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Eighty-first year

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Mukongo/Mrs. Kabengele Lukundula	(Democratic Republic of the Congo)
<i>Members:</i>	Bahrain	Mr. Alrowaiei
	China	Mr. Sun Lei
	Colombia	Mrs. Zalabata Torres
	Denmark	Ms. Lassen
	France	Mr. Bonnafont
	Greece.....	Mr. Stamatekos
	Latvia.....	Ms. Pavļuta-Deslandes
	Liberia	Mr. Brown II
	Pakistan.....	Mr. Ahmad
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Somalia	Mr. Mohamed Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.....	Ms. Foster
	United States of America.....	Ms. Bruce

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Algeria, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Cuba, Egypt, Iceland, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

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

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Coly Seck, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; Mrs. Nasria Elardja Flitti, Chargé d'affaires a.i., Permanent Observer Mission of the League of Arab States; and Mr. Quentin Weiler, from the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Alakbarov.

Mr. Alakbarov: I am briefing the Council today as the situation in the West Bank is rapidly deteriorating, as we have witnessed in the last few days. This is compounding the already alarming conditions across the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with a wider escalation increasingly likely unless immediate steps are taken to reverse course.

Let me also state at the beginning that the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and Security Council resolution 2803 (2025) must be implemented in full. This includes the disarmament of Hamas and all armed groups, the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from Gaza, the deployment of the International Stabilization Force (ISF), and the transfer of governance responsibilities to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG).

Earlier this month, I visited Gaza to assess humanitarian conditions and progress towards early recovery. The situation in Gaza has improved somewhat, but progress is far too slow. Recent weeks have seen some welcome progress in clearing solid waste from key areas and coordinating the entry of desperately needed sanitation equipment and supplies. I would like to recognize the facilitation by the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories in this regard.

These are positive steps, but they remain highly insufficient in the face of the immense needs on the ground. During my recent visit, I witnessed immense hardship amid continued displacement, overcrowded living conditions, widespread destruction and nearly daily casualties caused by ongoing Israeli military operations. Yet I also saw Palestinians in Gaza taking courageous steps against all odds to start rebuilding their lives.

Health workers continue treating patients and rehabilitating clinics in extraordinarily difficult conditions. Community organizations are helping displaced families access shelter, education and health services. Local actors are attempting to restore basic services in coordination with United Nations agencies and other humanitarian partners. At every stop of my visit, I met people determined to improve the lives of their families and communities. Their resilience is inspiring and provides a real glimmer of hope for what the future could hold.

I need to repeat my message to the Council that human dignity should not be conditional. The space for recovery has so far been denied. Community resilience cannot substitute for the required supply of materials at scale, including those Israel considers dual-use, or for the political will to set Gaza on the path to a genuine recovery.

As we have learned from the announcement earlier, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report released last week showed improvements in food security and nutrition in Gaza. But the situation remains highly fragile, and most families across the Strip are still relying on humanitarian assistance as their only lifeline. With winter approaching, the window to provide an effective response to pressing shelter needs is closing fast.

At the same time, the increase in Israeli airstrikes and the expansion of territory under Israeli military control continue to increase pressure on the population in Gaza, who are now confined to approximately one third of the Strip. Gaza remains a dangerous place for the United Nations to operate and deliver in, and I reiterate that, under international humanitarian law, all parties must respect and protect civilians, humanitarian personnel and facilities, and relief supplies and refrain from actions that obstruct humanitarian operations.

Humanitarian assistance on its own cannot put Gaza on a sustainable track. As we work to increase the availability of aid, we must accelerate the transition to early recovery by restoring livelihoods, rehabilitating essential infrastructure, providing dignified shelter and supporting Palestinian institutions capable of leading recovery and reconstruction. The framework for doing so is clear and has been endorsed by the Council in resolution 2803 (2025). It must be implemented without any delay.

This will require the parties to fulfil their commitments and enhanced coordination between all stakeholders, including between the Palestinian Authority and NCAG. In this regard, I take note of the steps taken by the Israeli authorities on 26 July to enable the deployment of the ISF to Gaza. These efforts must be guided by the political goal of reunifying the West Bank and Gaza under a single, legitimate, sovereign Palestinian Government, ending the unlawful occupation and restoring a political process towards a viable two-State solution. Israel's legitimate security concerns must be addressed.

I am encouraged by the ongoing meeting of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution in Rome and the second meeting of the Palestine Donor Group convened in Brussels on 13 July, in which I participated with United Nations colleagues. The meeting, co-chaired by the European Union and the Palestinian Authority, demonstrated broad international consensus on the need for close coordination in the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025).

Building a viable future for Gaza will not be possible if the Palestinian Authority is pushed to the brink of collapse, or if the current dangerous dynamics in the West Bank are left unchecked.

In the past week, the escalating violence in the West Bank has resulted in civilian casualties, displacement, damage to property and growing insecurity across affected communities. Israeli settler attacks against Palestinian communities, homes, places of worship and civilian infrastructure have persisted at alarming levels. Attacks by Palestinians targeting Israelis have also resulted in civilian casualties as well as damage to property.

On 23 July, two Palestinians, including a child, were killed in confrontations with Israeli settlers following a fire on agricultural land south-east of Nablus. The following day, violent incidents in Palestinian communities south-west of Nablus resulted in the killing of four Palestinians and two Israelis, injuries to several others and extensive damage to Palestinian property.

I urge Israel to take immediate and effective measures to prevent settler violence, protect Palestinian communities and ensure that all perpetrators are held accountable. Palestinians must unequivocally reject violence and incitement and take all necessary measures to prevent attacks against Israelis.

Israeli military operations, demolitions and displacement of Palestinians also continued, while Israeli authorities imposed further movement restrictions and accelerated settlement expansion efforts. On 14 July, Finance Minister Smotrich announced that the Israeli Security Cabinet had allocated 1.3 billion shekels towards the placement of temporary housing units in dozens of new settlements throughout the West Bank, prior to the approval of formal Israeli plans for those settlements. He later announced the approval for the establishment of a new settlement in the northern West Bank, where Israel had previously evacuated settlers as part of the 2005 disengagement plan.

I reiterate that all settlements are illegal under international law. I call upon all parties to take urgent steps to reverse the dangerous trajectory in the West Bank. I am deeply concerned about the repeated unauthorized entry of Israeli forces and officials into the Kalandia Training Centre of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in East Jerusalem yesterday while classes were in session. United Nations premises are inviolable and have immunity from any form of interference.

The Palestinian Authority's fiscal situation remains critical as Israel continues to withhold Palestinian clearance revenues. The Palestinian Authority is currently unable to deliver many critical public services, including education and health services or pay full salaries to its civil personnel. Preserving viable correspondent banking arrangements is essential to maintain Palestinian financial stability and economic activity. I welcome recent steps by the Israeli authorities to facilitate the extension of these arrangements. However, Israeli correspondent banks have indicated that they intend to terminate banking arrangements in the coming months. I urge continued engagement by all parties to avoid further deterioration, which could be disastrous.

On 9 July, Palestinian President Abbas issued a decree setting the date for the next Palestinian legislative elections across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza on 28 November. I welcome this announcement and reiterate that an inclusive and credible electoral process would represent an important step towards strengthening governance and responding to the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

I encourage all stakeholders to work towards creating the conditions necessary for these elections to take place, including the participation of all eligible Palestinian voters. The United Nations stands ready to support Palestinian efforts in this regard, in coordination with the Central Elections Commission.

This conflict continues to unfold amid wider regional tensions that impact levels of funding, the viability of supply lines as well as security and political dimensions, highlighting the urgent need for de-escalation and sustained efforts to promote just and durable regional peace and stability.

The trilateral framework between the United States, the State of Israel and the Republic of Lebanon, announced on 26 June, constitutes a milestone in efforts to end decades of conflict and advance lasting stability. I welcome the launch of the pilot zone operations and encourage Lebanon and Israel to fulfil their obligations and advance the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

The determination and resourcefulness I witnessed during my recent visit to Gaza must be matched by sustained and coordinated international engagement. There were positive signs of this commitment and mobilization at the recent gathering in Brussels. We must now carry this momentum forward. Resolution 2803 (2025) and its transitional arrangements must be implemented in full. Concurrently, urgent steps must be taken to reverse the rapid deterioration in the West Bank, support the Palestinian Authority and lay the groundwork for its return to governing Gaza. A coordinated approach is needed to ensure that these efforts are mutually reinforcing.

Ultimately, Gaza's reconstruction cannot be sustained in the absence of a political process. Similarly, a political process cannot succeed while Gaza remains devastated, violence escalates in the West Bank, Palestinian institutions remain divided, and security conditions continue to deteriorate. I urge the Council to use its voice and authority to ensure that its resolutions are translated into meaningful actions on the ground. The United Nations will continue to engage with all stakeholders and harness its operational capacity on the ground to advance this agenda and support a better future for Palestinians and Israelis.

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

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

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate at this critical time. Let me thank Mr. Alakbarov for his briefing and his efforts.

Palestinians continue to be killed on a daily basis in bombardments in Gaza and in attacks by settlers and occupation forces in the West Bank. They are killed as they sleep, as they tend to their groves, as they head to school and as they sit in their homes. They are killed as if their lives never mattered, as if they were expendable. And they will continue to be killed until those killing them are held accountable.

Those who storm Palestinian towns, villages, homes and lives, holding weapons and aiming them at Palestinians, want to hold our people responsible for the deaths that ensue — the deaths of Palestinians and of those attacking them, who should not have been there in the first place.

As if that were not enough, the Israeli Prime Minister's conclusion is that the answer is more colonization, more dispossession, more displacement and more violence. At a time when the situation in Gaza requires the full attention of the international community to stop the bloodshed, address the tremendous human suffering of our people and implement Council resolutions, as we have heard today,

Israel is seeking escalation in the West Bank, whether to justify further repression to facilitate annexation and displacement or for electoral purposes. Yes, confronted with the prospect of losing the upcoming election, Netanyahu is seeking electoral gains from the blood of Palestinians and even Israelis. This requires a strong international response before it is too late, as impunity is the reason for the persistence and escalation of these crimes.

For years now, we have warned of settler violence with the backing of Israeli occupation forces as an integral part of the Israeli strategy to annex maximum Palestinian land with minimum Palestinians. Some measures were taken, but they were in no way commensurate with the threat that this terror represents to hundreds of Palestinian communities. Israeli officials pay some lip service when the actions are too outrageous, while continuing to create the conditions for their commission. Nothing was done by Israel to stop this violence; on the contrary, everything was done to fuel it. It is therefore the Israeli Government that must be considered responsible for it, on a par with the settlers who committed it with the support of the Israeli occupation forces.

For those trying to disseminate fake news and alternative realities, there are numerous videos online of settler attacks across the West Bank, from those armed with automatic weapons to adolescents beating people with sticks and others setting fire to houses and property. There are videos of them doing all this while shouting insults and racist slurs and chanting "Death to Arabs. Death to Arabs". The videos of the attack by Israeli settlers in Tal village show the settlers surrounding unarmed Palestinian civilians, holding them at gunpoint and threatening to shoot them. Tal village is south of Nablus, as was indicated by Mr. Alakbarov. Such threats have been followed by action too many times to be taken lightly. The tales about hikers wandering around in the hills are ridiculous. The settlers came with one objective in mind: to terrorize the population to uproot it. There has been one provocation after another, one murder after another.

Our people are entitled to international protection. I repeat: our people are entitled to international protection in the face of these repeated assaults, especially when asked not to respond to violence with violence, even in self-defence. When the occupying Power, which is responsible for providing protection for the civilian population under occupation in accordance with international humanitarian law, abdicates its responsibility, it is therefore the responsibility of the international community to provide our people with protection.

The Council and the General Assembly have adopted resolutions calling for such protection, but it is nowhere to be found. Israeli settlers must be disarmed — I repeat, must be disarmed — as the Council resolutions state, to stop them from terrorizing our people. Action is needed. They need to be disarmed. And Israeli settlers and occupation forces have to leave our land and leave us alone. We do not want to see anyone killed. We want our people to live in freedom and dignity on our land. We want the occupation to end and peace to prevail.

Jerusalem has a diverse and rich history that has been preserved over centuries thanks to respect for the historical status quo. The images of Israeli extremists, officials, soldiers and settlers storming Haram al-Sharif are the definition of provocation and incitement, fuelling dangerous tensions. This is an integral part of a scorched-earth policy aiming to inflame tensions in the hope that the fire can be instrumentalized — a short-sighted and irresponsible approach.

The resolutions of the Council are unequivocal in opposing annexation and forcible displacement. So why are they still ongoing? There are upcoming elections in Palestine and in Israel. What signal will the international community send? We

have, on one side, a Palestinian Government committed to non-violence and peace and, on the other side, an Israeli Government unleashing brutal violence and committed to annexation.

That question can only be resolved with strong international mobilization. To uphold international law, empower those seeking peace and restrain those who seek to destroy any such prospect — let me repeat — to uphold international law, empower those seeking peace and restrain those who seek to destroy any such prospect, there is nothing to wait for and everything to act for, to show that we are not doomed to repeat history over and over again and that a different path is possible.

The Council has responsibilities. States have obligations. They can ensure that the parties uphold theirs and that any incoming Government understand that Palestinian land is not up for grabs; Palestinian lives are not expendable; Palestinian rights have to be recognized and respected; violence is a dead end — a cycle that will consume everything around it; the time for peace is right now, with no more delays or excuses; and no one is entitled to negate or destroy the other. Many lives would have been saved had this been done a long time ago. Many lives hang in the balance today. There can be no more delays, no more excuses.

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

Mr. Danon (Israel): I would like to thank Mr. Alakbarov for his briefing.

It has been more than eight months since the Council adopted resolution 2803 (2025). It established a path forward for Gaza. The Board of Peace was created to set the stage for new, non-radical leadership. Countries have contributed to the International Stabilization Force. Aid is getting in at levels not seen since 2023.

But while Israel upholds its end of the deal, the main problem remains: Hamas has refused to disarm. But Hamas does not feel any pressure, because the United Nations and the Council refuse to call them out, weaken them or pressure them. I quote Mr. Mladenov, High Representative for Gaza of the Board of Peace: “Every week without agreement is paid for by the population of Gaza, not by those refusing to agree to it.” While the Council has failed to pressure Hamas to accept the Board of Peace road map, the people of Gaza suffer — not only that, but the Council still refuses to designate Hamas as a terrorist organization.

This month, we saw these problems in practice. The United Nations released a statement. It implied that Hamas had stormed a food distribution point in Jabaliya and assaulted two truck drivers at a World Food Programme warehouse. The statement described, “an increasingly dangerous pattern of intimidation, violence and obstruction”. Good morning, United Nations — this is what we have been saying for years. But this statement was missing something.

The statement mentions “armed personnel”. It mentions “de facto authorities”. It says that this group is placing humanitarian workers at risk and disrupting the delivery of life-saving assistance. I looked very carefully. I searched paragraph by paragraph for the name of this group. I could not find it. The statement is missing Hamas. It is not mentioned even once. I asked myself: why? Why can the United Nations not call Hamas by name? Is the Secretary-General telling it not to do that? Is the United Nations afraid, afraid to say “Hamas”, afraid of the Governments that fund Hamas terrorism?

This failure to call terrorists out by name and designate them must end now. For years, we have talked about Hamas’s efforts to sabotage, prevent and block humanitarian aid. But, instead of taking action, the Council has wasted its time repeating Hamas propaganda: that Israel limits aid and starves civilians, that Israel

closes border crossings and that Israel does not comply with resolution 2803 (2025) or phase one of the 20-point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict.

Just take a look at the new Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report, which examines the nutritional situation in Gaza. The report documents humanitarian improvements. Food insecurity is decreasing in every part of the Strip. However, we still have reservations about the report. Unfortunately, the report must repeat Hamas propaganda. It must reach the same alarmist conclusion that there is a food crisis in Gaza. The report claims that the aid getting into Gaza is not enough, but that is not true. It is a lie because the projections are based on a flawed reporting process, incomplete sources of information and anti-Israel bias.

This month, an Israeli report showed that the humanitarian situation in Gaza is stable. More than 600 aid trucks are entering Gaza per day, not 100, as the IPC report says, and have delivered more than 1.8 million tons of food since the ceasefire began. That is more than the World Food Programme's benchmark of 80,000 tons per month.

We can argue about which report is more accurate, but the most reliable indicator that food security is improving is that food prices have decreased by more than 70 per cent. No one can argue with that. That means that more families can access and purchase food at reasonable prices.

The medical situation is improving as well. A total of 18,000 tons of medicine and medical equipment have entered Gaza since the ceasefire began, and hospital capacity has been up by 50 per cent since September 2025.

Israel is making progress not only on aid. On Sunday, the Israeli security cabinet approved the initial entry of the International Stabilization Force into Gaza so that we can start a pilot reconstruction project in Rafah, creating a humanitarian zone without Hamas control.

Despite the complicated situation, Israel has been facilitating humanitarian assistance into Gaza. I am sure that, as happens every month, we will hear remarks today regarding the entry of dual-use items into Gaza, which can be used for humanitarian purposes or terrorist activities. We know what happens when those dual-use items get into Hamas's hands.

Look at this picture. Hamas posted the video. Council members can find it online. This is an image from that video. One can see Hamas terrorists digging up water pipes and turning them into rockets. Hamas actually posted that video showing its members taking water pipes and actually transforming them into rockets. Still, many Council members call on Israel to let all those items in, without understanding the consequences or the reality on the ground.

Our policy was not designed to make things harder for the people of Gaza. It is designed to prevent Hamas from rearming. We work with the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to find alternatives, and we make exceptions where necessary. However, as long as Hamas is in Gaza, there will be restrictions. Let us admit it: with Hamas in power, there is no future for Gaza.

I now speak directly to Hamas: the ball is in your court. Either you disarm and gives up power voluntarily, or Israel will do what is necessary.

If we needed a reminder of Hamas's intentions, we received one this month when Hamas elected Khalil al-Hayya as its next chairman. It elected one of the architects of 7 October 2023 as its new leader. He is an arch-terrorist. Do Council members remember him? He was in Doha on 7 October, front and centre in a video with Ismail Haniyeh, the former chairman of Hamas. He watched the terrorists invade Israel and kill innocent civilians. He was proud of it. He celebrated it. He cheered

them on. After he was elected, the Vice-President of the moderate Palestinian Authority called to congratulate him.

Look at what happened on Friday. A terrorist in Samaria killed two Israelis and injured three more. They murdered Benayahu Mellet, a 32-year-old agriculture director, and Major Yuval Ezra, a 27-year-old Israel Defense Forces commander. Hamas not only praised the attack but also called for more violence.

Let us examine the irony in the Security Council. Look at the list of countries that will speak today in front of you, Mr. President. Some of those countries are hosting Hamas— both its military and political leadership — as we speak. They are facilitating its banking infrastructure and giving it the oxygen that it needs to survive. Today, they will come here, sit here and call for a new future for Gaza. But, at the same time, they embolden the terrorist organization that holds the people of Gaza hostage.

Maybe you, Mr. President, should ask them, when the representatives of Türkiye and Qatar sit here later today, whether they allow Hamas's banking to function in their countries and whether they allow transfers to banks elsewhere in the world, before they tell us what should happen in Gaza.

While Israel is fighting terrorism at home, New York is becoming the latest battlefield. Last week, Mayor Mamdani accused our Prime Minister of being a war criminal and our nation of committing genocide. Hours later, as a Jewish man walked out of his synagogue on the Upper West Side, he was stabbed by a radical, who yelled "Allahu Akbar".

When the Mayor of New York City uses his microphone to demonize Israel, terrorists with weapons get the message. Some attack with guns, some attack with screwdrivers and some attack with lies. It is all the same, because it all leads to the same result: violence against Jews.

Israel understands the challenges faced by a democracy fighting terrorism. Israel knows what it has to do if Hamas does not disarm. The question is: what will the Security Council do? The Council should also take action. It should designate Hamas as a terrorist organization and sanction it so that it cannot fund its crimes. The Council should not be afraid to use those tools, but until now it has failed to fulfil its responsibilities. And this is not just with Hamas. The Council has not designated the Houthis, Hizbullah or the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as terrorist organizations. The Council must designate them now. The Council has the responsibility and the authority to do so.

To conclude, Israel has set out a realistic path forward. We know what is going on in Gaza. Hamas is refusing to disarm. It is refusing to comply with the Board of Peace and implement resolution 2803 (2025). Hamas continues to choose smuggling over aid, violence over progress and terror over peace. But now Hamas has lost the chance to choose because they have shown the world that they do not want to change. Israel will ensure that Hamas will be disarmed. Israel will not wait forever. We understand that if we do not disarm Hamas, no one else will. It is our responsibility to ensure that Hamas can never again threaten the people of Israel, and we will fulfil that responsibility. Now the Council has its work cut out for itself. It is time for action. Designate Hamas, sanction Hamas and prevent Hamas terrorism once and for all.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Bruce (United States of America): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for sharing his views.

Earlier this month, representatives from the Board of Peace and the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG) met in Cyprus. We thank Cyprus for hosting this meeting, which showcased how our partners will continue to move ahead with President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, as endorsed in resolution 2803 (2025). The United States will continue to support the Board of Peace and the NCAG as they work towards a Gaza that offers prosperity, security and dignity for all of the people in Gaza. The discussion in Cyprus included in-depth planning for the transition to the new NCAG-led governance structure in Gaza, which is urgently needed and will be possible as soon as Hamas decides to put down its arms, to which it committed when it agreed to the peace plan. We welcome the pledges from several European countries launching the Team Gaza Initiative — a total of nearly \$1 billion in early recovery money for Gaza. These projects must be carried out in close coordination with the NCAG and the Board of Peace. Uncoordinated efforts will undermine the NCAG's credibility and bolster Hamas. Detractors may say that it cannot be done, but they are wrong. We know we will succeed, united by our confidence and determination to create a new future for the people of Gaza with the support of those who believe in the promise of resolution 2803 (2025).

Right now, three very different futures are possible. In one future, which becomes more likely if Hamas fails to disarm, war returns to Gaza. In another, the international community turns a blind eye, as it has done far too many times already. That would allow Hamas to hold the Palestinian people in Gaza hostage for years to come, threatening the security of Israel and the entire Middle East and guaranteeing that a stunted, aid-dependent way of life remained the only option for people in Gaza. Neither of these futures is acceptable. With their commitment to action, our partners in the region and in Europe are opening the door to the third and transformative option. That door is the Plan put forward by President Trump, implemented through the Board of Peace and the NCAG, permitting clear-eyed Palestinians from Gaza, determined to break the vicious cycle of the past, to move forward into the brightest possible future. Hamas has proven by its actions that it will do everything it can to retain power. Members of Hamas hope that we, the supporters of that bright future, the international community, will give up and turn a blind eye. I am here to say: we will not.

That is why the Board of Peace is moving forward with pilot programmes in the areas it can, beginning in southern Gaza, despite Hamas's continued intransigence and refusal to put the people in Gaza first. We thank our Israeli partners for their assistance in getting these pilot programmes off the ground. These projects will move forward and will demonstrate what all of Gaza can be as soon as Hamas decides to uphold its commitments to the peace plan. And we have seen other welcome developments in the past few days. Morocco officially signed up as a troop contributor to the International Stabilization Force (ISF) on 15 July, the first country to do so. We applaud and congratulate Morocco for achieving that distinction. Others will soon follow suit, and the ISF will be prepared to provide security for the pilot projects and other areas as we move forward with the implementation of the next phase of the peace plan.

Another welcome development has been the unprecedented exposure of the truth about Hamas. On 12 July, the United Nations put out a statement that laid plain what we have known for years: Hamas continues to obstruct and exploit humanitarian operations in Gaza. They continually put the lives of aid workers in danger. They raided a World Food Programme warehouse and assaulted the truck drivers there. As Mr. Alakbarov said in his statement, "these incidents are not isolated." They are a pattern. And although this welcome acknowledgement of reality comes late in the game, as we say, better late than never.

We all know the facts. Hamas has no place in Gaza. The people in Gaza know this. They have been intimidated into submission, but that will not last forever. We also know that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East has no place in Gaza. We have been clear about that as well. Hamas cannot play any role in the future of Gaza because of what it stands for: not for the people in Gaza, but as a proxy for the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Iran's ties to Hamas are the reason Hamas will not disarm. Iran wants to keep the Palestinian people hostage to Hamas. We cannot and will not let them.

Iran also wants to keep Hizbullah in business in Lebanon. We will not allow that either. Durable peace requires that sovereign Governments, not terrorist proxies, exercise full control over their territory. The historic talks between the Governments of Israel and Lebanon, enabled by President Trump's leadership, will contribute to that goal. Building on the historic trilateral framework, signed on 26 June, we look forward to continued negotiations as we look to restore peace and stability in the region.

For decades, Iran kept the Syrian people under the thumb of the brutal Al-Assad family. That is over now, too. The United States will continue to support Syria's transition, including by working with the Syrian Government to bolster its efforts to counter terrorism and drug trafficking, eliminate the remnants of chemical weapons, hold perpetrators of atrocities accountable and secure investment and assistance for the benefit of the Syrian people. The United States is committed to lasting peace in Syria, both internally and with its neighbours. Special Presidential Envoy for Iraq and Syria Tom Barrack continues to support engagement among groups within Syria and between Syria and Israel that could advance peace and stability throughout the entire region.

And in Yemen, where the Yemeni people have suffered for far too long, the Houthis have once again demonstrated that they are doing little more than acting on behalf of Iran. The Houthis are attempting to hold the world hostage in the Bab al-Mandab, just as the IRGC has done for weeks now in the Strait of Hormuz. To meet the political and security challenges throughout the Middle East, we must recognize a simple truth. Throughout the region, many conflicts are fuelled by a single actor, the Islamic Republic of Iran, with political and financial support from certain members of the Security Council. The United States once again condemns in the strongest possible terms Iran's outrageous and unacceptable attacks against neighbouring countries.

The Council must ensure that dialogue produces action. The United States remains committed to practical diplomacy that reduces conflicts, protects civilians, strengthens legitimate institutions and advances a more stable and peaceful Middle East. We urge all United Nations Member States to join us in working towards that goal.

Mr. Bonnafont (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking the Deputy Special Coordinator, Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, for his briefing. We listened with the utmost attention to the very important statements by the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine and the Permanent Representative of Israel.

Our debate cannot ignore the reality of the region as a whole. Indeed, in the Middle East, the sound of weapons still echoes, displacement continues, and terrorism has not been contained. Civilians remain the primary victims of the military escalation.

The resumption of hostilities in the Persian Gulf undermines the diplomatic progress achieved through the signing of the Islamabad Memorandum of

Understanding between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran and threatens regional security.

France condemns Iran's indiscriminate strikes against countries in the region and its attacks on vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. Navigation through that maritime route must remain safe and free, without restrictions or tolls. France is preparing to contribute to this effort alongside its partners through a neutral and strictly defensive multinational maritime escort mission. We call on the Houthis to cease immediately their destabilizing activities, which we firmly condemn.

It is imperative that Iran fulfil its commitments under the Memorandum of Understanding and that negotiations resume to achieve a lasting solution to the Iranian crisis, notably through verifiable safeguards for Iran's nuclear programme. France stands ready to support all efforts in this regard.

In Lebanon, France welcomes the trilateral framework agreement signed on 26 June thanks to the commitment of the United States, a first step toward the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The objective remains the restoration of the Lebanese State's authority throughout its territory, in full respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We call on Hizbullah to surrender its arms and permanently renounce its military activities. We call on Israel to withdraw completely from Lebanon.

France reiterates its support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon until the end of its mandate. Future international engagement in Lebanon must meet the expectations of the Lebanese authorities and avoid any security vacuum in southern Lebanon. France and Italy propose an ad hoc international coalition to support the Lebanese Army in implementing their commitments.

In Syria, the recent visit by the President of the French Republic marked a new stage in our support for the political transition, including through the signing of numerous investment contracts to rebuild this war-torn country and begin its political reconstruction. France welcomes the Secretary-General's recent visit to Damascus, which demonstrates the international community's growing mobilization. We call on the international community to continue its efforts in this regard.

Finally, let us not forget that the first anniversary of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict is approaching.

Nearly a year later, the situation remains worrying, and it is urgent to implement resolution 2803 (2025), which requires the disarmament of Hamas, the removal of obstacles to humanitarian action and reconstruction, and Israel's compliance with its international obligations.

In the West Bank, France condemns the acceleration of settlement activity, which is illegal under international law. The forthcoming launch of tenders for the E1 project poses a threat to the two-State solution. France is deeply concerned about the current violence in the West Bank. While the Israeli authorities have announced the launch of a large-scale military operation, France calls on all parties to remain calm and exercise restraint and recalls the Israeli military's responsibility to protect civilians. The increasing violence perpetrated by settlers against Palestinians is unacceptable, and France will continue to work with its European partners to sanction those responsible for settlement activity and settler violence.

Nearly a year after the adoption of the New York Declaration, we must redouble our efforts to implement the two-State solution, the only viable path to peace that recognizes and respects both Palestinian rights and Israel's right to security.

France will always stand alongside those who are committed to peace. It is the responsibility of all parties to return to the path of dialogue and end hostilities. It is the responsibility of the Council to demonstrate collective determination and to encourage them to do so.

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): I would like to thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his briefing.

We convene today as countries across the Middle East stand on the brink of further escalation. Once again, Iran is attacking countries in the region and vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. Denmark strongly condemns these actions, which threaten both regional stability and a key maritime shipping route. We remain committed to the stability of the region.

We also strongly condemn the recent attacks by the Houthis on Saudi Arabia and on vessels in the Red Sea. These actions further undermine regional stability and threaten freedom of navigation. We stand in solidarity with Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region and reiterate our call for immediate and unconditional de-escalation.

In Lebanon, we urge all actors to adhere to the trilateral framework agreement and implement their commitments, and call for respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, in line with resolution 1701 (2006).

While these crises demand our full collective attention, they do not diminish our responsibility elsewhere. As we have heard, the suffering in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has not paused, and nor should our resolve. The terrible violence over the weekend across the West Bank demonstrates just how volatile the situation has become.

It comes on top of a series of concerning developments, reflecting a broader systemic trend of erosion of the two-State solution. This includes the Israeli authorities issuing tenders for the construction of illegal settlements in the E1 corridor, which threatens to separate East Jerusalem from the West Bank and divide the West Bank in two. It also includes rapid settlement expansion, the expulsion of Palestinians and the erosion of the social cohesion of Palestinian society. Meanwhile, settler violence continues to rise, accounting for 55 per cent of all physical injuries in the West Bank. There are already more Palestinian fatalities linked to settler attacks in 2026 than in all of 2025.

We also see deepening impunity, as the Israel Defense Forces either fail to stop violent acts by settlers or actively side with the settlers, without holding perpetrators accountable.

These developments are deplorable, and these actions violate international law. We urge the Israeli authorities to take immediate measures to prevent further attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinian communities and ensure the protection of civilians in the West Bank. We further urge the Israeli authorities to ensure effective law enforcement and accountability for perpetrators.

In Gaza, the situation remains catastrophic. Civilians live in ever-shrinking territories, in improvised tents, in inhumane conditions, with insufficient access to nutritious food, clean water and basic healthcare. The latest report of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification shows that more than half of Gaza's population still faces crisis or worse levels of food insecurity. Israel's restrictions on international non-governmental organizations operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory further undermine stability and Palestinians' access to basic services.

We call on Israel to allow full, immediate, safe and unhindered access and the sustained distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale into and throughout Gaza. Meanwhile, Israeli attacks continue, with more than 1,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza since the ceasefire, including 294 children. In July alone, 180 Palestinians were killed. This cannot continue.

The only way forward is for all parties to strictly adhere to the ceasefire agreement. This includes the disarmament of Hamas. Moreover, the International Stabilization Force and the Palestinian Police Force must be deployed without delay.

The challenges facing the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza should not be addressed in isolation. They are key obstacles to the Palestinian people's legitimate aspiration to establish an independent, sovereign and viable State under a reformed Palestinian leadership along the 1967 borders as part of a two-State solution, living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

In closing, this renewed escalation across the Middle East and the Persian Gulf shows how fragile regional stability remains. At the same time, we must not lose sight of the suffering of the Palestinian people and the urgent need for a two-State solution. Denmark will continue to work for both a stable Middle East and a credible path towards the two-State solution.

Mr. Mohamed Yusuf (Somalia): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his sobering briefing.

We gather again as the Palestinian people endure deep suffering while the Middle East faces ongoing instability and a worrying disregard for international law. Eight months after resolution 2803 (2025) was adopted, its goals of ending the conflict, expanding aid and starting reconstruction remain largely unfulfilled, with little real progress for civilians in Gaza. Somalia reiterates its call for the full implementation of resolution 2803 (2025). Humanitarian aid is a legal duty, not a political tool. Civilians must receive assistance quickly, safely and on the scale of their needs. All crossings should remain consistently open, and restrictions on essential goods such as fuel, medicine, water and other supplies must be lifted.

We recognize the value of humanitarian benchmarks for monitoring the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025), but they must be verified by the United Nations and humanitarian actors throughout the reporting period. International humanitarian law and international human rights law must always be respected. Civilians, humanitarian workers and United Nations staff must be protected.

Somalia remains deeply concerned by reports of torture, sexual violence and missing Palestinians. We support the establishment of mechanisms to account for missing persons and reunite families.

Gaza's health system crisis is alarming. Thousands, including children and cancer patients, need urgent evacuation as essential medicines run out and hospitals ration care. The medical evacuation corridor to the West Bank must be restored, but evacuations cannot substitute for rebuilding Gaza's health system. The destruction of water, sanitation and electricity infrastructure has created a public health emergency. Without basic services, civilians are trapped in crisis, regardless of market availability. Israel, as the occupying Power, has the responsibility to allow basic services, including health services, and to ensure evacuated patients the right to return.

Somalia rejects any attempt to fragment Gaza or prevent the safe and voluntary return of displaced Palestinians. We condemn the continued expansion of military-controlled areas in Gaza, which restricts movement, blocks family returns and raises fears of permanent displacement.

Gaza's recovery and the unification of its governance must be Palestinian-led and supported by the region and the international community, anchored in a two-State solution. We reiterate that Gaza is an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and a future Palestinian State.

While Gaza draws global attention, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as we heard, also faces a dangerous deterioration. Somalia remains gravely concerned about the continued illegal settlements, settler terrorism, forced displacement, land confiscation, arbitrary detention and destruction of Palestinian property. Those actions violate international law and Security Council resolutions and must cease immediately.

Recent days have also seen one of the largest incursions at the Aqsa Mosque, with more than 4,000 Israeli settlers and far-right groups entering the compound under heavy police protection, while Palestinian worshippers were barred from entering. We unequivocally condemn the occupying Power's actions, which represent a dangerous escalation and a violation of the historic and legal status quo at that holy site. We emphasize that Jerusalem's status cannot be changed through unilateral actions. The historic and legal status quo at the holy sites must be respected by Israel, and all incitement to violence must stop immediately and unconditionally.

Somalia welcomes the renewed momentum behind the two-State solution, including the efforts of Saudi Arabia and France and the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. Concrete actions, not just statements, are needed to preserve the foundations of a future Palestinian State, including the release of the Palestinian Authority's tax revenues withheld by Israel. Humanitarian aid cannot substitute for a political solution, and reconstruction cannot succeed amid occupation and settlement expansion. Somalia stands firmly for an independent, sovereign Palestinian State along the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Turning to Lebanon, Somalia is concerned about the tensions along the Blue Line. We call for the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and respect for Lebanon's sovereignty and international law. We take note of the ongoing strategic review of the post-United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon presence and stress the importance of maintaining a strong and meaningful United Nations presence to deter further escalation and support stability in Lebanon and beyond.

In Syria, Somalia supports the Syrian-led political process in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015). We condemn Israeli military incursions into Syria and call on Israel to withdraw fully from all Syrian territories, in line with its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions and the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces.

In Yemen, Somalia calls for respect for the country's sovereignty and support for the Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process under United Nations auspices.

Recent escalations in the Gulf show how quickly conflict can spread in the Middle East. Somalia urges restraint, diplomacy and respect for the sovereignty of all States and for international law. Equally important is to guarantee freedom of navigation in international waterways, including the Strait of Hormuz, and to refrain from actions that undermine maritime security and the free flow of global commerce.

To conclude, regional security must rest on mutual respect, good-neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. To achieve that in the Middle East, it is essential to address the common denominator and the root cause of the elusive peace in the region. There can

be no peace in the Middle East without addressing the long-standing occupation and annexation of Arab lands, including the territory of the State of Palestine. We remain committed to working with all Council members to that end.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama is grateful for the convening of this quarterly open debate and for Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov's briefing and constant efforts. We welcome the representatives of the delegations who honour us today with their participation.

For far too long, the peoples of the Middle East have witnessed one crisis follow another without the root causes of the conflicts being definitively resolved. While some situations show encouraging signs of de-escalation and openness to dialogue, others continue to be marked by violence, displacement and a humanitarian crisis that continues to affect millions of people.

In Gaza, after nine months, the ceasefire, albeit fragile, has helped to alleviate some of the population's most urgent needs, and it must be acknowledged that the volume of humanitarian assistance has increased. Nevertheless, the cumulative consequences of the conflict remain a daily reality for thousands of families, while enormous challenges persist in restoring hospitals, schools, homes, drinking-water systems and other essential services destroyed during the war.

Panama reiterates the need for humanitarian assistance, the flow of which has fortunately improved, to continue reaching the population in full, safely, without impediment, at the required scale, on a sustained basis and without attacks by extremists. The conditions necessary for United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations to carry out their work safely and independently, with full respect for international law, must also be maintained.

What is happening in Gaza cannot be separated from the West Bank. The expansion of settlements, demolitions, the displacement of communities and measures that are progressively changing the territorial reality continue to undermine the conditions necessary to preserve a credible political horizon. Gaza and the West Bank form part of the same political and territorial reality. Accordingly, any path to peace must address them comprehensively, preserve their territorial continuity, strengthen a reformed Palestinian Authority and avoid unilateral measures that continue to diminish the prospects for a negotiated solution that would enable Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace, security and dignity.

In Lebanon, the intensification of hostilities since March has had a profound humanitarian impact, with thousands of people killed or injured and more than 1 million displaced. Although the relative de-escalation observed since the end of June is encouraging, continuing military activity, airspace violations and restrictions on the freedom of movement of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) show that the situation on the ground remains fragile.

Panama welcomes with hope and optimism the progress made in recent talks between Lebanon and Israel, facilitated through mediation by the United States, and encourages efforts to ensure that the process can consolidate the cessation of hostilities, advance the implementation of the understandings reached and create the conditions necessary for lasting peace. Panama reiterates its commitment to Lebanon's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Panama also reaffirms its support for UNIFIL's work to promote stability along the Blue Line. We strongly condemn attacks against United Nations personnel and reiterate that all parties must guarantee their safety, respect the inviolability of United Nations premises and ensure UNIFIL's full freedom of movement. Furthermore, we

believe that discussions on the future United Nations presence in Lebanon should respond to the current reality on the ground, with a view to avoiding security vacuums and ensuring that any mechanism agreed by the Council has the capacities necessary to implement its mandate effectively.

Syria faces a different challenge. Recent political advances offer an opportunity to strengthen State institutions and broaden the participation of different sectors of society, provided that this new phase is accompanied by concrete measures in the areas of transitional justice, the rule of law, national reconciliation and the clarification of the fate of missing persons. Terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to the transition and the country's stability. Panama condemns attacks aimed at undermining the political process and reiterates the need to avoid actions that exacerbate tensions and to fully respect Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

In the meantime, the prolonged and dangerous tensions involving Iran and the Strait of Hormuz demonstrate that military confrontation is not the path to a solution. A solution can be achieved only through political dialogue, negotiations in good faith and the fulfilment of agreed commitments. Panama supports diplomatic efforts to promote de-escalation, keep channels of communication open and prevent tensions from escalating into a broader confrontation. We strongly condemn attacks and threats against merchant vessels, including those flying the Panamanian flag, in the Red Sea, the Strait of Hormuz and other maritime routes in the region. Such attacks and threats endanger crews, affect international trade and compromise the security of global supply chains.

Every new escalation in the region ultimately fuels another crisis; every opportunity lost for dialogue prolongs the suffering of millions of people. The United Nations continues to play an irreplaceable role. The work of the Secretary-General, his special envoys, peace operations and humanitarian agencies keeps spaces for dialogue open, supports political processes and provides assistance to those most in need. The peoples of the Middle East deserve a future defined by peace and dignity. Panama will continue to support any initiative aimed at transforming dialogue into agreements, agreements into trust and trust into lasting peace for the region.

Mr. Stamatekos (Greece): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his remarks.

Recent developments in the Middle East remind us how fragile regional stability remains and how quickly tensions can escalate. From Gaza to Lebanon, Syria and the Gulf, the challenges before us are interconnected. Respect for international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and determined diplomacy must guide our collective response. The United Nations has an indispensable role to play.

This means safeguarding freedom of navigation and ensuring unimpeded transit through international straits, including the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab, in accordance with international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We will continue cooperating closely with our international partners, including France, the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia, to promote initiatives that are defensive in nature and safeguard freedom of navigation and maritime security. Greece stands in solidarity with its regional partners and strongly condemns illegal and unprovoked attacks against civilian infrastructure and international shipping by Iran. We equally condemn continued threats and attacks by the Houthis against maritime shipping to and from Saudi Arabia. Greece will strengthen its cooperation with Saudi Arabia and the member States of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf in promoting regional stability and prosperity.

Our commitment to the global non-proliferation architecture remains unwavering. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the International Atomic Energy Agency remain its indispensable pillars. Iran must therefore commit clearly and unconditionally to an exclusively peaceful nuclear policy.

Turning to Lebanon, we welcome the framework agreement and the subsequent direct talks in Rome between Israel and Lebanon, facilitated by the United States. The direct Israeli-Lebanese track offers a genuine opportunity to advance towards sustainable peace, and it deserves our full support. The path to lasting stability lies in the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), the restoration of the Lebanese State's authority throughout its territory and the disarmament of all non-State armed groups, so as to ensure the State's monopoly on the legitimate use of force. We stand firmly behind President Aoun and the Lebanese Government as they undertake this daunting task.

Greece maintains a strong engagement with Lebanon across the military, economic and diplomatic fields. We will continue supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces both bilaterally and together with our partners. Greece has also provided funding to Lebanese hospitals, and we will continue assessing projects aimed at addressing Lebanon's socioeconomic needs and supporting a sustainable path towards prosperity for all Lebanese.

We are actively assessing the period following the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). An international presence will be required to ensure that the gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon and the strengthening of the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces, particularly in the south, take place smoothly and in a coordinated manner. Having been a significant contributor to UNIFIL from the outset, Greece stands ready to contribute and participate actively to discussions on a post-UNIFIL mission, including in the Security Council.

In Syria, as discussed in this setting a few days ago (see S/PV.10199), a political transition with inclusiveness, accountability, justice and genuine national reconciliation is possible and the newly formed People's Assembly could be an important step on this path. Translating commitments into actions will now ensure that all Syrians feel fully protected and represented. Greece intends to remain an active partner in this effort and supports deeper engagement between Syria and the United Nations, and we also welcome the historic visit of the Secretary-General to Damascus.

The need for a credible political horizon in Gaza remains as pressing as ever. The Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, endorsed through resolution 2803 (2025), has created an opening which we should turn into lasting progress. Disarmament of Hamas is a priority, and we commend the efforts of High Representative Mladenov in this regard and look forward to the deployment of the International Stabilization Force in the Strip. Addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns remains indispensable to building a durable peace.

At the same time, the gap between humanitarian needs and the assistance reaching civilians in Gaza is alarming. Humanitarian actors, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, remain indispensable. The Palestine Donor Group's meeting in Brussels reaffirmed the international commitment to Gaza's recovery, including through the Horizon Fund. Greece will participate in the Team Gaza Initiative launched by the European Commission. As a first step, we will focus on enhancing social and economic infrastructure across the Strip. Transitional arrangements should reinforce, not replace, Palestinian institutions. We support the National Committee for the

Administration of Gaza and the deployment of the newly vetted Palestinian police force. Our collective objective is to support the Palestinian Authority in implementing reforms, paving the way for its return to Gaza as provided for in resolution 2803 (2025).

In the West Bank, settlement expansion, forced displacement, demolitions and settler violence against Palestinians, including Christian communities, violate international law and undermine the prospects for a negotiated peace. Preserving the status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem is also essential for interfaith coexistence and regional stability. We call for the release of withheld Palestinian tax revenues and welcome the Palestinian Authority's reform efforts under exceptionally difficult circumstances. Greece will continue supporting these efforts, including through the European Union's Palestinian-European Mechanism for Management of Socio-Economic Aid, while channelling its funding to East Jerusalem hospitals.

International initiatives such as the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution demonstrate that support for peace remains strong. That support must be matched with a credible political process leading to the two-State solution.

Mr. Brown II (Liberia): We join in thanking the Deputy Special Coordinator and Resident Coordinator of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and we welcome colleagues to the Chamber.

Every war, however protracted, eventually confronts a moment of strategic truth: the moment when the cost of continuing war far exceeds any conceivable gain from prolonging it. This is true of every protracted conflict, including this one. The briefing of today and the figures presented by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other United Nations agencies confirm that the Occupied Palestinian Territory is approaching that point. We are no longer merely observing a crisis. We are witnessing the systemic erosion of the conditions necessary for human life itself. According to OCHA, in the West Bank, fatalities from settler attacks this year have already surpassed the total for all of 2025. In Qalqiliya alone, recent demolitions claimed homes, water networks and 19 donor-funded shelters, displacing dozens of families, including 34 children. In Gaza, the humanitarian catastrophe strikes at the very generation to come. Nearly 4,000 miscarriages were recorded in just the first six months of this year. More than 57 per cent of pregnant women suffer from severe anaemia. Beneath 60 million tons of rubble, human hope is being buried. The clearing of 630,000 tons of debris is not a sign of recovery. It is a drop in an ocean of ruin.

The Council must also not lose sight of the fact that the attacks of 7 October 2023 killed close to 1,200 people and took 251 hostages into Gaza, taking a toll on Israeli families. It took more than two years, until January of this year before the last of them — living and deceased — were finally accounted for and returned home. That suffering is also a part of this record, and it must inform how the Council thinks about deterrence, justice and the conditions for a lasting peace. Liberia speaks as a nation that walked through the fire of civil conflict. We speak from a continent that understands a fundamental truth: no society ever truly emerges from war simply because one side managed to exhaust the other. Peace does not begin when the last weapon fires. Peace begins when leaders find the courage to acknowledge that dialogue yields what weapons never can and never will.

Liberia unequivocally condemns every attack against civilians by any party, anywhere and at any time. We affirm without reservation Israel's legitimate right to live in peace and security, free from terror and the threat of future attacks. And we affirm, with equal conviction, the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-

determination, freedom and statehood. These rights are not mutually exclusive. They are mutually dependent. Security that denies dignity and humanity is an illusion. Dignity without security cannot endure. Lasting peace demands both. We therefore call upon the Council and all parties to act to guarantee full respect for international humanitarian law; to ensure unhindered aid access; to halt settlement expansion, forced displacement and destruction affecting civilians; to ensure full accountability and transparency in the treatment of all captives and detainees; and to urgently reignite a credible political pathway towards a durable and just two-State solution.

To conclude, the greatest illusion in any protracted conflict is the belief that tomorrow's battlefield will produce what yesterday's battlefield could not. Peace is never achieved when one people surrenders its future to another. It never will happen. Peace begins when both peoples finally reclaim their right to dignity and shared humanity. That is the responsibility of the parties. It is the solemn duty of the Council.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing.

The situation in the Middle East has been one of the main items on the agenda of the Security Council almost since the very establishment of the United Nations. Nevertheless, despite decades of painstaking work, we have to acknowledge that the goal of achieving peace and prosperity for the countries and peoples of the Middle East remains as distant as ever. Regrettably, at times it seems that any diplomatic successes we might have witnessed, including in recent months, are simply "reset" each time. The situation is not merely failing to improve — it often worsens, as the conflict spreads to new territories and engulfs virtually every country in the region. We are witnessing new outbreaks of violence, the geographical scope of the conflict is expanding and, as always, civilians face the brunt.

Despite the fact that the root causes of the region's problems are often drowned out by the daily flow of news, we are convinced that the international community must not lose sight of the Palestinian question, —the issue of greatest importance for the Middle East.

We regret to note that the ceasefire agreements reached between Israel and Hamas in October 2025 have largely stalled. We regularly receive reports of new operations by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), bringing continuous civilian deaths and suffering. Restrictions on the entry and delivery of humanitarian assistance remain in place. The so-called Trump plan for Gaza, which formed the basis of the peace arrangements, remains a dead letter. The Board of Peace has so far been essentially non-operational. The International Stabilization Force has yet to be established. There are still no prospects for the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip. Clearly, there is currently no talk of any practical steps to launch reconstruction work in the enclave. The peace efforts of the United States leadership on the Palestinian track have been virtually put "on hold".

Despite the efforts by the High Representative of the Board of Peace for Gaza, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, to secure approval for the road map he drafted jointly with the mediators, there is still no solution mutually agreeable to the parties. The key sticking point remains the complicated issue of demilitarizing the Palestinian enclave. Moreover, the document contains no guarantees for the de-occupation of Gaza, let alone prospects for its political reunification with the West Bank and a long-term settlement of the Palestinian issue.

The situation in the West Bank itself is also unfolding along a negative trajectory. The Israeli authorities proceed with their policy of cementing their administrative and legal control over the territory. The pace and scale of settlement

expansion have long since broken all records. We are concerned by recent reports of an unprecedented tightening of restrictions on the movement of Palestinians between different localities. Therefore, irreversible realities are being established in the West Bank, while the territories controlled by the Palestinians are steadily shrinking.

We have carefully reviewed the letter from Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, circulated ahead of today's debate, expressing deep concern over the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories, primarily in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. We believe that the expansion of settlement activity, compounded by attacks on Palestinians and the destruction of their civilian infrastructure, undermines the prospects for implementing the two-State solution and poses a threat of a further deterioration of the situation.

Russia is convinced that only a comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, premised on well-known international legal principles, can guarantee lasting peace and stability for all the peoples of the region. Achieving this is still possible, and we strongly urge all parties concerned to seize every opportunity.

The continuing negative trends in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are unfolding amid growing tensions in the Middle East as a whole. In this regard, we are equally concerned about developments surrounding Lebanon. Over the past weeks, we have observed positive dynamics on the track of a political and diplomatic settlement. Specifically, we welcome the launch, for the first time in more than three decades, of direct Lebanese-Israeli talks under United States mediation and the achievement of a trilateral framework agreement on 26 June. We also note the visit to Washington last week by the President of the Lebanese Republic, Joseph Aoun.

At the same time, negotiations have failed to bring about a definitive cessation of hostilities. Israel continues to occupy territories in southern Lebanon, in particular north of the Litani River. According to reports, from 25 to 27 July, the IDF continued demolishing and blowing up buildings in a number of Lebanese localities. The actions of the Israeli military pose a direct threat to the lives and health not only of civilians but also of United Nations peacekeepers, preventing the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon from carrying out its mandate. Against this backdrop, a question naturally arises. Given the expansion of the Israeli occupation and the highly likely emergence of a security vacuum, what explosive consequences could the winding-down of the mission in 2027 entail? In our view, a complete cessation of hostilities and a political settlement of the Lebanese conflict remains imperative in this regard, including with a view to ensuring the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

We believe that we would be remiss if we did not recall that the latest escalation in Lebanon was a direct consequence of the aggression launched by the United States and Israel against the Islamic Republic of Iran on 28 February. Despite the signing of the "Islamabad Memorandum", which was made possible through the vigorous and effective mediation efforts of Pakistan, Qatar and a number of other regional States, the situation in the Persian Gulf not only remains extremely tense but also continues to deteriorate. In recent weeks, we have witnessed yet another series of exchanges of strikes, which have once again put civilian infrastructure in Iran and the Arab States at risk. There are also potential risks of disruption to navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea, which could have extremely serious repercussions for global energy and food security. Our country has consistently advocated a political and diplomatic settlement of the conflict between the United States and Iran, which would take into account the interests of all States in the region.

The same approaches apply to the situation in Yemen. The crisis in that country has remained unresolved into its second decade, undermining stability throughout the

region and creating a risk of uncontrolled escalation on the Arabian Peninsula. Unfortunately, recent developments in and around Yemen bear this out. We are convinced that the path to peace and stability in this Arab country is through direct and frank dialogue among its leading political forces, including the Ansar Allah movement. We consider it counterproductive to antagonize the movement, as it has long been an integral part of the country's military and political landscape. There is a need to revitalize the mediation process under the auspices of the United Nations, led by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and to involve a wide range of Yemen's neighbours, including Saudi Arabia and Iran.

In conclusion, we would like to note that the only way to achieve peace, stability and prosperity in the region is through diplomacy, negotiations and fostering good-neighbourly relations among all countries in the region while strengthening their security. We could begin with narrower formats envisaged in Russia's updated Concept of Collective Security in the Persian Gulf. This document contains practical proposals for strengthening confidence-building measures and provides for a gradual approach to resolving crisis situations in the region, ultimately leading to a stable and conflict-free Middle East open to broad international cooperation. Russia stands ready to engage in such cooperation and discuss these and other constructive proposals with all parties concerned to ensure a reliable and sustainable security architecture throughout the Middle East.

Ms. Foster (United Kingdom): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his briefing.

In November last year, the Council adopted resolution 2803 (2025), endorsing President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. It continues to offer a historic opportunity to achieve lasting peace. But eight months on, implementation risks stalling. Now is the time for all parties to fulfil their commitments under the Plan in full.

In that context, I will highlight three points.

First, we need further action to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Civilians continue to endure horrendous conditions, surrounded by sewage and rubble. We welcome the progress that has pulled Gaza back from the levels of famine seen last year. However, according to the latest snapshot of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, 1.2 million people still face significant food shortages, with projections indicating that 90 per cent of the population will remain dependent on humanitarian aid to survive. While food may be available in some private markets, it remains unaffordable or inaccessible for many Palestinians, in particular the most vulnerable. Averting famine cannot be a benchmark for success, nor can improving the humanitarian situation be conditional on progress on other tracks. Israel must fulfil its commitments under the Comprehensive Plan by ensuring unimpeded humanitarian access. This includes opening more crossings into Gaza, streamlining the dual-use approvals process and allowing life-saving and essential recovery items to enter.

We are also deeply concerned by reports of Hamas obstructing humanitarian operations, as Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov set out today. That includes the recent incident at a World Food Programme distribution centre. Actions that disrupt life-saving assistance are unacceptable. The United Nations, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and non-governmental organizations must be able to operate safely and at scale so that they can help alleviate the suffering.

Secondly, we need greater momentum on security, governance and recovery in Gaza. We reiterate that Hamas must fulfil its commitments to decommission its weapons and dismantle its terrorist infrastructure. This should be phased and verified alongside a strengthened Palestinian security presence, deployment of an International Stabilization Force and a sequenced Israeli withdrawal. At the recent meeting of the Palestine Donor Group, the United Kingdom joined the Team Gaza Initiative and announced more than \$13 million for the United Nations Horizon Fund. These commitments should support Palestinian-led delivery across all of Gaza. There can be no permanent arrangements that entrench Gaza's division or leave millions of people living under Hamas control.

Thirdly, the trajectory in the West Bank and East Jerusalem remains deeply alarming. We are appalled by the violence in the West Bank on 24 July, in which four Palestinians and two Israelis were killed. We condemn violence on all sides and call for de-escalation. We urge the Israeli Government to exercise restraint, to uphold stability and international law and to ensure accountability for crimes. We are also alarmed by the mass incursion at the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount on 23 July by thousands of Jewish worshippers. The status quo on Jerusalem's holy sites is clear and should be respected. We are further concerned by reports of an incursion by Israeli forces into a UNRWA training centre located near Kalandia refugee camp yesterday morning. These incidents form part of a broader deterioration in the stability and security of the West Bank, fuelled by settler violence and Israeli Government policies. In four years, 104 Israeli settlements have been approved, and billions of dollars allocated to speed up construction. Together, these represent a deliberate attempt to erode the possibility of a two-State solution.

The path to peace requires the parties to demonstrate the political will needed to realize the promise of the Comprehensive Peace Plan. We must now renew momentum across all tracks and deliver tangible change on the ground. That is the only route to a future based on a two-State solution that delivers peace, security and dignity for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing, which reflected the alarming situation in the Palestinian territories. I also welcome all participating countries.

I would like to address the following points.

First, despite insufficient progress in meeting the requirements of phase one of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, including achieving a complete ceasefire and ensuring a full and effective humanitarian response, we must continue working and spare no effort to alleviate the suffering of the brotherly Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank. Such efforts include the ongoing work of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza and the third official meeting of the joint coordination office between the Palestinian Government and the Board of Peace, held on the margins of the Palestine Donor Group meeting in Brussels.

The Kingdom of Bahrain therefore calls for the removal of all obstacles to the work of the Board of Peace, which is a transitional administration with international legal personality that will set the framework and coordinate funding for the redevelopment of Gaza pursuant to the Comprehensive Plan and consistent with relevant international legal principles, until such time as the Palestinian Authority has completed its reform programme. The Kingdom of Bahrain also stresses the importance of early recovery and reconstruction in the Gaza Strip and of deploying

the International Stabilization Force there, as well as the need for Israel to withdraw completely from the Strip.

Secondly, the Kingdom of Bahrain expresses its deep concern at the tragic humanitarian situation facing 2 million Palestinians in Gaza and stresses the importance of fully resuming the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip, in cooperation with the Board of Peace. The Kingdom of Bahrain warns of the consequences of depriving Palestinian children of their rights under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In response, the Kingdom of Bahrain, represented by the Royal Humanitarian Foundation, signed a cooperation agreement with the Jerusalem Empowerment Fund for Development to support the “Bahrain Endowment for Education and Orphans”, making the Kingdom the first country to implement an endowment project in Jerusalem.

We cannot speak of the situation in Gaza without addressing the West Bank, which is witnessing troubling developments resulting from heightened tensions, most notably the alarming pace of settlement expansion and settler violence. Accordingly, the Kingdom of Bahrain calls for a commitment to reaching common understandings rather than imposing unilateral measures, for an end to all settlement activities throughout the Palestinian territories and for compliance with all relevant legal obligations. It also draws attention to the United States-Gulf Cooperation Council ministerial statement issued in Manama on 25 June, which expressed opposition to the annexation of the West Bank and reaffirmed that no one would be forced to leave Gaza and that those who had left were free to return.

The Kingdom of Bahrain reiterates its condemnation of all religious violations in Jerusalem. It commends the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan’s custodianship over the Islamic and Christian holy sites and the Kingdom of Morocco’s role as Chair of the Al-Quds Committee. It also notes the convening in Cairo of the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Thirdly and finally, the Kingdom of Bahrain reiterates the need to support the Palestinian Government, which is undertaking tireless reform efforts. It also commends all United Nations and international efforts and initiatives and calls for integration and coordination among them, since they all serve a single objective: ensuring the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, thereby strengthening their steadfastness and resilience on their land and ensuring their participation in reconstruction efforts.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms that the cornerstone of a safe, stable, prosperous and sustainable regional environment is the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State within the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with the State of Israel, in accordance with the principles of international law, the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant international resolutions. Palestine must also be granted full membership in the United Nations.

Mrs. Zalabata Torres (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his briefing and welcome the delegations participating in this meeting.

Almost 10 months have passed since the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict began. Since then, Israel has killed more than 1,100 Palestinians, and attacks against densely populated areas have continued to claim

civilian lives and destroy what little infrastructure there is. It is difficult to describe that reality as a ceasefire.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains catastrophic, and the population's living conditions have changed little. The humanitarian response cannot be measured by the number of trucks entering Gaza. The question is: does the population have access to safe drinking water, sanitation, sufficient and nutritious food, medical care, education and decent housing? Despite attempts to present an alternative reality to the Council, the answer to that question is no.

There are no decent living conditions in Gaza because the occupying Power has failed to comply with its obligations under international law. While the Palestinian population continues to be confined to ever smaller and more fragmented areas, senior Israeli officials continue to promote rhetoric of hatred, encouraging the expansion of settlements, settler violence, forced displacement and ethnic cleansing in Gaza and the West Bank.

Colombia has been clear about the principles that must guide the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025): respect for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to decide on their governance and future; rejection of any demographic or territorial alteration; the central role of the United Nations in the humanitarian response and respect for the principles of humanity, neutrality and independence; and the immediate and unconditional start of Gaza's reconstruction.

However, the facts show that the architecture of the occupation is becoming ever more deeply entrenched. Settlement expansion, settler violence, the financial strangulation of the Palestinian Authority and incitement to hatred are all components of a single policy aimed at consolidating an illegal reality incompatible with the two-State solution. No peace plan will be credible if it merely manages the consequences of genocide without removing its structural causes, beginning with an end to the illegal occupation.

The situation in Lebanon also remains a matter of concern. While we welcome the continuation of talks and the agreements reached recently, which constitute a first encouraging step towards de-escalation, that progress remains insufficient given the scale and gravity of the situation. Colombia strongly condemns all actions that violate Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The continuing deterioration of the country's peace and security not only has devastating and immediate consequences for its population but also compromises its long-term development and stability.

At the same time, Israel persists in its war against the truth. Smear campaigns and reckless accusations against journalists, humanitarian workers, human rights defenders and United Nations officials not only endanger their lives but also seek to silence those documenting the reality on the ground. That policy is aimed at weakening international verification and accountability mechanisms and eroding the principles essential to the protection of civilians.

The impunity with which Israel has conducted this genocide calls into question the validity of the international order and the future of a system based on the sovereign equality of States, justice and respect for international law, as opposed to an order in which the law of the strongest and the idea that some lives are worth more than others prevail. The United Nations was founded to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reaffirm the dignity and worth of the human person and create the conditions in which justice and international law could prevail over force. Today, it is incumbent upon the Council to demonstrate that those principles remain valid, because when the law ceases to protect a people, it begins to lose its capacity to protect us all.

Ms. Pavluta-Deslandes (Latvia): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov for his briefing.

At a time when the international community is making a united effort to resolve the conflict in the wider Middle East, Iran has reignited the crisis by targeting ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz and conducting yet another campaign of reckless attacks against its neighbours: Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar, as well as Jordan.

Iran has also continued to undermine Yemen's sovereignty, including through recent unauthorized flights into Sana'a and Hudaydah. Iran must abandon any attempts to disrupt free and safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. In the same vein, Iran-supported Houthis must cease their threats and attacks against commercial shipping imposing an unlawful blockade in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait and their attacks against Saudi Arabia, which threaten freedom of navigation, international trade and regional stability and risk drawing Yemen into a wider regional conflict.

By launching an attack against Syria on 17 July, Iran demonstrated that it prioritizes its own strategic objectives and the preservation of its disruptive influence in the region over Syria's post-war stabilization efforts. Iran's unjustified aggression blatantly disregards the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran, threatens regional stability and constitutes a flagrant violation of the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the respective countries. Latvia categorically condemns these attacks. We express full solidarity with our Gulf partners, as well as Jordan, Iraq and Syria.

The wars in the Gulf and Ukraine are becoming increasingly interconnected, with Russia and Iran acting as mutually reinforcing drivers of instability across both regions. Russian-Iranian cooperation is no longer just a tactical partnership. It is a long-term strategic alliance based on shared interests to weaken and challenge international security and strengthen the military capabilities of both countries, leading to irregular migration flows. Russia has repeatedly relaxed visa rules, facilitated transit, provided logistical support and used disinformation to channel migrants from the conflict areas of the Middle East and Africa towards European Union borders, instrumentalizing the consequences of the conflicts it helped to spread.

We reiterate our support for the resumption of meaningful negotiations between the United States and Iran and appreciate the mediating efforts of Pakistan and Qatar, among others. In order for diplomacy to succeed, a complete cessation of hostilities and free navigation in the Strait of Hormuz is needed, in full compliance with the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding and resolution 2817 (2026).

With regard to Lebanon, we welcome the ongoing peace negotiations between Lebanon and Israel under the auspices of the United States, which pursue the same objectives as resolution 1701 (2026): to secure a permanent ceasefire, achieve a sustainable solution to the conflict and provide lasting peace.

We commend the conclusion of the 26 June trilateral framework agreement providing for the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces throughout the southern part of the country, the disarmament of Hizbullah and the withdrawal of Israel's forces from Lebanon. Launching the pilot zones plan represents a tangible step towards the implementation of this framework.

We call for the continuation of negotiations between Lebanon and Israel to reach a comprehensive and sustainable agreement, restoring Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity while addressing Israel's security concerns. This effort also

requires an end to Iran's support for and influence over Hizbullah, which undermines Lebanon's sovereignty and the prospects for lasting peace.

The international community must continue and reinforce its support to Lebanon's Government and armed forces to take full control of the territory and the monopoly of weapons. An adjusted, credible and impartial United Nations presence in Lebanon will be essential to oversee the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) after the drawdown of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, as well as the comprehensive bilateral agreement, once it is reached.

In Gaza, further progress in implementing resolution 2803 (2025) and President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict is urgently needed. In this regard, all parties must abide by their commitments. Hamas and non-State armed groups must accept the plan proposed by the Board of Peace, disarm and relinquish their power. The ongoing daily strikes in Gaza and the resulting Palestinian civilian casualties must stop. The deployment of the International Stabilization Force and the Palestinian police, as well as the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces must provide a pathway for stabilization. The long-delayed recovery of the entire Gaza Strip through the work of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza must be enabled urgently. We welcome the recent meeting of the Palestine Donor Group and the launch of the Team Gaza Initiative to support reconstruction and healthcare.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains extremely challenging. Insecurity, access restrictions and repeated displacement continue to constrain humanitarian operations. Limited and unpredictable flows of humanitarian goods are increasing hunger, restricting the availability of essential supplies and placing additional pressure on a nearly collapsed health system. Sustained, safe and predictable humanitarian access remains critical to enable an effective response.

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the human rights, humanitarian and security situation keeps deteriorating. The expansion of Israeli settlements, including in the E1 area, is ongoing, with an increasing number of Palestinian families being evicted from their homes. Settler violence continues. We call on Israel to ensure accountability for all committed assaults and killings and fully respect all its legal obligations.

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

With regard to Syria, by pursuing the path of stability and recovery, Syria's achievements stand out against the backdrop of broader regional turmoil and inspire hope that positive change is possible. We welcome the Secretary-General's recent visit to Syria and trust that the United Nations continued support will reinforce Syria's political transition, reconstruction and transitional justice.

In conclusion, Latvia remains committed to achieving comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, as well as fully restoring freedom of navigation, and expresses its readiness to continue efforts alongside regional and global partners to achieve this shared goal.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): This debate is an important opportunity for a holistic assessment of the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The

Deputy Special Coordinator's briefing and the detailed statement in the Chaber testify that the Occupied Palestinian Territory remains in dire straits.

While the ceasefire and President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict have provided an important opportunity to alleviate humanitarian suffering and advance a credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood, delays in full implementation of these efforts require our urgent attention. It is imperative to uphold the commitments reflected in the peace plan and resolution 2803 (2025) that endorsed it. Failure to act now risks irreparably undermining the prospects for a just and lasting peace.

Developments in the West Bank are a matter of grave concern. Continued settlement expansion, the establishment of new settlement outposts and increased incidents of settler violence are altering the demographic and geographic character of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this context, the so-called Crimson Thread project, a planned 500-kilometre network of walls and military roads bisecting the Jordan valley, also raises serious concerns, as these efforts to isolate Palestinian communities and sever the Jordan Valley from the rest of the West Bank will undermine the viability and territorial contiguity of a future Palestinian State. The Foreign Ministers of the group of eight Arab and Islamic countries, including Pakistan, have also condemned in the strongest terms the Israeli escalation at the Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, particularly the continued mass incursions by settlers. They stress that these provocative actions constitute a flagrant violation of international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the historical and legal status quo at the holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem.

In Gaza, the humanitarian situation is extremely fragile. The ceasefire and the implementation of elements of the peace plan have yielded some improvements. However, 59 per cent of the population still faces crisis-level food insecurity and notably, since the ceasefire, more than 1,100 Palestinians have been killed. That calls into question the full and faithful implementation of the plan. Nearly 2 million people remain confined to just 30 per cent of Gaza's territory and are enduring catastrophic living conditions. There are also reports of a massive earthen barrier being constructed across Gaza, entrenching Israeli occupation and control over nearly 70 per cent of the territory.

Against this backdrop, the Security Council should act with unity and support the full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and resolution 2803 (2025); demand an immediate halt to all settlement activities and reject any attempts at annexation, forced displacement or alteration of the demographic and geographic character of the Occupied Palestinian Territory in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016); ensure international protection for the Palestinian people, as also urged by President Abbas in his recent letter to the Council; hold accountable those responsible for crimes and violations committed against civilians; and secure the immediate unconditional release of withheld Palestinian revenues to enable the Palestinian Authority to continue delivering essential public services. The only credible path to a just and lasting peace is the establishment of an independent, sovereign, contiguous and viable State of Palestine based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

In the broader context, Pakistan continues to follow with deep concern the recent developments that are further escalating regional tensions. Pakistan reiterates its strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all brotherly countries in the region and urges all sides to exercise restraint, take immediate steps towards de-escalation and uphold respective commitments under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding. For its part, Pakistan remains committed to providing all support

towards achieving lasting peace and stability in the region through dialogue and diplomacy.

In Lebanon, the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) remains essential for achieving lasting peace and stability. Pakistan appreciates the diplomatic efforts led by the United States to consolidate the cessation of hostilities and advance a durable peace in Lebanon.

Pakistan also calls for full respect for Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity and reaffirms its support for the Government's efforts in this new phase. The 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement and resolutions 338 (1973) and 497 (1981) must be fully respected. Israel must vacate all the Arab territories it illegally occupies.

Pakistan supports a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process for comprehensive and lasting peace in Yemen. Pakistan condemns attacks against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and all attacks against commercial shipping, which threaten global trade and regional security. Pakistan is deeply concerned at attempts to drag the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia into the conflict in the Middle East and reiterates its unwavering support for the security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and prosperity of the brotherly Kingdom.

Lasting peace in the Middle East will remain elusive as long as occupation persists and the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for self-determination remain unfulfilled. Pakistan continues to stand in unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people and will support all genuine efforts aimed at achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on the relevant Security Council resolutions and international legitimacy.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his briefing.

The situation in the Middle East continues to escalate, with multiple intertwined hotspots reinforcing one another, casting a shadow of conflict over the entire region. The restoration of peace is the fervent hope of its people and achieving a ceasefire to end the violence must be the overriding priority. The Palestinian question remains at the core of the Middle East conflict and must not be ignored or marginalized. Only by achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question can we break the vicious cycle of recurring conflicts in the Middle East and truly usher in the dawn of peace. I would like to emphasize three points.

First, the suffering of civilians cannot continue, and peace and stability in Gaza must be restored. The Gaza ceasefire agreement was reached more than nine months ago, yet bombings, attacks and blockades continue, and more than two million people remain trapped by the threat of death and displacement. Lasting security can be built only on respect and mutual trust. War and destruction breed only hatred and confrontation. Gaza is not a perpetual battlefield, and suffering and turmoil are certainly not the destiny of Gazans. We call on Israel and all parties concerned to fully implement the ceasefire agreement and achieve a genuine, lasting ceasefire in Gaza. Israel must fulfil its obligations under international humanitarian law, lift restrictions on the entry of humanitarian supplies into Gaza and ensure that humanitarian agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, can carry out their aid operations.

Secondly, the international rule of law must not be compromised, and tensions in the West Bank must be eased. The violence being perpetrated by settlers in the West Bank is appalling and resulting in heavy civilian casualties and destruction of property. The occupying Power continues to accelerate settlement expansion and is encroaching on Palestinian territory. Despite strong appeals from the international

community, the situation in the West Bank continues to worsen. Key reasons for this are the lack of investigation and accountability and the persistence of impunity. International law and resolution 2334 (2016) must be observed. Double standards and selective application are unacceptable. We urge Israel to immediately cease settlement activities, take concrete action to curb violence and ensure strict accountability for all attacks. The West Bank economy is already struggling. Israel should return tax revenues as soon as possible and lift unreasonable restrictions on the West Bank.

Thirdly, fairness and justice must not be absent. We must push for the two-State solution to be implemented. For decades, the Palestine-Israel situation has seen unabated turbulence. The problem lies in the fact that the two-State solution has only been half-realized. Israel became an independent State a long time ago, but a Palestinian State remains a distant prospect. The international community must remain firmly committed to the two-State solution, step up its efforts and take irreversible action. Any arrangement or establishment of new mechanisms must adhere to the principle of Palestinians governing Palestine, respect the will of the Palestinian people and promote, rather than undermine, the two-State solution. Any dangerous attempt to change the territorial and demographic composition of Palestine will severely undermine the foundation for the two-State solution and must be firmly opposed. China supports the early establishment of an independent, fully sovereign Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

China is deeply concerned about the recent escalation of tensions in the Gulf region of the Middle East. The Memorandum of Understanding, signed more than a month ago, is a valuable outcome of the good offices and mediation efforts of multiple parties. It embodies the hope of the people of the Middle East for an end to the conflict and the restoration of peace and stability, and these hard-won achievements should not be squandered. Now that the door to negotiations has been opened, it should not be closed. As long as there remains hope for peace, efforts should not be abandoned. The most urgent task is to stay committed to resolving disputes through negotiations and to return to implementing the consensus reached in the Memorandum of Understanding.

China will continue to support the mediation efforts of Pakistan and other parties and to promote the early resumption of dialogue and negotiations among the parties concerned, the early restoration of normal and secure passage through the Strait of Hormuz, improved relations among neighbouring countries and the pursuit of collective security for the Gulf States.

The Red Sea is an important international trade route. All parties concerned should respect the right of commercial vessels of all countries to navigate the Red Sea, in accordance with international law; respect the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of all countries; and jointly safeguard the safety and smooth flow of international shipping lanes. The parties concerned should continue to properly resolve their differences through dialogue and consultation and avoid actions that could further escalate confrontation.

We welcome the easing of tensions between Lebanon and Israel. The parties concerned should cease hostilities and fully implement Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). Israel should complete its withdrawal from Lebanon.

China supports Syria in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. The Golan Heights is recognized by the international community as occupied Syrian territory, and the 1974 Disengagement Agreement should be observed.

The Middle East belongs to the people of the Middle East. It should not become an arena for great Power rivalry or a victim of geopolitical competition. China will

continue to act in the spirit of President Xi Jinping's four-point proposal on promoting peace and stability in the Middle East; work with the international community to advance political solutions to hotspot issues in the region; and support regional countries in pursuing independence, rebuilding mutual trust and building a new regional security architecture suited to evolving realities, so as to achieve lasting peace and stability in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo would like to thank Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing, which has helped to inform the Council about recent developments in the region.

My delegation remains deeply concerned about the ongoing humanitarian and security crisis in the Gaza Strip, as well as the continuing deterioration of the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Despite the progress made thanks to the ceasefire established under resolution 2803 (2025), the suffering of the civilian population remains considerable, and the prospects for a lasting peace remain fragile.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomes the progress made in implementing the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, in particular the maintenance of the ceasefire, the release of all hostages and the increase in humanitarian aid. These advances demonstrate that dialogue and diplomacy can produce concrete results when backed by a sincere commitment from all parties. However, these achievements remain fragile. We note with concern that several key elements of the Plan remain outstanding. Negotiations on the road map have yet to be finalized, the deployment of the International Stabilization Force has not yet begun, the transitional administration in Gaza has not yet been able to fully exercise its responsibilities and the other necessary conditions have still not been met. The Democratic Republic of the Congo urges all parties to exercise restraint and to continue negotiations in good faith with a view to implementing the provisions of resolution 2803 (2025).

The humanitarian situation continues to require the urgent attention of the international community. Although aid flows have increased significantly, the needs remain immense. Millions of people remain displaced and access to healthcare, drinking water, electricity, education and essential services remains limited, while civilian infrastructure has suffered considerable damage. The Democratic Republic of the Congo reaffirms that humanitarian assistance must be provided on a continuous, safe, rapid and unimpeded basis, in accordance with international humanitarian law. We call on all parties to facilitate the work of United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations so that they can respond effectively to the needs of the civilian population.

My delegation is also closely monitoring developments in the West Bank, which risk further jeopardizing the prospects for a just, lasting and negotiated peace.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo reaffirms its commitment to respecting international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council resolutions. We call on all parties to refrain from any action that might fuel tensions or undermine ongoing diplomatic efforts.

My delegation takes note of the efforts undertaken by the Board of Peace, the guarantor States and international partners to facilitate the transition and the

restoration of civilian institutions in Gaza. We hope that the transitional mechanisms, including the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza and the International Stabilization Force, can be deployed in a climate of trust, with the agreement of the parties concerned and in full compliance with international law. We also encourage States and international partners that have pledged financial contributions to step up the disbursement of the funds concerned in order to support the economic recovery and the restoration of essential services for the civilian population.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains convinced that no lasting solution can be achieved through the use of force. Only a political process based on dialogue, mutual respect, trust and good faith will enable the foundations to be laid for lasting peace and enduring stability in the Middle East.

In conclusion, the Democratic Republic of the Congo reaffirms its willingness to continue, alongside the other members of the Security Council, all efforts aimed at promoting a lasting de-escalation. It calls on all parties to exercise restraint; to uphold the ceasefire; to ensure the protection of the civilian population; to guarantee safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access; and to prioritize dialogue and diplomacy in order to create the conditions for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. 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 Mr. Seck.

Mr. Seck (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Ramiz Alakbarov, for his briefing.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addresses the Council with deep concern. Over the past three months, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has not improved in any way. The current escalation is part of a systematic policy of terror which, as the Committee has been denouncing for decades, aims to dismantle the Palestinian presence and deprive the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights.

In Gaza, the ceasefire remains fragile and incomplete. It has not put an end to the suffering of civilians. Since it was announced, more than 1,000 Palestinians are reported to have been killed and several thousand more have been wounded. The majority of the population remains displaced, confined to ever-shrinking areas and exposed to hunger, disease and insecurity.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other United Nations bodies must be able to carry out their activities fully, and the Council must ensure the full implementation of resolution 2803 (2025), guarantee unimpeded humanitarian access, ensure the protection of civilians and support reconstruction efforts, while reaffirming that Gaza is an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The most recent report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2026/321) also documents patterns of sexual violence against Palestinian detainees. These findings call for immediate protection for victims and survivors, urgent independent investigations and accountability at all levels. Similar action is needed in response to demolitions, evictions, settler violence, military operations and

restrictions on freedom of movement. Such acts, carried out with impunity and in flagrant violation of international law, are intended to terrorize the Palestinian population.

Jerusalem remains at the heart of the question of Palestine. On 18 July, the Committee, together with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, convened the 2026 International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem in Cairo. Participants emphasized the need to preserve the historical and legal status quo of the holy sites, to protect freedom of worship and to safeguard the presence, rights and sovereignty of Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem.

The way forward is clear. International law must be respected. The two-State solution must be preserved through concrete action, including by building on the efforts initiated at the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, held in 2025. The illegal occupation must end. The Palestinian people must fully exercise their inalienable rights, including their rights to self-determination, independence and return.

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

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's open debate. Let me express appreciation to Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov for his valuable briefing.

Kazakhstan remains deeply concerned about the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East and the wider impact of regional tensions on international peace and security. The Palestinian question remains at the heart of the crisis in the Middle East. Kazakhstan reaffirms its support for a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement based on the two-State solution.

We underscore the indispensable role of the United Nations, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and of resolution 2803 (2025) in supporting the Palestinian people and advancing recovery and reconstruction.

Humanitarian relief should be devoted to early recovery and reconstruction under United Nations coordination. These efforts should reflect Palestinian priorities and contribute to the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank within the framework of a viable Palestinian State. Moreover, we encourage utilizing the potential of the Islamic Organization for Food Security, headquartered in Astana, which has already delivered aid to Afghanistan, Syria and Gaza.

Recent developments in the Persian Gulf region once again show how quickly tensions can escalate, with consequences extending far beyond the immediate area of conflict. This dangerous crisis threatens to drive the Middle East deeper into uncharted waters, placing regional security and global supply chains under severe strain. Developments affecting the Strait of Hormuz are a reminder that regional instability can affect international trade, transport and energy supplies, as well as States not party to the conflict.

Kazakhstan is therefore concerned about attacks on civilian vessels and critical civilian infrastructure. Such attacks undermine confidence in transport routes, disrupt lawful economic activity and increase risks to global energy security. They must stop. Practical steps are needed to ensure the safety of maritime navigation and the protection of civilian infrastructure in line with international law.

In this context, we note the important role played by countries of the Gulf region in maintaining regional stability, supporting dialogue and ensuring the resilience of global energy and trade systems. Their constructive engagement remains essential for de-escalation and confidence-building. Recent developments in the region once again warn us of the dangers of escalation. Non-parties to the conflict should not be drawn into it.

Kazakhstan remains committed to working with all partners in support of peace, security and stability in the Middle East and beyond.

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

Mr. Cha (Republic of Korea): I thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov for his valuable briefing.

Nine months have passed since the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict was endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2803 (2025), which established a framework to end the conflict in Gaza and chart a path towards sustainable peace. We welcome the efforts of the Board of Peace and ongoing steps to establish transitional governance in Gaza. The recent declaration by Hamas of its intention to transfer authority to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza is an encouraging sign for future progress.

However, while some progress has been made since the announcement of the ceasefire, the Republic of Korea is deeply concerned that progress towards the second phase of the Plan has largely stalled and that the already dire humanitarian crisis on the ground continues to worsen.

To break the deadlock and prevent further regional destabilization, my delegation would like to emphasize three critical priorities.

First, the implementation of resolution 2803 (2025) must proceed in a balanced and accountable manner. The deadlock cannot be resolved unilaterally. Progress on the phased withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces, the deployment of the International Stabilization Force and the decommissioning of Hamas's weapons remains closely linked. These interdependent elements require renewed political commitment, mutual trust and sustained engagement by all key stakeholders.

Secondly, Gaza requires immediate, unhindered humanitarian access at scale. It is very alarming that nearly 1,200 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire and that 90 per cent of Gaza's population remains forcibly displaced and concentrated in less than a third of the Strip. Families are enduring immense hardship, and severe shortages of all basic necessities, including food, while humanitarian operations face severe constraints. Measures to revoke the licences of key international non-governmental organizations severely compound an already fragile relief environment. My Government underscores that humanitarian aid must reach civilians rapidly, safely and without obstruction and that all parties must respect international humanitarian law under all circumstances.

Thirdly, we must prevent the further fragmentation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We remain seriously troubled by developments in the occupied West Bank, including illegal settlement expansion and daily settler violence, as well as deteriorating economic conditions. As last week's deadly violence near Nablus clearly exemplifies, the West Bank is becoming an increasingly volatile region. Such developments directly undermine peace and jeopardize the two-State solution. The unity, contiguity and territorial integrity of Palestinian land must be preserved.

We emphasize the importance of harnessing the momentum for stabilization in Gaza created by the Gaza peace plan and resolution 2803 (2025). We also highlight the need to promote peace and uphold freedom of navigation in and around the Strait of Hormuz through dialogue and diplomacy.

The Republic of Korea is actively participating in the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, and today we reaffirm our guiding commitment to continuing our efforts towards lasting and comprehensive peace in Gaza and beyond.

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

Mr. Obeidat (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Madam President, for giving me the floor. I wish the delegation of the friendly Democratic Republic of the Congo every success in steering Council's work for the remainder of its presidency this month. We thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov for his briefing.

I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The Arab Group condemns the continuing unlawful violations committed by Israel, the occupying Power, throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in flagrant breach of international law and the relevant international resolutions and in a manner that threatens regional peace and security. That calls for decisive action by the Security Council and by States, in accordance with their obligations, to ensure respect for international law, implement its resolutions and put an end to unilateral Israeli measures, which are accelerating at an unprecedented pace.

In that context, the Arab Group stresses the need to consolidate the ceasefire in Gaza and ensure the full implementation of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, as endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2803 (2025), thereby ensuring an end to the humanitarian catastrophe, the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip and the launch of a serious political process leading to an end to the occupation and the realization of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State. We also reiterate our rejection of all Israeli policies and statements calling for the annexation of parts of the Gaza Strip or the displacement of the Palestinian people, as they constitute violations of international law and resolution 2803 (2025) and undermine international efforts aimed at ending the war, achieving peace and preserving the unity of the Palestinian territory, comprising the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

The occupied West Bank is witnessing a dangerous Israeli escalation manifested in settlement expansion, land confiscation, home demolitions, the enactment of racist and discriminatory legislation, escalating settler terrorism and attempts to impose annexation, in grave violation of international law, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and Security Council resolutions, foremost among them resolution 2334 (2016). In recent days, settler attacks, supported and protected by the Israeli occupation army, have escalated across the West Bank. Those attacks by the settlers and the operations of the occupying forces have resulted in Palestinian civilians being killed, injured and forcibly displaced from their land and homes, in a dangerous escalation that threatens to cause the situation to erupt on a wide scale.

The Arab Group also condemns all Israeli measures aimed at entrenching the illegal Israeli occupation and undermining the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in contravention of international law, the vision of the President of the United States and the international consensus rejecting the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Group further affirms that all measures aimed at

altering the legal, demographic or geographic character of the Occupied Palestinian Territory are null and void and have no legal effect.

With regard to occupied East Jerusalem, the Arab Group reiterates its condemnation of the Israeli escalation at Aqsa Mosque/ Haram al-Sharif, in particular the repeated incursions by settlers, including extremist ministers, under the protection of the occupation forces, and the accompanying provocative practices, including raising the Israeli flag within the courtyards of the Mosque. We also condemn the discriminatory restrictions imposed by Israel on access to the Old City and places of worship, as well as the systematic measures aimed at altering the historic, legal and demographic character of occupied East Jerusalem and undermining the sanctity of its Muslim and Christian holy sites. We affirm that Israel has no sovereignty over occupied East Jerusalem or its Muslim and Christian holy sites.

We also stress the need to respect the historic and legal status quo at the holy sites and affirm that Aqsa Mosque/ Haram al-Sharif, with its entire area of 144 dunums, is a place of worship exclusively for Muslims and that the Jerusalem Awqaf and Aqsa Mosque Affairs Department, which is affiliated with the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Places, is the sole authority responsible for its administration, on the basis of the historic Hashemite custodianship of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Al-Quds al-Sharif.

On the humanitarian front, the Arab Group affirms that the continued fulfilment of the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is indispensable for nearly 6 million Palestine refugees in its five fields of operation. It stresses the need to provide UNRWA with the necessary political and financial support and rejects all Israeli measures aimed at undermining its work or curtailing its United Nations mandate, in flagrant violation of United Nations resolutions, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice last year.

The Arab Group also stresses the importance of halting the Israeli measures by which the Israeli Government seeks to cause the collapse of the economic and social situation in the occupied territory, thereby threatening international peace and security, foremost among them the withholding of clearance revenues and measures aimed at causing the collapse of the Palestinian banking sector.

The Arab Group reiterates its appreciation of the importance of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and the initiative of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, whose ministerial meeting is scheduled for 24 September, on the margins of the high-level week of the General Assembly at its eighty-first session. Both embody the international will to end the Israeli occupation. The Group calls for building on that international momentum, in particular by expanding recognition of the State of Palestine, thereby contributing to the realization of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State, in accordance with the relevant international resolutions and on the basis of the two-State solution.

With regard to Syria, the Arab Group condemns Israeli incursions and attacks on Syrian territory, which constitute a flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and a threat to its security and stability and to peace and security in the region. The Group stresses the need to compel Israel to fully comply with the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces and calls for its immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the Syrian territories into which it has recently advanced and from the entire occupied Syrian Golan and for the immediate cessation of its illegal settlement activities.

The Arab Group welcomes the trilateral framework reached between Lebanon and Israel under United States auspices on 26 June. However, it condemns Israel's continued violations of that framework and of all previous understandings, which undermine the security and stability of Lebanon and the unity and territorial integrity of the country. It calls on Israel to withdraw immediately and unconditionally from all the territories it occupies in Lebanon and to respect Lebanon's sovereignty. The Group also calls for support for the Lebanese Government in its efforts to carry out structural reforms, rebuild institutions, extend State authority throughout its territory and secure the resources necessary for those efforts, including support for the Lebanese Armed Forces and the legitimate security forces.

In conclusion, the Arab Group reaffirms that ending the illegal Israeli occupation remains the only way to achieve security and stability in the region, and that a just and lasting peace can be achieved only by enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and establish an independent, sovereign State, along the lines of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the two-State solution and in accordance with the relevant international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

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

Mr. Helal (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to express my appreciation for your leadership of the Council's work this month, Madam President. I also thank Deputy Special Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov for his briefing.

I would like to make the following six points.

First, the Palestinian question stands at a crossroads between an opportunity that should be built upon to end decades of conflict and risks that threaten to undermine that opportunity. In that context, Egypt, in coordination with the United States, Qatar and Türkiye, is working to support the full implementation of all phases of President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and to ensure that each party fulfils its commitments therein. However, the world is witnessing Israel continue to take unilateral escalatory measures throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories, thereby undermining the opportunity to end the conflict and squandering the prospects for peace.

Secondly, Egypt condemns Israeli practices aimed at eliminating the Palestinian cause through settlement expansion, settler terrorism, attempts to displace the Palestinians, repeated violations of the ceasefire, restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian assistance and on recovery efforts, and the systematic targeting of humanitarian organizations and United Nations entities, in particular the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Egypt also condemns the pressure being brought to bear on the Palestinian Authority, the attacks at Aqsa Mosque/ Haram al-Sharif by extremist officials in the Israeli Government, and restrictions on freedom of worship for Muslims and Christians. We stress that Israel has no sovereignty over occupied Jerusalem or its holy sites, and reiterate our full support for the Jordanian Hashemite custodianship of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem and for the preservation of their historic and legal status quo.

Thirdly, we call on the Security Council to discharge its responsibilities and compel Israel, the occupying Power, to implement the relevant international resolutions, including resolutions 2334 (2016) and 2803 (2025), and the ceasefire arrangements. Israel must cease all unilateral measures that contradict the United States President's vision and the international position rejecting the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and any infringement upon the unity of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The historical and legal status of the holy sites must

be preserved. Israel must fulfil its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. Compliance with these obligations must not be conditional. Settler violence against Palestinian civilians must be stopped and the perpetrators held accountable. Safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance must be ensured in full. Israel must refrain from obstructing prompt recovery and reconstruction efforts throughout the Gaza Strip, and Israel must ultimately withdraw fully from the Strip.

Fourthly, achieving peace in the Middle East begins with an end to the Israeli occupation and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State within 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the two-State solution. Egypt calls for broader recognition of the State of Palestine and its admission as a full member of the United Nations. Egypt welcomes the decisions of some European countries to prohibit trade in goods originating from Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory — a step that reflects a commitment to the values of justice and represents a practical and responsible implementation of international law and resolutions of international legitimacy. Egypt calls upon all remaining European Union member States and the international community to adopt similar legal measures.

Fifthly, regional peace will not be complete without an end to the Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab territories. Accordingly, we call for the implementation of the framework agreement between Lebanon and Israel, under United States auspices, with a view to ensuring Israel's full withdrawal from Lebanese territory, to restoring the Lebanese State's control over all its territory and to implementing resolution 1701 (2006). We also renew our call for an end to Israel's occupation of the occupied Syrian territories and for Israel to withdraw fully therefrom, including from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

Sixthly, Egypt condemns the Iranian attacks on the brotherly Gulf Arab States and the brotherly Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and supports the legitimate measures taken by Arab States to preserve their security and sovereignty. Egypt further stresses the need for an immediate cessation of any actions that threaten the security of Arab States or expand confrontations in the region. We underscore the importance of giving precedence to political and diplomatic solutions and of safeguarding the freedom and safety of navigation in international waters in accordance with international law.

In conclusion, imposing a *fait accompli* by the use of force will not achieve peace in the Middle East but will only prolong the conflict. Achieving lasting peace will remain contingent upon commitment to a just solution to the root causes of crises and to international law and international resolutions.

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

Mr. Grütter (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Amid the proliferation of crises, Switzerland underscores one fundamental principle: the peaceful settlement of disputes — a principle firmly established in international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

The Middle East — from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the tensions that afflict the entire region — illustrates that principle with particular urgency. We urge the parties to immediately and fully implement the Gaza peace plan, resolution 2803 (2025), the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and the other relevant resolutions. Switzerland points out that all parties must abide by international humanitarian law in all circumstances, including the obligation to protect civilians

and facilitate swift, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to, and within, the Gaza Strip.

Following yesterday's incursion by Israeli forces into a training centre of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in East Jerusalem during school time, we underline that United Nations premises are protected by international law. The situation as a whole in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is deteriorating alarmingly. Switzerland calls for the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) and reiterates that the settlements are illegal. We condemn all measures aimed at expanding them and the mounting settler violence, often backed by the security forces. Switzerland calls on Israel to end the violence, to conduct investigations and to ensure that all criminal acts are punished according to the law. Only a political process that reunifies Gaza and the West Bank under a single, legitimate Palestinian Government, addresses Israel's legitimate security concerns and advances the two-State solution will ensure lasting peace for both peoples.

A political horizon is also crucial elsewhere in the region. Switzerland is profoundly concerned at the resumption of hostilities between the United States and Iran. The conclusion of the Memorandum and the talks that followed the Lake Lucerne Summit are an opportunity that must not be squandered. Accordingly, we urge the parties to do their utmost to attain a lasting, negotiated solution. Switzerland cautions against any expansion of the conflict and is troubled by signs of escalation in Yemen. It conveys its solidarity to the Gulf countries directly affected.

In Lebanon, ongoing negotiations must culminate in the immediate implementation of the trilateral agreement and full compliance with resolution 1701 (2006). Contact between Israel and Syria, facilitated by the United States, is pivotal to implementing the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement in a manner that respects the territorial integrity of Syria. Switzerland welcomes the rapprochement between Damascus and Beirut in this regard.

The prohibition on the use of force is a response to centuries of suffering and conflict. Undermining it for the sake of short-term gain would be a costly mistake with lasting consequences. Diplomacy grounded in international law and the implementation of existing agreements is alone capable of fostering the trust necessary for lasting peace — in the Middle East and elsewhere.

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

Mr. França Danese (Brazil) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Alakbarov for his information and remarks.

The conflicts in the Middle East are intertwined, and their repercussions transcend borders. Every fresh escalation destabilizes the entire region. It is therefore essential to abide by ceasefires, afford precedence to dialogue and eschew the repeated use of force.

The Palestinian question continues to be at the heart of instability in the region. In Gaza, the ceasefire must guarantee unimpeded humanitarian access and the protection of civilians. A future of reconstruction and lasting peace for Gaza must be planned. That reconstruction, however, cannot be allowed to legitimize foreign occupation or the forced displacement of Palestinians. It must be accomplished under Palestinian coordination and allow Gaza and the West Bank to be reunified under a legitimate Palestinian Government that is supported by the international community. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, settlement expansion, demolitions, forced displacement and settler violence must end unconditionally. Lasting peace requires two independent States — Israel and Palestine — within pre-1967 borders,

living side by side in peace and security. United Nations membership for Palestine would help to rectify one imbalance that is detrimental in this connection.

It is regrettable that the agreement concluded between the United States and Iran proved so ephemeral. Brazil strongly condemns the resumption of attacks in the region. Attacks against civilian infrastructure are particularly unacceptable. Safety of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea must be ensured through frank dialogue and the adoption of substantive measures aimed at shoring up mutual trust. Militarization and acts of force, irrespective of their source, will just compound the situation, affecting not only the countries of the region but also the world as a whole.

In Lebanon, all parties must respect the ceasefire and resolution 1701 (2006). Brazil reaffirms its support for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of this country, to which we are so closely tied, and for the Lebanese State's monopoly on the use of force. The Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon and the attacks against the civilian population and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon are unacceptable and must be brought to an immediate and a definitive end.

In Yemen, only inclusive negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations will be capable of advancing a lasting political solution.

Lastly, turning to Syria, Brazil commends the efforts of the Syrian Government and its cooperation with the United Nations, in particular its recent accounts of the country's needs in terms of recovery, stability, economic growth and the international community's possible contribution. The Peacebuilding Commission can play a creative role in this wide-ranging endeavour of rebuilding a stable and democratic Syria.

Amid the proliferation of conflicts and tensions in the Middle East, it is only through adherence to our Charter, international law and international humanitarian law on the one hand, and diplomacy and genuine political will on the part of all stakeholders on the other that we will usher in real prospects of lasting peace and sustainable development for the entire region, without exception.

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

Mr. Hadi (Indonesia): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting. I should also like to thank Deputy Special Coordinator Alakbarov for his briefing.

Indonesia associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people.

Indonesia shares the deep concern at the deteriorating situation in the Middle East. Diplomatic initiatives have too often been followed by setbacks that undermine collective efforts to resolve the situation. The Council has the obligation to reverse this deteriorating situation. Diplomacy must prevail. Peace must be waged, not war. I have three points to share.

First, it is time to confront Israel's illegal practices. We condemn Israel's recent inflammatory actions in Jerusalem aimed at altering the demography and the historical and legal status quo of the holy sites. These actions fuel hatred and extremism and aggravate instability across the wider region. We reiterate that Israel has no sovereignty over occupied Jerusalem or its Islamic and Christian holy sites. The Council must halt these practices, restore respect for international law and prevent further escalation.

Secondly, it is necessary to bring the occupation of Palestine to an end. Israel's occupation remains the root cause of persistent conflict in the region. It is a clear

violation of international law. Remaining unchecked, it is eroding the prospects for peace and a lasting solution based on a two-State solution. The Security Council must ensure accountability and enforce compliance with international law, including the relevant resolutions of the Council. Concrete action to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is imperative for lasting regional peace and security.

Thirdly, there is a need to build an inclusive regional security architecture. An inclusive security architecture would create conditions that replace confrontation with cooperation. Lessons learned can be taken from the experience of other regions such as the experience of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Through trust-building, institutional frameworks and dialogue, countries in the region can build a robust regional security architecture as a bedrock for regional development. This includes denunciation of the use of force or the threat of the use of force, non-interference, respect for territorial integrity and national sovereignty and the promotion of dialogue through deliberations for consensus. The importance of an inclusive security architecture in the Middle East is therefore paramount, as envisaged in the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution.

Indonesia reaffirms that any meaningful peace process in the Middle East must be comprehensive, inclusive and firmly grounded in international law. The Council must therefore act with unity, resolve and moral clarity to ensure that justice, dignity and humanity will prevail.

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

Mr. Alnasr (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like to congratulate your friendly country, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month, and we thank you for convening this quarterly meeting.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the Arab Group and the statement to be delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We thank the briefer for his valuable input.

In the context of the delicate circumstances that the Gulf region has been experiencing since 28 February and their implications for international peace and security, the State of Qatar has expressed its strong condemnation of the targeting of the Qatari tanker *Al-Rekayyat* as it transited near the Strait of Hormuz. We underscore that this attack constitutes a grave violation of the safety of international navigation, a direct threat to the security of global energy supplies and a flagrant violation of international law. The State of Qatar condemns the renewed attacks launched by the Islamic Republic of Iran against Qatari territory and the territories of the State of Kuwait, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the sisterly Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. We condemn the targeting of the Kuwaiti tanker *Kifan*, the two Emirati oil tankers and the Saudi tanker *Wadiyan* while they were transiting the Strait of Hormuz. We consider these attacks a flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these States, a grave threat to the safety of navigation and global energy supplies and a clear breach of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council and the principles of good neighbourliness. We call for full compliance with the rules of international law and resolution 2817 (2026). The State of Qatar also strongly condemns the Houthi group's targeting of a Saudi vessel while it was sailing in the Red Sea earlier this month and regards these unacceptable attacks to be a grave violation of the safety of international navigation, a direct threat to the security of global energy supplies and a clear breach of international law.

Out of a firm belief in mediation and the peaceful resolution of disputes for the purpose of consolidating security and stability at both the regional and international levels, the State of Qatar welcomes the fact that the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding electronically on 17 June with a view to addressing outstanding issues between them, ceasing military operations and ensuring freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. We regard this as a reaffirmation of both sides' willingness to move forward in resolving their differences through negotiation and peaceful means and to promote opportunities for sustainable peace and economic growth at the regional and international levels.

Accordingly, the State of Qatar underscores the need to refrain from any action that might broaden escalation, to return to the path of dialogue and negotiations in earnest and to adhere to the agreements reached through diplomatic efforts. The State of Qatar expresses its full appreciation for the partnership of, and the ongoing efforts made by, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and other regional and international parties to de-escalate tensions and bridge differences, which culminated in the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding. On 21 June 2026, in its capacity as a mediator, the State of Qatar announced the launch of the Lake Lucerne Summit and the first meeting of a high-level committee, with the participation of representatives of the United States of America, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the two mediators, Qatar and Pakistan.

With regard to the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the State of Qatar condemns in the strongest of terms the Israeli escalation at the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Haram al-Sharif, in particular the continued mass incursions by settlers, led by extremist Israeli ministers under the protection of the Israeli police, the hoisting of the Israeli flag within its grounds and all other provocative acts, which constitute a flagrant violation of international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the historical and legal status quo at the holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem. The State of Qatar reaffirms its categorical rejection of any attempts to alter the historical and legal status quo and the need to preserve it, while pointing to the special role of the historic Hashemite custodianship. The State of Qatar reaffirms its unwavering position based on international resolutions, including the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, which guarantees the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and an end to the occupation, settlement activity and Israel's other unlawful practices in the occupied territories.

When it comes to the situation in the Gaza Strip, the State of Qatar emphasizes the need for all parties to commit to the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip. Crossings must be opened to ensure the sustainable and unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid to the Strip. The State of Qatar reaffirms its full and unwavering commitment to the Board of Peace, which it has maintained since the very first day of mediation efforts through to the signing of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement with its partners. The State of Qatar will continue to coordinate its humanitarian efforts with its partners in the United Nations and the Board of Peace in a manner that supports the path to recovery and reconstruction and enhances the prospects for sustainable peace pursuant to resolution 2803 (2025) on ending the war in the Gaza Strip.

The State of Qatar reaffirms its steadfast stance of support for Syria's unity, sovereignty and independence and stands with the Syrian people in their quest for security, stability and prosperity. We condemn the Israeli attacks that violate Syrian sovereignty and contravene international law and the Charter.

The State of Qatar welcomes the United States' announcement that it is initiating procedures to remove the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic from the list of State sponsors of terrorism and regards this as a positive development that supports stability in Syria and the region.

As concerns the situation in sisterly Lebanon, the State of Qatar reaffirms its longstanding position regarding the sisterly Lebanese Republic and expresses its full solidarity with it in its measures to preserve its security. The State of Qatar welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire as a first step towards de-escalation and appreciates the mediation efforts of His Excellency President Donald Trump, President of the United States of America. In this regard, the State of Qatar emphasizes the need to adhere to the ceasefire and build on it.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m.