in Area C, which are in violation of international law, including resolution

2334 (2016). We likewise condemn the dangerous escalation in settler violence and attacks against civilians, villages, holy sites and private property. We call on the Israeli Government to hold the perpetrators of these violations to account and to prevent the cycle of hatred and instability from deepening. We reject any attempts to alter the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem and its holy sites. We reaffirm the special role of the historical Hashemite custodianship.

In conclusion, in its capacity as a member of both the Board of Peace and the Gaza Executive Board, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms its full commitment to supporting the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, the efforts of the High Representative for Gaza and the road map he has put forward, in parallel with our efforts to move forward with the two-State solution, leading up to the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with the State of Israel in security and peace.

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

Ms. Osman (Malaysia): Malaysia thanks the Democratic Republic of the Congo for convening this quarterly open debate. We also thank Mr. Alakbarov for his comprehensive briefing.

We align ourselves with the statements to be delivered on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The situation across the Occupied Palestinian Territory continues to deteriorate at an alarming pace. In the Gaza Strip, the humanitarian situation remains dire. UNICEF estimates that 1.9 million of Gaza's 2.1 million people remain displaced, many of them repeatedly. Continued hostilities, restrictions on humanitarian access and severe damage to civilian infrastructure continue to impede the delivery of life-saving assistance. These conditions limit Palestinians' access to food, safe water, sanitation, shelter and healthcare.

Israel's aggression extends beyond the Gaza Strip. The situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is also worsening. Civilians, including children, have been killed not only by Israeli forces but also by settlers. Israeli military operations, restrictions on the movement of Palestinians, demolitions of homes and civilian infrastructure, the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements and settler violence in the occupied West Bank continue to drive displacement, isolate communities and restrict access to essential services and livelihoods. Palestinian children are increasingly being denied safe access to education. Across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 84 schools remain under pending demolition or stop-work orders, including 54 that are facing full demolition. These violations must end. Israel must uphold its obligations under international law, in particular international humanitarian law, including by protecting Palestinian children, schools and other civilian infrastructure. These children deserve their right to education and must be protected from harm.

Malaysia reaffirms the indispensable role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The International Court of Justice's advisory opinion of 22 October 2025 and General Assembly resolution 80/116 clearly call upon Israel to facilitate humanitarian relief efforts undertaken by United Nations entities, including UNRWA, for the civilian population without obstruction. They further call for the protection of all humanitarian and medical personnel and reaffirm the inviolability of United Nations premises and property and the privileges and immunities of its officials. In this connection, Malaysia categorically rejects any attempt to obstruct, delegitimize or dismantle UNRWA's operations or to undermine its mandate. UNRWA remains an indispensable lifeline for millions of Palestine refugees across the Middle East. Any effort to weaken the Agency is legally indefensible and morally unacceptable.

Malaysia remains steadfast in its support for the inherent and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, the right of return and the right to statehood. Malaysia reiterates its unwavering and principled support for the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We recall the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, adopted by an overwhelming majority of Member States, Malaysia among them. The Declaration demonstrates the international community's collective commitment to translating the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people into concrete political action and to advancing a credible and irreversible pathway towards Palestinian statehood.

To conclude, accountability for Israel's unlawful actions against the Palestinian people must remain a priority. Accountability is a foundation of justice, a safeguard against the repetition of atrocities and a necessary condition for a just and lasting peace. The Council must not allow the suffering of the Palestinian people to remain unanswered, nor their lives to be reduced to statistics. It must act with courage and consistency to uphold international law and to bring impunity to an end. The Palestinian people deserve justice, dignity and freedom.

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

Mr. Salah (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to thank the Democratic Republic of the Congo for convening this meeting and express our support for its presidency of the Council this month.

As we have previously noted on numerous occasions, the tragic situation unfolding in the Middle East is a direct result of the international community's failure to reinstate the Palestinian people's exercise of their inalienable rights over their entire territory. In this context, Tunisia calls on the Security Council and the international community to put an end to the violations committed by the occupying Power and to assume their political and moral responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security so as to enforce international law, including international humanitarian law, and resolutions of international legitimacy.

Tunisia expresses its support for the vital and fundamental role played by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in providing relief to Palestinian refugees and its outstanding contributions to regional stability. We emphasize the need for the international community and the humanitarian community to continue providing political and financial support to the Agency and to reject all measures aimed at undermining its work or diminishing its United Nations mandate.

In conclusion, Tunisia reaffirms its unconditional support for the Palestinian people in their struggle and in defence of their inalienable rights and its unwavering support for our Palestinian brothers and sisters in asserting self-determination and in their struggle to regain their full, legitimate and historic rights and to establish their State throughout the entire territory of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

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

Mr. Vintas (Portugal): Starting with the Gulf, Portugal calls for the full implementation of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding. We urge all the relevant parties to uphold international law, including international humanitarian law, and freedom of navigation. Portugal supports a diplomatic solution as the only viable path to a comprehensive and long-lasting peace. The same applies to Yemen.

Turning to Lebanon, we welcome the trilateral framework agreement and highlight the importance of its implementation in the context of existing United Nations Security Council

resolutions, including resolution 1701 (2006). We believe the United Nations should continue having a role after the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon is terminated.

Concerning Syria, Portugal welcomes the inaugural session of the People's Assembly and the recent visit by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, both of which mark significant milestones in the country's political transition.

Regarding Palestine, the humanitarian situation in Gaza remains grievous. Portugal calls for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. We stress that the United Nations and all its agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, as well as international non-governmental organizations, must be able to fulfil their roles. Violations of the ceasefire must stop. Furthermore, the Palestinian Authority should be involved in preparation for its return to the Strip.

In the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Portugal is concerned by the surge in settler violence and Israel's unilateral actions aimed at increasing its control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including through expanded settlements, which are illegal under international law. We also condemn actions aimed at altering the status quo of the holy sites.

Portugal formally recognized the State of Palestine one year ago and remains committed to the implementation of the two-State solution and the promotion of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, in line with the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution.

Portugal remains convinced that diplomacy is possible, dialogue is necessary and peace is achievable. This is the spirit that will guide us as we serve as an elected member of the Security Council in 2027 and 2028.

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

Ms. Lumsden (Canada): Canada remains deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict with Iran. We reiterate the need to work towards a diplomatic resolution to the conflict and support efforts by Pakistan and Qatar and other regional partners towards the resumption of negotiations. Canada urges all parties to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. We condemn in the strongest terms Iran's strikes against Gulf States, Jordan and other partners in the region. We stand firmly in support of our Gulf partners' sovereignty and security and commend their ongoing efforts towards dialogue and de-escalation.

Canada will continue to pressure Iran to end its malign behaviour. To this end, we have imposed sanctions on a total of 227 Iranian individuals and 260 entities. These sanctions address concerns related to Iran's abhorrent human rights abuses, nuclear programme, its funding of proxy terrorist groups and the transfer of uncrewed aerial vehicle and drone technology to malign actors.

Canada is equally concerned by the situation in the Strait of Hormuz, where the continued disruption of maritime security poses a serious threat to our economies and overall security, including critical supply chains. Canada calls on Iran to respect navigation rights and safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz in line with international law. Canada is working with partners towards restoring maritime security and safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, and we stand ready to support proposed French and United Kingdom initiatives.

We are also concerned by the recent Houthi threats against Saudi Arabia, including to disrupt the lawful passage of vessels in the Bab al-Mandab Strait. The Bab al-Mandab

Strait must remain open and safe for international navigation, free from attacks or interference in accordance with international law.

Canada welcomes initial steps taken under the trilateral framework agreement, including the recent deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces in areas of southern Lebanon, and encourages the continued implementation of commitments by all parties. We reiterate the importance of full respect for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the commitments undertaken by all parties in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1701 (2006). We also welcome efforts by the Lebanese authorities to extend State authority throughout Lebanese territory and encourage continued progress on the reforms necessary to support Lebanon's long-term stability and recovery.

Canada remains concerned by ongoing security incidents affecting civilians and civilian infrastructure and by the threats to the safety and security of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon personnel. We underscore that peacekeepers must be able to carry out their mandated tasks safely and without interference.

(spoke in French)

We must not lose sight of the immense suffering of civilians in Gaza, where the humanitarian crisis persists despite the ceasefire. Canada has pledged more than \$500 million in international aid since 2023 and reiterates its call for greater humanitarian access.

Canada condemns the terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas in Israel on 7 October 2023, which claimed the lives of nearly 1,200 people, including Canadians. Political negotiations must lead to the disarmament of Hamas and its removal from power in Gaza. We welcome and support the progress made by the Palestinian Authority in implementing its reform programme, notably the holding of local elections in April and the announcement of parliamentary elections in November this year.

In the West Bank, settlement expansion continues unabated. Canada once again calls for the immediate cessation of Israel's settlement policy, including the E1 settlement project, which undermines the prospects for a two-State solution. Canada also urges Israel to prevent violence committed by extremist settlers and to bring those responsible to justice. Canada has imposed five rounds of sanctions targeting 19 individuals and 12 entities linked to this violence and will continue to consider all appropriate measures to address this issue.

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

Mr. Flygenring (Iceland): Eight months ago, the Council adopted resolution 2803 (2025) endorsing the 20-point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and the role of the Board of Peace in its implementation. Since then, some of the Plan's key objectives have been achieved. All living hostages were released and the remains of those killed have been returned to their families. A ceasefire has been in effect, although an imperfect one, and humanitarian assistance has resumed with some improvements in the rate of delivery.

Nonetheless, the humanitarian situation remains critical and humanitarian access restricted for many essential items. Regrettably, Israel has continued to delay, obstruct and prevent the work of United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and key international non-governmental organizations in Gaza. Meanwhile, Israel, by its own account, has expanded its control of Gaza instead of gradually withdrawing in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Plan.

The full promise of resolution 2803 (2025) remains unrealized, and we call for more progress towards the peace and relief it pledged for Palestinians in Gaza. More needs to be done to support the Palestinian National Committee for the Administration of Gaza in carrying out its work and all efforts made for the urgent deployment of the Palestinian police and the International Stabilization Force in line with resolution 2803 (2025). We reiterate that Hamas has no role in the future of Palestine and that militant factions in Gaza must be decommissioned. Their defiance must neither be tolerated nor allowed to prevent the implementation of the peace plan.

Iceland is gravely concerned by the situation in the West Bank which continues to deteriorate with ongoing settlement expansion in violation of international law. There have been serious incidents of violence in recent weeks, as we heard in Mr. Alakbarov's briefing this morning. Regrettably, settler violence and crimes persist with impunity and are fuelled and enabled by inflammatory rhetoric and permissive government policy. While it may almost seem futile in the current dire circumstances to call for a two-State solution in which Israelis and Palestinians live side-by-side in peace and mutual recognition, it remains the only viable path to sustainable peace and security.

Finally, we call for renewed efforts for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in the region. The ongoing obstruction of lawful transit passage through the Strait of Hormuz is unacceptable and must stop. It presents not only a direct threat to the region but to our energy markets and global food security. All States are obliged to uphold and respect the fundamental freedom of navigation, including the right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation, as well as other freedoms and principles laid down in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

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

Mr. Arafa (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this open debate on the situation in the Middle East. I also thank Mr. Alakbarov for his briefing this morning.

The challenges facing Lebanon remain serious and multifaceted. The Lebanese Government remains determined to rebuild institutions, undertake reforms and reconstruction, and extend State authority in a manner that meets the aspirations of the Lebanese people, especially those in the south who have suffered greatly, with a view to achieving comprehensive and sustainable recovery.

As you know, Lebanon engaged constructively in the talks sponsored by the United States of America, for which we are grateful, guided by clear objectives that prioritized regional security and stability over electoral or domestic considerations. Those talks culminated in the trilateral framework announced on 26 June. Lebanon's constructive engagement in those talks reflects, first, its respect for the mediation efforts of the United States of America and, secondly, the conviction of Lebanon and the Lebanese people that diplomacy is less costly than wars and conflicts, which have failed over the past decades to achieve the desired security and stability. However, what is happening today in Lebanon, especially in the south, threatens to undermine the trilateral framework, the 2024 cessation of hostilities arrangement and all the resolutions of the Council, foremost among them resolution 1701 (2006), which, in all its aspects, remains the fundamental framework governing relations between Lebanon and Israel under United Nations auspices.

The number of people martyred as a result of the continuing Israeli attacks on Lebanon has approached 4,500, with 13,000 wounded. That is in addition to the material damage to public and private property, the systematic destruction of villages and towns and the erasure of their geographical features, as well as economic losses now estimated in the billions.

Israel's continued military operations and occupation of Lebanese territories constitute a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Lebanon clearly and unequivocally condemns those Israeli practices, which undermine international peace and security and the Lebanese Government's efforts to achieve stability. Those practices once again place mediation efforts under severe strain, as did Israel's previous violations of the 2024 cessation of hostilities arrangement and all the relevant Security Council resolutions.

No serious and sincere effort can succeed if Israel continues to pursue that aggressive course, unconstrained by legal or moral considerations. Israel must put an end to it so that the Lebanese State can discharge its duties toward its citizens, launch the reconstruction process, extend its authority and establish a State monopoly over weapons. We must also thank France, Italy and the many other countries that have recognized that strengthening the capacities of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the security forces is a necessary condition for the success of those efforts.

The Lebanese Government will spare no effort to safeguard the interests of Lebanon and its people and preserve the country's unity and territorial integrity. As you all know, it remains open to cooperating with all stakeholders, especially the members of the Council, in considering arrangements for the period following the expiry, at the end of this year, of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

The Lebanese Government views the existing tracks as complementary, although separate; they converge on a set of objectives, all of which are set out in resolution 1701 (2006). We reiterate our readiness to work in partnership with the Council and renew our thanks to the Secretary-General for the options presented in his letter dated 1 June 2026 (S/2026/453). Those options include the establishment of a new United Nations force whose principal objectives would include verification and monitoring. They also include strengthening the role of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the inclusion of other essential components, such as engineering support, the clearance of explosive remnants of war and a maritime force. We must also mention the letter addressed to the Council by 86 members of the Lebanese Parliament calling for a temporary extension of UNIFIL until conditions stabilize again, reflecting their firm conviction of the importance and effectiveness of its role, especially when tensions are high.

The region as a whole is facing difficulties and challenges. At the same time, many countries in the region are moving to strengthen their institutions and develop comprehensive economic and social visions for their peoples aimed at ensuring stability and peace and enhancing economic and investment opportunities. In that context, we welcome the positive developments in Syria, whose stability contributes to Lebanon's stability, and vice versa. A joint high-level committee has been established between the two countries, and coordination is under way on border security and combating smuggling. Cooperation in various fields continues to develop in a very positive manner and is based on equality, with the aim of launching constructive, vital commercial and economic projects that are essential to both countries.

We also reaffirm our steadfast solidarity with the Arab Gulf States and Jordan in the face of the unjustified Iranian attacks against those sisterly countries amid the current escalation, and we condemn those attacks, which destabilize security and stability in the region.

The situation in Gaza remains difficult and unacceptable. Civilians continue to suffer destruction, displacement and deprivation, and the international community cannot continue to watch in silence, especially as the ceasefire continues to be violated.

In the occupied West Bank, settler terrorism has sharply escalated in full view of the occupying forces, indeed with their encouragement and, in many cases, their protection. The fact is that lasting stability and peace cannot be achieved without ending the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories and fully implementing international law, especially the resolutions adopted by the Council. What is required is a peaceful solution based on well-known parameters, one that respects the rights of the Palestinian people and leads to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Ms. Godoy Calderón (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honour to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Group of Friends reaffirms its commitment to the just cause of the Palestinian people and expresses its profound solidarity with their legitimate aspirations to exercise fully their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination, their right to freedom and their right to live in conditions of peace and security. Those principles are non-negotiable; they constitute the foundation of the international order that we have all agreed to defend.

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continues to deteriorate at an alarming pace. The reports presented to the Council describe a context marked by continuing military operations, the destruction of essential infrastructure and a devastating impact on the civilian population. Hospitals, schools, humanitarian facilities and homes have been severely affected, causing suffering that no community should have to endure.

Various United Nations bodies have documented grave violations of international law, international humanitarian law and the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations in Palestine. The persistence of those violations undermines the credibility of the multilateral system and the capacity of the Organization to fulfil its mandate to maintain international peace and security.

The Group of Friends considers that the Security Council must act in accordance with all the relevant resolutions adopted on the matter and do so impartially and resolutely, in order to prevent further loss of human life, ensure the protection of the Palestinian civilian population and guarantee full, safe and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance.

We reiterate our firm support for the work of the United Nations on the ground, in particular the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, whose work remains indispensable to millions of Palestine refugees. Its humanitarian action, carried out in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly, must receive sustained support and remain free from political conditions. The continuity of its operations is essential to regional stability and to preserving the dignity of those who depend on its services.

The recent briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (see S/PV.10177) highlights that, even after the ceasefire, the Palestinian population continued to face extremely precarious conditions, marked by further loss of life, mass displacement and confinement to ever-shrinking areas, with very limited access to essential services. Those circumstances are incompatible with regional stability and with the humanitarian principles that the United Nations is called upon to uphold.

A significant step towards peace would be to advance the admission of Palestine as a full Member State of the United Nations. Legal and political equality is essential to genuine and sustainable peace. Peace requires all parties to be able to participate in

dialogue on an equal footing and with mutual respect and to be held accountable for their obligations under international law. Equal standing is not a privilege; it is indispensable to resolving a conflict that has persisted for far too many decades.

There can be no lasting peace while occupation, annexation and the denial of fundamental rights persist. Peace demands respect for human dignity, international law, international humanitarian law and the right of peoples to self-determination. Those principles are not abstract concepts; they are the foundation of any viable and sustainable political solution.

Accordingly, the Group of Friends reiterates its commitment to continue working for the full exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to an independent and sovereign State. We are convinced that there can be no peace in the Middle East without a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of Palestine based on international law and the relevant resolutions of the Organization.

We reiterate our call for the establishment of a sovereign and viable State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the two-State solution, and for the right of return of Palestinian refugees to be guaranteed in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Group of Friends reaffirms that the Charter of the United Nations remains our collective guide. Respect for the Charter is not optional; it is an indispensable condition for the peaceful coexistence of States and the protection of all the peoples of the world.

Allow me now, in my national capacity, to add a few brief remarks. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, true to the principles of its diplomacy of peace, reiterates its call for dialogue and restraint to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, which remains at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In that regard, we call for an end to all unilateral actions aimed at complicating the situation on the ground and further delaying the launch of a genuine political process between the parties. It is therefore urgent to safeguard international maritime security, including in the Red Sea, ensure the safety of the civilian population and advance the realization of the legitimate aspirations of all the peoples of the Middle East, who are calling for a future of peace, justice and well-being.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Mr. Hai Luu Nguyen (Viet Nam): Viet Nam remains deeply concerned about the ongoing situation in the Middle East, including the renewed hostilities and the risk of their further spread across the Gulf; the fact that maritime security and freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz have yet to be restored; continued hostilities and restrictions on humanitarian access in Gaza; the worsening situation in the West Bank; and the deterioration of security in southern Lebanon. These developments are causing immense human suffering, disrupting international trade and energy supplies, heightening regional and global uncertainties, undermining the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) and the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, and jeopardizing the prospects for a negotiated settlement between the United States and Iran.

We regret that the Security Council has not been able to take united, balanced and impartial action to address these pressing crises and their serious implications for regional and international peace and security. We are especially alarmed by attacks against civilian infrastructure. Under all circumstances, civilians and critical civilian infrastructure must be protected. Such attacks constitute violations of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 2573 (2021).

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

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

In this regard, Viet Nam welcomes the resumption of negotiations between the United States and Iran aimed at resolving their differences and ending the conflict. We commend the tireless efforts of Pakistan, Qatar, Oman, Türkiye, Switzerland and other mediators to maintain channels of communication and facilitate the negotiating process. We call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint, engage constructively and implement the agreements reached in good faith.

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

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

Mr. Naanda (Namibia): The situation in Palestine, one of the gravest crises confronting the international community, has reached a point at which euphemisms and diplomatic caution no longer suffice. Recent developments in Gaza, including what we all have chosen to label as a ceasefire, do not resemble any ceasefire recognized under international law.

When civilians continue to face brutality, when humanitarian access remains obstructed and when the occupying Power retains full coercive control, we must call this situation what it is: a pause defined by the perpetrators, not by the protection and needs of the victims.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains catastrophic and reflects the predictable outcome of sustained destruction, displacement and deprivation. Children are suffering from trauma. Families are living amid rubble. Disease is spreading. The world should not remain insensitive to this human tragedy. Behind every statistic are real people, families and communities whose lives have been profoundly affected.

Namibia stresses that humanitarian assistance must flow unhindered, at scale and without political interference. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) must be allowed to operate fully and safely. Attempts to delegitimize or restrict its work are actions that exacerbate human suffering and undermine the international system's ability to respond.

In the same vein, we want to reiterate that the reconstruction of Gaza should not be a distant aspiration. It is an immediate necessity. The people of Gaza cannot be condemned to live indefinitely among the ruins of their homes, schools, hospitals and places of worship. A credible reconstruction effort requires sustained international support, adequate resources and the removal of all barriers.

Namibia is deeply outraged by recent reports of deliberate violence against Palestinian children, including killing and sexual violence attributed to Israeli forces.

These acts constitute some of the gravest violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Children must never be targets of conflict. Namibia demands independent investigations and the full accountability of all perpetrators without exception and without political shielding. The same should apply to the situation in the West Bank, where the illegal expansion of settlements continues unabated. These actions violate international law, undermine the viability of a two-State solution and fuel tensions and instability across the Middle East. They are a deliberate attempt to undermine political outcomes on the ground.

The recent 2026 United Nations and Organization of Islamic Cooperation Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, held in Cairo, Egypt, reaffirmed that Jerusalem remains central to the Palestinian question and any viable peace process. Consistent with its outcome, Namibia reiterates that East Jerusalem is an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The status of Jerusalem cannot be determined through unilateral measures or *faits accomplis* on the ground, but through justice, dialogue and steadfast commitment to the rules-based international order, including the right to self-determination. The international momentum for Palestinian statehood has never been clearer today. And today, the State of Palestine is recognized by a record number of countries, reflecting the international community's growing acknowledgement that Palestinian statehood is legitimate, necessary and overdue. Namibia therefore calls on the Council to shoulder its responsibility by reflecting the overwhelming international consensus. The credibility of the Council is being tested. Selective norms, persistent inaction to stop genocide and atrocity crimes in the Gaza Strip and war crimes in the West Bank and the failure to enforce its own resolutions erode multilateralism. Namibia urges the Council to act with consistency and courage. We remain firmly committed to contributing to restoring peace and hope for the Palestinian people and a region that has endured too much, for too long.

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

Mr. Al Faily (Iraq): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in my capacity as Acting Chair of the group.

At the outset, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for convening this quarterly open debate and for the comprehensive briefing provided to the Council.

The Palestinian people have continued to suffer untold hardship and tragedy in Gaza and elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in flagrant violation of international law, including international humanitarian law. Israel continues to attack children and families and damage civilian infrastructure, dwellings, schools and places of worship. It is extremely disappointing to witness that humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, violence by settlers in the West Bank and Israeli measures aimed at changing the demographic, religious and cultural character of East Jerusalem continue unabated.

More devastating are the obnoxious Israeli policies that have denied humanitarian supplies to the displaced people of Gaza and other cities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. To this end, the humanitarian operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continue to face obstruction by the Israeli authorities through illegal and punitive measures, including the demolition of the Agency's facilities in occupied Al-Quds Al-Sharif, in contravention of Israel's obligations under international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, the relevant resolutions and the International Court of Justice's advisory opinions of July 2024 and October 2025. We call for the immediate implementation of the extant peace agreement, which provides for unfettered access for the beleaguered people of the

Occupied Palestinian Territory to relief and humanitarian support. We also reiterate the roles of the various United Nations agencies, in particular UNRWA, in ensuring a coordinated humanitarian response.

The OIC group expresses grave concern at Israel's violation of the ceasefire in Gaza on an almost daily basis, while reiterating its previous call for the rigorous implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. In this regard, we hail the landmark adoption of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, which provides for the upholding of the legal obligations and the long-lasting commitments of the global community to realize a just solution through the speedy implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions on the restoration of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and the independence and sovereignty of the Palestinian State.

We urge the international community and the Security Council to uphold their responsibilities under the United Nations Charter and international law by taking concrete and effective measures to halt annexation activities, settlement expansion, forcible displacement, attacks by the Israeli occupation forces and settlers, the arbitrary arrests, torture and abuse of Palestinian prisoners and other unlawful practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Israel's unilateral violations of the historic and legal status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem. To this end, we renew our call for the Council to commence action on the implementation of its relevant resolutions, including resolutions 2803 (2025) and 2334 (2016), with the aim of transforming the ceasefire into a just and durable peace agreement aimed at bringing final closure to disputes over the restoration of the inalienable territorial rights of the Palestinian people and a definitive end to the illegal Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory.

Similarly, we reiterate our previous appeal to the Council to give effect to the global call for the admission of the State of Palestine as a full-fledged member of the United Nations on the basis of various United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution ES-10/24 of 18 September 2024, which affirmed the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and from the illegality of Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and resolution ES-10/23 of 14 May 2024 on the admission of new members to the United Nations. While Israel's continued occupation and policies have led to the deterioration of the socioeconomic conditions of the Palestinians, the ongoing withholding of Palestinian tax revenues and exploitation of Palestinian natural resources have intensified an unprecedented financial crisis. Israel must release all unlawfully withheld Palestinian tax revenues, cease the exploitation of Palestinian natural resources and provide full reparation for the damage caused by its illegal measures.

The OIC group reiterates that lasting peace in the Middle East requires Israel's complete withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Arab Golan Heights, and full compliance with resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981). We condemn Israel's incursion into Syrian territory since 8 December 2024 in violation of international law, the United Nations Charter and 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

The OIC group welcomes the trilateral framework of 26 June 2026 between Lebanon, the United States of America and Israel. The group emphasizes the imperative of Israel's full compliance with the ceasefire, the cessation of all military attacks against Lebanon, Israel's immediate complete and unconditional withdrawal from all Lebanese territory and the return of forcibly displaced Lebanese to their homes. The group further calls for the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). It further reiterates its steadfast position in support of the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of Lebanon. The group strongly condemns repeated Israeli attacks against civilians, including women,

children, journalists, medical staff and the Red Cross, and civilian infrastructure. It further condemns attacks against the Lebanese Armed Forces and State institutions, as well as the large-scale destruction and systematic demolition of Lebanese towns and villages and the establishment of so-called security zones, all of which constitute a flagrant violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

The OIC Group reaffirms its support for the Lebanese State in asserting its control and sovereignty over all Lebanese territory, including the exclusive authority of the State over decisions of war and peace, its monopoly on the possession and use of arms and the disarmament of all non-State actors, as well as advancing its reform agenda. The Group underscores the urgent need to scale up humanitarian assistance to Lebanon to address the growing needs of affected civilians, as well as to enhance support for the Lebanese Armed Forces. The Group also strongly condemns the attack on United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon personnel and premises and stresses the need to ensure accountability for all such attacks.

In conclusion, the OIC Group reiterates its call on the Security Council to support the Palestinian people in their just struggle for the recovery and exercise of their national rights, including the right to return, and the realization of the independence of the State of Palestine in the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

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

Ms. Daley Whitworth (Australia): Eight months since the adoption of resolution 2803 (2025), the humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire. Millions of Palestinians remain displaced and more than 1,100 have been killed since the October ceasefire, with thousands more injured. We must end this suffering. That is why Australia supported President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and resolution 2803 (2025), which presents the most viable route available to end the suffering in Gaza and to bring stability.

Improved humanitarian access is a fundamental part of that Plan but the suffering in Gaza continues to be exacerbated by unnecessary impediments and restrictions on humanitarian aid. These restrictions must be lifted. Border crossings must be fully opened to allow aid to flow unimpeded to those in need and United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations must be allowed to perform their vital work. Humanitarian workers must be respected and protected in line with international law and the Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel.

Australia is proud to play a role in assisting Palestinians in need, and we commend the extraordinary efforts of humanitarian organizations delivering vital services in difficult conditions. The Australian Government recently announced new support for recovery in Gaza, including \$15 million to the United Nations Horizon Fund.

A two-State solution has always been the only pathway to enduring peace and security for both Israel and Palestine. That is why Australia recognized the State of Palestine almost a year ago as part of coordinated international efforts to build momentum towards achieving this goal. Strengthened Palestinian institutions are essential to advancing a two-State solution and that is why we are working with partners to bolster the institutional foundations of Palestine, including by supporting reforms to governance and public institutions and promoting economic development. This includes a \$10 million contribution to the World Bank's Palestinian Fund for Reconstruction and Development to strengthen the Palestinian Authority's public financial management.

Australia opposes all actions that risk fuelling further violence and instability. We remain unequivocal in our condemnation of Hamas, including for its atrocities on 7

October 2023 and its ongoing acts of terror. Hamas must disarm and play no role in the governance of Palestine.

In the West Bank, Israel's expansion of illegal settlements continues to present a major obstacle to peace. It has been accompanied by unprecedented levels of settler violence. Australia recently joined partners to impose further sanctions on violent settlers and related entities for their serious human rights abuses against Palestinians. Israel must hold perpetrators of settler violence to account and must cease ongoing settlement activity. Altering the demographic composition of Palestine is unacceptable.

Achieving lasting peace also requires stability beyond Gaza and beyond the West Bank. The dire situation in Lebanon is having a serious humanitarian impact. We welcome the trilateral efforts by Lebanon, Israel and the United States to support enduring peace and stability in the region. We want to see a durable end to the conflict, Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity respected and Hizbullah disarmed in line with resolution 1701 (2006).

Australia has long called for de-escalation and an end to the Middle East conflict. The longer these wars go on, the greater the regional and global costs. We want to see negotiations between the United States and Iran continue, the ceasefire to resume and the Strait of Hormuz and other vital trade corridors in the region to be kept open.

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

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

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

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

NAM condemns in the strongest terms all illegal practices and all forms of violence, particularly Israeli military attacks and Israel's collective punishment against the Palestinian people, as grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. The killing and injuring of more than 244,600 Palestinian civilians in Gaza, the majority of whom are children and women, as well as medical personnel, humanitarian workers and journalists, is an indictment of the mandate of the United Nations Security Council. NAM demands an immediate and complete cessation of all forms of armed hostilities, violent repression and illegal Israeli policies and practices against the Palestinian people and other nations in the region.

The Members of the United Nations conferred on the Security Council the primary responsibility of the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with Articles 12 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council must uphold its mandate to maintain international peace and security and must act to implement its own resolutions as provided for in the United Nations Charter. We call on the United Nations Security Council to uphold its responsibilities and act forthwith for the full implementation of all its resolutions pertaining to the question of Palestine, including its most recent resolutions, namely 2334 (2016), 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023), 2728 (2024) and 2735 (2024), and resolution 2803 (2025), adopted following the ceasefire agreement.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the trilateral framework agreement of 26 June 2026 between Lebanon and the United States of America and Israel. The Movement emphasizes the imperative of Israel's full compliance with the ceasefire and the cessation of all military attacks against Lebanon and its immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal from all Lebanese territory, ensuring the return of forcibly displaced Lebanese to their homes. The Movement further calls for the full implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). It further reiterates its steadfast position in support of the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of Lebanon.

The Movement strongly condemns the repeated Israeli attacks against civilians, including women and children, journalists, medical staff and the Red Cross, as well as civilian infrastructure. It further condemns attacks against the Lebanese Armed Forces and State institutions, as well as the large-scale destruction and systematic demolition of Lebanese towns and villages and the establishment of so-called security zones, all of which constitute a flagrant violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

The Movement reaffirms its support for the Lebanese State in asserting its control and sovereignty over all Lebanese territory, including the exclusive authority of the State over decisions of war and peace, its monopoly on the possession and use of arms and the disarmament of all non-State actors, as well as in advancing its reform agenda. The Movement underscores the urgent need to scale up humanitarian assistance to Lebanon to address the growing needs of affected civilians, as well as to enhance support for the Lebanese Armed Forces. The Movement also strongly condemns attacks on the personnel and premises of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and stresses the need to ensure accountability for all such attacks.

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

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution arising out of the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution as a reaffirmation of the unwavering international commitment to a just and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The Movement calls for the necessary coordination and cooperation among all States to advance the Declaration's objectives to mobilize international efforts at the political, economic, financial, legal and security levels; and to foster momentum by building on national, regional and international initiatives aimed at achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace and realizing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

NAM welcomes the recognition of the State of Palestine by a majority of countries and calls on the Security Council to urgently recommend the admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations, in respect of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination as a long-overdue commitment to lasting peace in the Middle East.

To conclude, the Movement seizes this opportunity to reiterate its call for collective international efforts to uphold international law and end the historic and grave injustice against the Palestinian people. NAM member States reaffirm their

commitment to promoting a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects, including the realization of the inalienable right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and property, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and reaffirm their support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve justice and fulfil their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations, including self-determination, freedom and independence in their sovereign and independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

NAM calls on all Member States to uphold their obligations in accordance with international law, the relevant resolutions and the rulings of the International Court of Justice and to undertake tangible actions, including urgent measures of accountability, to bring an end to this prolonged and tragic injustice, end the illegal Israeli occupation and assist the Palestinian people to finally realize their rights.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): At the outset, Sri Lanka welcomes the Democratic Republic of the Congo's presidency of the Security Council and appreciates the convening of this important meeting. We also thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his comprehensive briefing. Sri Lanka associates itself with the statement delivered by Uganda on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Palestinian people continue to face intense hardship. Civilians in Gaza remain displaced and reliant on humanitarian assistance for the most basic necessities of life. Behind these familiar words are families that have lost their homes and their loved ones.

Sri Lanka calls for the full observance of the ceasefire and the implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions. Humanitarian assistance must reach all those in need safely and without obstruction. International humanitarian law must be respected. Civilians, humanitarian personnel and United Nations premises must be protected.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other United Nations agencies remain indispensable. Their ability to operate must be preserved, and they must receive the political and financial support necessary to carry out their mandates.

The recovery and reconstruction of Gaza must be an urgent priority. The Palestinian people, who have endured so much, cannot be asked to continue living among ruins.

The resolve of the Palestinian people remains strong. Two teenage sisters from Gaza were recently named regional winners of the Earth Prize after developing reusable building blocks from rubble. They plan to train other young people to do the same, so that Palestinians can take part in reconstruction rather than depend entirely on outside help. Their example speaks to the determination of the Palestinian people to reclaim their future. The international community must match that resolve with the protection and opportunity needed for recovery.

The situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, also demands the Council's attention. Settlement expansion, demolitions and violence must end. Attempts to alter the demographic character or legal status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory are incompatible with international law and undermine the prospects for peace.

International efforts must now be directed towards ending the suffering of the Palestinian people and securing a future in which they can live in dignity and shape their own destiny. Declarations and diplomatic initiatives are meaningful only when they lead to positive change in people's lives.

Sri Lanka reaffirms its support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination; for the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel in peace and security; and for Palestine's full membership in the United Nations. The path forward is well known. What remains necessary is the political will to stand with them and follow that path.

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

Mr. Garcia II (Philippines): The Philippines thanks the presidency of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for convening this quarterly open debate.

The Philippines shares the continuing deep concern of the international community over the situation in Palestine. The Philippines reaffirms its consistent and principled support for the inalienable right of self-determination of the Palestinian people and for the two-State solution. We strongly believe that the two-State solution remains the only viable path to lasting and durable peace, with Palestine and Israel coexisting side by side in peace and security. We call for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2334 (2016) and 2803 (2025), in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The Philippines emphasizes the primacy of international law, particularly international humanitarian law, in the protection of civilians and the safeguarding of vulnerable groups, including women and children. The Philippines calls on all parties to advocate for de-escalation, restraint and the resumption of meaningful dialogue to ensure the unimpeded delivery of assistance to affected populations.

The support of partners is crucial in this regard. The Philippines, together with Japan, was honoured to have hosted the fifth ministerial meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development on 22 July in Pasay City, the Philippines. Participating countries expressed deep concern over the continuing humanitarian crisis in Palestine and underscored the role of the Conference to promote effective technical cooperation and humanitarian assistance to the people of Palestine, including through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The Philippines recognizes the critical role of UNRWA in delivering essential and life-saving services, especially to those most in need, including primary healthcare and education. The Philippines will continue to work with the international community and partners to build a secure, peaceful and prosperous future that every Palestinian family deserves.

We express serious concern about the rapidly evolving situation across the Middle East, including in Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen. We are deeply concerned that the developments severely undermine ongoing mediation efforts and diminish the prospects for a peaceful resolution through dialogue.

We reaffirm the importance of maintaining maritime safety and security and upholding freedom of navigation in and overflight above straits used for international navigation, in accordance with international law, in particular the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Philippines calls for the restoration of the safe, unimpeded and continuous transit passage of vessels and aircraft in the Strait of

Hormuz, as well as for all parties to ensure the safety of seafarers and ships in accordance with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea.

We recognize the immediate and long-term effects of the Middle East crisis on the well-being of our people and on regional trade, energy and food security, including energy markets and global supply chains.

In conclusion, the Philippines calls on the Security Council, together with the United Nations and regional partners, to reinforce its efforts to support mediation, dialogue and confidence-building that reduce tensions, prevent escalation and create lasting conditions for peace.

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

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): I congratulate you, Madam President, on your able presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. I also thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov for his valuable presentation.

When the ceasefire was announced in October 2025, the Palestinian people, the international community and indeed humanity itself hoped that it would mark the beginning of relief in Gaza. Yet today, that hope has given way to an even darker reality.

Nearly 10 months have elapsed since the ceasefire entered into effect, and Israeli violations and attacks have not ceased for a single day. As a result, more than 1,200 Palestinians have been killed and several thousand more injured.

We are equally alarmed by reports that Israel — the occupying Power in Gaza, the Palestinian territory — is now constructing an earthen barrier along the so-called yellow line, further exacerbating Gaza's fragmentation while continuing to destroy and depopulate areas under occupation. Meanwhile, the West Bank has become a scene of relentless violence. Brutal military operations have driven mass displacement from refugee camps, while the killing of Palestinian civilians, in particular women and children, continues unabated. Settler violence, illegal settlement expansion, Palestinian home demolitions and land confiscation continue to accelerate the systematic erosion of the Palestinian presence in the territory.

Against this grim backdrop, I would like to highlight the following points.

First, these atrocities are the direct consequence of prolonged impunity — yes, impunity. Israel's systematic annihilation of the Palestinian people, their land and their means of existence has been allowed to continue without accountability. As long as impunity prevails, such violations of international humanitarian law and Security Council resolutions will persist unchecked.

Secondly, the Security Council must fully assume its responsibilities. It must ensure full respect for the terms of the ceasefire. It must guarantee the protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel. It must secure unhindered humanitarian access to Palestinian civilians, and it must finally create the conditions for the immediate reconstruction of Gaza for Palestinians, not for foreigners.

Thirdly, Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Territories remain in clear violation of international law, as reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice in July 2024, and resolution 2334 (2016), the implementation of which can no longer be postponed.

The Palestinian people continue to demonstrate extraordinary resilience in the face of unimaginable suffering. Their endurance reminds us that peace cannot be built under any occupation, injustice or collective punishment. Peace requires justice; justice requires accountability; and accountability requires action — action by the Security Council itself.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm Algeria's unwavering support for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and for the establishment of their sovereign and independent State, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

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

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): Gaza has become the graveyard of the Council's promises. For nearly three years, Israel has carried out a genocide in full view of the world. Every delayed decision has given that genocide more time. Every unenforced resolution has given Israel greater impunity. The ceasefire announced in October 2025 did not end Palestinian suffering. Across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, settlement expansion, demolition, land seizure and settler violence are driving forced displacement and de facto annexation. Israel's impunity is not confined to Gaza. Its attacks, illegal occupation and repeated violations across Palestine, Lebanon and Syria are destabilizing the region.

The Council must take three steps: set deadlines, verify compliance and impose consequences.

When it comes to Palestine, the Council must demand an immediate end to attacks on civilians, settlement expansion, demolitions, forced displacement and restrictions on humanitarian access. It should require regular reporting on Israel's compliance. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) must be protected. The sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the historic and legal status quo of the holy sites must be respected.

With respect to Lebanon, the Council should require Israel to end its attacks and withdraw from all Lebanese territory immediately. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon should verify that withdrawal, and the Secretary-General should report to the Council before the mission ceases its operations. Israel must respect Lebanon's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006).

As regards Syria, Israel must end its occupation of the Syrian Golan. The Council should require the immediate removal of Israeli forces, positions and roadblocks from the area of separation and ensure that the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force can verify compliance with the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. The Maldives reaffirms its commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria and supports a Syrian-owned, Syrian-led political process, as outlined in resolution 2254 (2015).

Non-compliance must have consequences. The Council should impose targeted sanctions on individuals and entities responsible for obstructing humanitarian aid, attacking civilians or United Nations personnel and expanding illegal settlements. The Maldives reiterates its call for an arms embargo against Israel. Member States must stop supplying weapons used to sustain occupation and attacks across the region. These measures must advance a political outcome: the recognition of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Palestine must be admitted as a full member of the United Nations.

Palestinians do not need another description of their suffering. They need deadlines, verifications and consequences for the perpetrators. Genocide must end. Occupation must end, and Palestine must be free. The Maldives will stand with Palestine until justice is secured, its sovereignty is restored and its people live in freedom on their own land.

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

Mr. Mythen (Ireland): I thank the Democratic Republic of the Congo for convening this important meeting.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Ireland remains deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. Nine months since the ceasefire agreement was announced, the people of Gaza still urgently need to see a real improvement in their daily lives. We — all of us — must apply more pressure on Israel to uphold its obligation under international humanitarian law and remove restrictions on aid access and facilitate essential supplies and services so that they reach people unimpeded throughout the Gaza Strip. This obligation was confirmed by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 22 October 2025, and it is simply not tenable for Israel to assert dual-use labelling to block the entry of basic humanitarian equipment.

Ireland is deeply concerned that Israel continues to increase the area of Gaza that it occupies, unilaterally moving demarcation of the so-called yellow line and further displacing Palestinians from their homes. All parties must honour their commitments under the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. In this regard, we continue to call for the permanent disarmament of Hamas and other non-State armed groups and the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip. We urge Israel to open all crossing points and facilitate freedom of movement for Palestinians into, and out of, the Strip. We further condemn the continuing Israeli policy of restricting access for foreign journalists to visit Gaza and to report on the situation there independently.

Ireland reiterates its unwavering support and strong appreciation for the continued efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to support Palestine refugees. We regret that UNRWA continues to face political and financial pressures to its operations, including the impacts of Israeli legislation on its operations in Palestine.

Ireland is alarmed by the increasing extremist settler violence in the West Bank, which continues within an environment of impunity. Accountability for such violence is imperative, and the West Bank must be a central part of efforts to reach agreement on a durable and sustainable peace through implementation of the two-State solution.

We are deeply concerned at the continuing conflict in the Gulf region and its devastating humanitarian, economic and political impacts. All sides there are obliged to uphold international law, including international humanitarian law. We call on the parties to the conflict to engage meaningfully and in good faith and to return to the negotiations provided for in the Memorandum of Understanding, which they agreed in mid-June. There is no military solution to this conflict. A durable peace can be achieved only through dialogue and diplomacy.

We welcome last month's trilateral agreement between Israel, Lebanon and the United States. We hope that the full implementation of this agreement builds momentum for the disarmament of Hizbullah, the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops and the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces in support of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the establishment of a lasting peace. The people of Lebanon have experienced conflict and interference from outside the country for far too long.

We commend the Syrian authorities for their continued efforts to achieve a positive transition. The international community must support Syria to overcome remaining key risks, including internal violence, external interference and occupation of its territory and the need for transitional justice and accountability.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Nkosi (South Africa): South Africa thanks the Democratic Republic of the Congo for convening this quarterly open debate on the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, providing all United Nations Member States with an opportunity to address the Council on a matter that lies at the core of resolving instability and insecurity in the region.

We welcome the pause in military strikes between the United States and Iran, following breaches of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, which was signed in June. This paves the way for renewed diplomatic efforts aimed at finding a peaceful and durable solution to the ongoing conflict. Resolving the Strait of Hormuz crisis is vital for the global economy as this is one of the strategic choke points for the global supply of oil and international trade. The ongoing disruption has introduced volatility in global oil prices, caused inflation and is pushing millions into poverty. South Africa thus calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities, de-escalation and a return to diplomacy through the Oman-mediated process and the Islamabad framework agreement.

We cannot discuss instability in the Middle East while ignoring its root cause: the continued occupation and unresolved Palestinian question. The credibility of the international rules-based system cannot be selective. The Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits closure of an international strait, also prohibits annexation, collective punishment and attacks on United Nations premises. South Africa reiterates its call for Israel to fully respect the Gaza ceasefire agreement. Despite the ceasefire, hostilities in Gaza have continued, and the humanitarian situation remains dire. In this regard, it has been reported that according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire was announced on 10 October 2025. Nearly all of Gaza's 2.1 million people remain displaced and are being compressed into increasingly limited spaces by repeated expansions of the territory held by Israel. Moreover, Israeli forces reportedly issued maps showing that they controlled 64 per cent of the territory, having advanced past the initial yellow line demarcating approximately 50 per cent of Gaza's territory.

The continued targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, hospitals, schools and United Nations shelters is a violation of the fourth Geneva Convention. Collective punishment of a protected people cannot be justified, including the political campaign seeking to undermine the credibility and operational mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). This must stop. UNRWA plays a crucial role in delivering humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees. South Africa reaffirms its full support for UNRWA's indispensable role in providing life-saving humanitarian assistance and human development services. UNRWA is not an optional actor. It is a lifeline for millions of Palestinian refugees.

In conclusion, South Africa reaffirms its commitment to peace in the Middle East and stands ready to share its experiences in peacebuilding, transitional justice and reconciliation, and indeed is willing to assist in nation-building efforts. We believe that any path towards alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian people cannot be complete without ensuring their legitimate right to self-determination, including the right of return and the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian State, along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.