



General Assembly

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New York

Official Records

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 3.55 p.m.

Agenda item 38 (continued)

The situation in the Middle East

Draft resolution (A/73/L.42)

Draft amendment (A/73/L.46)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.42.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): Today could be a historic day at the United Nations or just another ordinary day. Today could be a day during which the General Assembly unconditionally speaks out with moral clarity against one of the most obvious and grotesque cases of terrorism in the world or it could be a day during which it refuses to do so.

Last Friday, the General Assembly adopted six — and I repeat six — resolutions condemning Israel in one single day (see A/73/PV.43). In an average year, the United Nations votes against Israel 20 times. Over the years, the United Nations has voted to condemn Israel over 500 times. That is what an ordinary day at the United Nations looks like.

As much as the United States finds that record appalling, no one can question whether the United Nations is on record in its hostility towards the State of Israel. But for good measure, there will be another vote this afternoon that gives everyone another chance to put themselves on record in a way that goes against Israel.

The question before us now is something very different, namely, whether the United Nations thinks terrorism is acceptable if — and only if — it is directed at Israel.

That is something that we should all think deeply about. The draft resolution we have before us (A/73/L.42) does not comment about the specifics of any peace agreement. As I have said, the United Nations has commented hundreds of times on what it would like to see in a peace agreement, and it will do it again later today. What this draft resolution does is stand for a foundational element of peace. That foundation is the rejection of terrorism, because we all know that there can be no peace without a mutual agreement that terrorism is unacceptable.

Let us talk about some of the activities of Hamas, an entity designated by the United States, the European Union and others as a terrorist organization. The charter of Hamas openly calls for the destruction of Israel; its statements continually repeat that goal. Over the years, Hamas has used several barbaric ways of conducting terrorist attacks. Initially, it used suicide bombers. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Hamas members armed with bombs boarded Israeli buses and entered Israeli restaurants and detonated themselves, killing hundreds of innocent civilians and injuring thousands more. Since then, it has moved towards indiscriminately firing rockets into Israel from Gaza, launching thousands of them in the past five years, including more than 400 in a two-day period just last month. Neighbourhoods were targeted and a bus was hit by an anti-tank missile.

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More recently, Hamas tactics have changed again as it has adopted still more methods of killing Israeli civilians and damaging Israeli civilian property. It has launched flaming kites and balloons by the thousands, often emblazoned with Nazi symbols, into Israeli civilian areas. This is the classic case of terrorism. And yet, throughout all of this, the United Nations has never — and I repeat never — adopted a resolution condemning Hamas. It has adopted 700 resolutions condemning Israel and not one single resolution condemning Hamas. That, more than anything else, is a condemnation of the United Nations itself.

Today, at this moment, the United Nations can change that awful record. The world is coming to recognize the dangerous and troubling rise of anti-Semitism around the globe. The Secretary-General has forcefully spoken out against it, as have many Heads of State and parliaments around the world. And yet, what the United Nations chooses to do today will speak volumes about each country's seriousness when it comes to condemning anti-Semitism, because there is nothing more anti-Semitic than saying that terrorism is not terrorism when it is used against the Jewish people and the Jewish State.

There is nothing more anti-Semitic than saying that we cannot condemn terrorism against Israel, while we would not hesitate for one minute to condemn the same acts if they were directed against any other country. I have watched countries that would never take such positions on their own come together here at the United Nations and abandon all sense of honesty, all sense of accuracy and all sense of truth.

Today we have an opportunity to change that. We can come together as the unified, moral and powerful force for peace that this institution's founders intended it to be.

However, if that is not enough to motivate Assembly members, then I ask them to set aside the death and destruction that Hamas has inflicted on Israel for one moment. I ask them to consider the suffering that it has inflicted upon the Palestinian people themselves. Hamas has been the de facto Government of Gaza since 2007, and yet, after 11 years of Hamas rule, Gaza has electricity for only a few hours a day. Only 10 per cent of its population has access to safe drinking water. Unemployment is approaching 50 per cent and climbing — one of the highest employment rates in the entire world. Hamas uses torture and arbitrary arrest

to punish its political opponents. It has made Gaza a police State, all while it spends its resources, including United Nations resources, on rockets and terror tunnels. The people who have suffered by far the most because of Hamas are the Palestinian people. For their sake, the world should speak out against the destruction of Hamas and what it continues to cause.

The draft resolution before us would right a historic wrong. More importantly, it would put the General Assembly on the side of truth and balance in the effort to achieve peace in the Middle East. The draft resolution condemns Hamas rocket attacks on innocent civilians. It demands that Hamas and other militia groups end all violent attacks, including the use of flaming kites, and it also reaffirms the United Nations support for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. Before the General Assembly can credibly advocate compromise and reconciliation between the Palestinians and Israel, it must unambiguously and unconditionally condemn Hamas terrorism on the record. Regardless of what any country in this Hall thinks a future peace settlement should look like, support for this draft resolution is an essential step to achieving it. Peace must be built on truth.

I want to take a personal moment and ask my Arab brothers and sisters if the hatred is that strong. Is the hatred towards Israel so strong that they will defend a terrorist organization — one that is directly causing harm to the Palestinian people? Is it not time to let that go? For true peace and security in the entire region, is it not time for both sides to let this go? For the sake of peace and for the sake of this institution, I respectfully urge my colleagues to support the United States draft resolution.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation has introduced draft amendment A/73/L.46 to draft resolution A/73/L.42, submitted by the United States of America.

As we have done on other occasions, we state our firm commitment to all international efforts that are able to lead to a peaceful resolution of the occupation suffered by the Palestinian people. In this regard, we endorse such initiatives as the Quartet road map, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and others, which constitute a guarantee of just and lasting peace so that both peoples can live within recognized and safe borders.

Moreover, we reaffirm our conviction that the only long-term solution to the occupation of Palestine is the two-State solution, which would finally establish a free, sovereign and independent Palestinian State, within the pre-1967 international borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. As we have indicated on other occasions, my delegation condemns any action that leads to violence or risks civilian lives. We ask all parties to give priority to the protection of civilians and infrastructure.

After a number of consultations, my delegation has decided to withdraw the draft amendment that it had submitted because we believe that doing so will help to guarantee that the General Assembly fulfils its role in this extremely important case. We take this opportunity to call on all representatives and Member States to join the initiative of adopting the draft resolution proposed by the delegation of the United States with a two-thirds majority of General Assembly members. I reiterate that my delegation has taken the decision to withdraw the draft amendment, and we ask the presidency to please take that decision into consideration.

The President: The Plurinational State of Bolivia has withdrawn the draft amendment contained in document A/73/L.46.

The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/73/L.42.

I give the floor to the representative of Kuwait on a point of order.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): As my country is the Chair of the Group of Arab States for this month, I am speaking on behalf of that Group.

The agenda item under consideration, “The situation in the Middle East”, is directly linked to international peace and security. This item has been on the agendas of the Security Council and General Assembly for years. Accordingly, scores of resolutions condemning the Israeli occupation and calling for its end have been adopted, as have resolutions denouncing the occupying Power’s policies and practices that violate the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law. If the occupation had been brought to an early end then we would not have needed to adopt such resolutions. For this reason, the Palestinian question, which is at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is an issue of such importance

that General Assembly decisions on it require a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, in accordance with Article 18 of the Charter and rule 83 of the rules of procedure.

That is what the Arab Group believes. We hope that the presidency will conduct its work in accordance with the Charter and the General Assembly’s rules of procedure and take into account the precedent set in June 2018, by which the previous President of the General Assembly decided that the situation in the Middle East is an important issue that affects international peace and security (see A/ES-10/PV.38).

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America on a point of order.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): A simple majority is required for the adoption of the draft resolution submitted by the United States (A/73/L.42). Since coming to the United Nations, everyone in this Hall has heard me talk about double standards and the fact that we need fairness in the United Nations. We take on heavy concerns and issues, and the answers are not always easy. But if we do not exercise fairness, we have nothing else. This is not about a motion; it is about doing what is right. The General Assembly has never said anything — not one thing — about Hamas, even when we all agree that the behaviour of Hamas undermines any prospects for peace. The General Assembly has never uttered the word “Hamas” in any resolution.

Just last Friday, there was no decision that resolutions under this same agenda item had to be adopted by a two-thirds majority (see A/73/PV.43). The Assembly did not act under such conditions then; similarly, there should be no decision that a two-thirds majority applies now.

There should be no double standards in this Hall. I want to be clear about the consequences of this procedural vote. This is a decision meant purely to disrupt the adoption of the draft resolution put forward by the United States. Those putting forward this motion want our draft resolution to fail. My Kuwaiti brother knows that, as does the Group of Arab States. The President should not let them have their way.

The United States urges all member States to stand with us on this procedural vote. Accordingly, I urge all member States to vote against a motion for a two-thirds majority to be required. Let us vote for the draft

resolution in the way that was intended — with a simple majority, just as all other draft resolutions under this agenda item were adopted last Friday.

The President: I have listened carefully to the comments made by the representatives of Kuwait and the United States.

At this stage, I also wish to inform members that I have been approached by several delegations concerning the majority required for the adoption of draft resolution A/73/L.42. Having taken note of the fact that the text of the draft resolution deals with matters that have been dealt with by the Security Council, and taking into account the decision taken by the General Assembly during the 38th plenary meeting of the tenth emergency special session (see A/ES-10/PV.38), I shall put to the consideration of the Assembly the question of whether a two-thirds majority of members present and voting is required for the adoption of draft resolution A/73/L.42, in accordance with rules 83 and 84 of the Assembly's rules of procedure.

We will now proceed to take a decision on the question of whether a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting is required for the adoption of draft resolution A/73/L.42.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Chad, China, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gambia, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kiribati, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Nauru, Netherlands, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu

Abstaining:

Armenia, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Iceland, Jamaica, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Timor-Leste

By 75 votes to 72, with 26 abstentions, the General Assembly decided that a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting was required for the adoption of draft resolution A/73/L.42.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Guatemala informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote against.]

The President: The Assembly has decided that a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting is required for the adoption of draft resolution A/73/L.42.

I now give the floor to delegations wishing to deliver explanations of vote before the voting. I would remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of four States: the Kingdom of Bahrain, the United Arab

Emirates, the Republic of Yemen and my own country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I would like to state that we are in complete agreement with my colleague the representative of Kuwait, who spoke on behalf of the Group of Arab States. The four States, in their national capacities, would like to add the following comments.

Our States attach great importance to a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East as a strategic choice in favour of ending the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on the two-State solution, in accordance with international terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002, which calls for establishing the Palestinian State along the 4 June 1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, the return of refugees, and an end to the Israeli occupation of all Arab territories, including the Syrian Arab Golan and the Lebanese territories.

Our States stress that the lasting settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict can be achieved only by peaceful means, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. Israel must cease any aggression or use of force against the Palestinian people. It must also bring to an immediate end all of the illegal Israeli settlement practices and policies in the occupied State of Palestine.

Our States denounce without reservation all terrorist acts, regardless of the identity of perpetrators or victims. We also condemn all States, groups or individuals that practice or incite terrorism. We believe that there is no justification for terrorist acts. We further denounce all acts of violence that could put civilian lives at risk. We call for respect of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, in particular the protection of civilians. All measures necessary for protecting civilians and their welfare must be taken, and the perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable.

In that regard, we take note of the some 500 United Nations resolutions denouncing Israel, the more recent of which was resolution ES-10/20, on the protection of Palestinian civilians. We call on Israel, the occupying Power, to abstain from all acts of aggression and to fulfil its legal commitments and responsibilities. We condemn any act that leads to further violence or threatens civilian lives. We call on all stakeholders to make all forms of protest peaceful in nature. We also condemn the launching of rockets from the Gaza Strip

into Israeli civilian areas, and call for the adoption of urgent measures to bring about an immediate and lasting ceasefire and, once a ceasefire is in place, for strict adherence to it.

From 1947 to the present, Israel has acted without respect for United Nations resolutions or any ethical and humanitarian law, and has contravened numerous international resolutions, particularly those of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Israel has no respect for the United Nations, of which it is a Member. Israel has no respect for the will of the international community, which has condemned its violations of the rights of the Palestinians. For this reason, our four States will vote against draft resolution A/73/L.42.

Indeed, the draft resolution attempts to cover up Israeli violations against the Palestinians and seeks to undermine the two-State solution to which we aspire. The draft resolution diverts attention away from the major issues of the conflict, namely, occupation, settlement activity and the blockade. These are the three fundamental challenges that Palestine is facing, be it in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank or Al-Quds Al-Sharif. We must not turn our attention away from these obstacles to peace. Accordingly, we call on all Member States to vote against the draft resolution before us today.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to explain our position regarding draft resolution A/73/L.42, entitled “Activities of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza”.

The draft resolution is based on deception, as it totally ignores the main root cause of the conflict — the decades-long illegal occupation of Palestine by Israel. That occupation remains at the epicentre of all conflicts in the Middle East. It is the main source of more than seven decades of Israel’s brutal practices towards the Palestinian people. It is the root cause of the continued violation of the fundamental human rights of the Palestinians and other Arabs living under Israel’s occupation. It is the main reason for the suffering and injustice imposed on the Palestinians, resulting in the displacement of approximately 6 million refugees. It is why the Palestinians, Muslim and Christian alike, suffer from a situation tantamount to ethnic cleansing.

Worse still, in the Gaza Strip nearly 2 million Palestinians continue to live under the suffocating Israeli-imposed closure. The unlawful, inhumane blockade has made Gaza an uninhabitable open-

air prison that is designed to be unsustainable for human life. The situation represents an actual, massive and collective punishment against the entire Gaza population, including women and children. It constitutes a war crime.

One of the latest cruelties committed by Israel is the killing of more than 160 Palestinians and the injury of thousands more during the peaceful Great March of Return, in Gaza. Another reality on the ground that the draft resolution intentionally and entirely ignores is the continued illegal settlement activities in the Palestinian territories, which constitute not only a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, but also a war crime. Furthermore, Israel's so-called participation in the peace process has merely been a shroud covering its policy of aggression and expansion. Emboldened by the changes in the United States political landscape, which led to America's recognition of Jerusalem as the so-called capital of Israel and the relocation of its Embassy to Jerusalem, the Israeli occupying regime has conveniently wrapped all of this disrespect in that shroud.

Israel also continues to totally negate any right of the Palestinians to self-determination. This was seen in the recent enactment of the racist Jewish nation-State law. In addition, the regime has taken unprecedented measures to accelerate the Judaization of Jerusalem, alter its demographic composition and religious and cultural identity, and eliminate the Palestinian, Christian and Muslim presence in the holy city.

All of the foregoing measures have been taken while the Security Council was failing to live up to its responsibilities to put an end to the illegal occupation and decades-long tragedy. This failure is the direct result of the sustained and unequivocal support of the United States for all of the Israeli regime's policies and practices. Such policies greatly embolden the regime to continue its illegal policies and inhumane practices against the Palestinian people, in clear violation of international law, international humanitarian and human rights laws, United Nations resolutions and, more importantly, the principle of humanity.

The submission of the draft resolution represents yet another instance of United States support for Israel's narrative of the conflict, justifying its aggression towards the Palestinians. The draft is a deceptive attempt to deflect the attention of the international community from the root causes of the Middle East conflict — the

occupation of Palestinian territory. The United States initiative intends to undermine the sustained and strong international support for the realization of the cause of Palestine. It tries to disregard relevant United Nations resolutions, adopted over decades in support of the full realization of the Palestinian's rights. Therefore, it not only targets Hamas, but also multilateralism and the long-standing support given to the Palestinian people by the Organization and its Member States.

The Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects the draft resolution. We will vote against it and urge all Member States to do likewise and clearly reject its adoption. We recognize Hamas as a legitimate resistance movement fighting for the liberation of Palestinian territory from foreign occupation. Hamas is part and parcel of the Palestinian people and defends Palestinian civilians against Israeli military aggression. By any measure, this is an inherent and legitimate right under international law.

Moreover, in recent years, Hamas has consistently played a significant and responsible role in the maintenance of security in the Gaza Strip and has remained committed to the elements of the 2014 ceasefire agreement. Therefore, adopting any decision against Hamas will only serve the occupying regime's interests. The adoption of such a distorted draft resolution will also further embolden the Israeli regime to continue its years-long brutal blockade of Gaza, thereby worsening the already dire humanitarian crisis there. It will also send a very erroneous and frustrating message to the Palestinians, in particular in Gaza.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved through coercion, intimidation or discriminatory or selective policies. Condemning the legitimate struggle of the Palestinians against occupation is illegal, illegitimate and void of political wisdom, and is therefore unacceptable. Any solution to the crisis requires the termination of the occupation and the restoration of all the inalienable rights of the Palestinians, including their right to return, to self-determination and to establish their own independent and viable State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. Despite all of the brutalities and recklessness committed by Israel, along with the unwavering support, plots and plans of the United States in this regard, we are confident that all such rights will be realized and that the force of logic will prevail over the logic of force.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Group of Arab States, I call on all Member States to vote against draft resolution A/73/L.42. Indeed, we believe that the draft resolution draws attention away from the deep-rooted causes of the Palestinian question and contributes to undermining international consensus on it.

Lasting, comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East is based on relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), the land-for-peace principle, the Quartet road map and the Arab Peace Initiative, which was adopted by all Arab countries during the Beirut summit, in 2002. The Initiative states that peace and normalization with Israel must be preceded by its ending the occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories that have been occupied since 1967. We reaffirm our support for the two-State solution whereby Israeli and Palestine would live side by side in peace and security, within the recognized pre-1967 borders.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.42, entitled “Activities of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza”. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and

Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Against:

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, China, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Barbados, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Kenya, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/73/L.42 was rejected by 87 votes to 57, with 33 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Afghanistan and South Sudan informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote against.]

The President: Before giving the floor to those delegations wishing to deliver explanations of vote after the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Danon (Israel): Today's draft resolution, contained in document A/73/L.42, presented an opportunity for redemption. Proposed by the United States and supported by a global coalition, the draft resolution offered the United Nations another chance to finally condemn Hamas. We thank the United States and Ambassador Haley for standing up for what is right, and we are proud that a plurality of Member

States stood by the truth and took a moral stand by condemning Hamas for its relentless acts of terror.

Today we achieved plurality. That plurality would have equated to a majority if the vote had not been hijacked by a political procedural move. In one strong courageous voice, we could have brought Hamas to justice. Those Member States that voted against the draft resolution should be ashamed of themselves. I ask those countries to wait until they have to deal with terrorism on their own territories. Their silence in the face of evil reveals their true colours and tells us what side they are really on — the side that does not care for the lives of innocent Israelis and Palestinians who have fallen victim to the terrorists of Hamas. Those who endorse terrorism today will be forced to face its deadly consequences tomorrow.

We salute the children in Israel — in Sderot, Netivot and Ashkelon — who so bravely endure the unthinkable dangers of falling rockets. We also think of the people of Gaza; they deserve a brighter future, not one that is controlled by a regime of terrorists. The world will not be silent until Hamas stops its violent and illegal ways. Its time is up. Whether or not they choose to admit it, all Member States in this Hall know full well that Hamas is a radical Islamic terror organization that is dedicated to the destruction of Israel.

For the past 13 years, since Israel completely withdrew from the Gaza Strip and Hamas violently took it over, Hamas terrorists have launched over 13,000 rockets into Israeli communities, deliberately targeting civilians. In November, Hamas fired nearly 500 rockets into Israel over a two-day period. Hamas is committing a double war crime by launching rockets from Palestinian neighbourhoods in Gaza directly into Israeli civilian population centres. Hamas has constructed nearly 40 terror tunnels that infiltrate Israeli border towns to kidnap and kill Israelis. We have exposed and neutralized 15 tunnels this year alone, most recently in October. Hamas has carried out hundreds of suicide bombings, shootings and stabbings that have killed and wounded thousands of innocent people. It has organized endless, violent riots on the security fence between Israel and Gaza, seeking to invade and overrun Israel and encourage young Palestinians to send flaming materials into Israel.

Hamas exploits the people of Gaza — its own Palestinian brothers and sisters — as human shields, an activity that is both illegal and deplorable. Hamas

deprives its people of their basic human rights and steals billions of dollars of humanitarian aid, paid for by the taxes of citizens of United Nations Member States, to fund its terror ambitions. Day in and day out, Hamas denies Israel's very right to exist.

Hamas is also in flagrant violation of international law by continuing to hold hostage four young Israelis whom it has captured. In 2014, Hamas killed and kidnapped Oron Shaul and Hadar Goldin. Hamas is also holding Avraham Mengistu and Hisham Al-Sayed, two young Israeli civilians who suffer from mental illnesses. Hamas has refused to provide any sign of life to the families of those men and is not permitting visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The United Nations has a legal and moral obligation to ensure the return of our boys.

While Hamas flagrantly violates international law, its leadership has the audacity to complain about Israel to the United Nations. Just last week, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh sent a letter to the United Nations that all Member States received, condemning Israel and calling for more violence. Ismail Haniyeh approached you, Madam President. He is a man who has praised Osama bin Laden and referred to him as a holy warrior. The blood of countless innocent lives drips from his hands. There is no difference between the evil of Hamas and the barbarity of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida or Boko Haram. All of those organizations are committed to terrorizing innocent people.

Today, as the Jewish people celebrate the miracle of Hanukkah, a plurality of Member States took a moral stand. They supported the draft resolution and unequivocally condemned Hamas. Other nations chose to vote against the draft resolution. Some sat passively on the sidelines in an attempt to appear neutral or objective. Let me be clear — there is no such thing here as neutrality. There is no such thing as “both sides”. There is no moral equivalency. There is a terrorist organization that endangers civilians, flagrantly violating the law, and there is a State that protects it. Today, the majority of the international community has exposed Hamas; others have turned a blind eye. It will not be long until all nations of the world stop turning their backs on the thousands of Palestinian and Israeli victims of terror and finally make a clear and unequivocal statement condemning Hamas.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the explanation of vote

that will shortly be delivered by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. The following statement will be made in our national capacity.

The United Kingdom voted in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.42 and we thank the United States for introducing it, because it is right that Hamas be condemned for its indiscriminate use of rocket fire and other weaponry against Israeli communities and civilians. The United Kingdom supports and calls for a comprehensive peace between the parties, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

The draft resolution makes it very clear that all acts of violence against civilians are unacceptable. The United Kingdom calls on all actors to show restraint and refrain from any further violence. Palestinians have the right to engage in peaceful protest and Israel has the right to defend itself, but it should use restraint in the use of live fire. We are deeply concerned by casualties on both sides, including the number of Palestinian fatalities this year.

Hamas faces a decision about whether it is prepared to accept the Quartet principles and join efforts for peace or whether it will continue to use terror, with all the consequences for the people of Gaza and Israel. We therefore fully support the draft resolution's call for tangible steps towards intra-Palestinian reconciliation and concrete steps to reunite the Gaza Strip and the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority and ensure its effective functioning in the Gaza Strip. We welcome the efforts of Egypt, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the wider international community towards that goal.

We remain gravely concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. The immediate priority must be to reduce tensions and avoid another conflict. We expect Hamas, the Palestinian Authority and Israel to do their utmost to prevent further escalation. We have frequent discussions with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority about the need to ease restrictions on Gaza. The United Kingdom welcomes recent efforts to improve the humanitarian situation, but much more needs to be done. The people of Israel and Gaza have the right to live without constant fear for their security. Both peoples have the right to live safely in peace. Urgent steps need to be taken to address the underlying causes of the conflict.

Now more than ever we need a political process that delivers the two-State solution, based on the

well-established parameters that the United Kingdom continues to see as the only viable framework for a just and lasting peace. For that reason, the United Kingdom would also have voted in favour of the other draft resolution on the matter, had it been submitted. The United Kingdom remains committed to working with both parties and regional and international partners in support of that goal.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States, to which the United Kingdom has just aligned itself. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

While reconfirming that the EU supported draft resolution A/73/L.42, on the activities of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza, I would like to once again reiterate and emphasize the EU's strong, continued commitment to the internationally agreed parameters for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and previous agreements. Any peace plan that fails to recognize those internationally agreed parameters would risk being condemned to failure.

The EU is truly convinced that the achievement of a two-State solution based on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, that meets Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, ends the occupation and resolves all final-status issues, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1860 (2009) and 2334 (2016) and previous agreements, is the only viable and realistic way to end the conflict and achieve just and lasting peace. The EU will continue to work towards that end with both parties and its regional and international partners.

The EU is deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza. Gaza is home to 2 million people who struggle to access basic services, sufficient water and electricity supply. The humanitarian situation is dire. We commend the efforts of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, to

mitigate the risk of further deterioration and improve the humanitarian situation.

More generally, the EU would like to express its support for all humanitarian actors, in particular the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). UNRWA's assistance to Palestinian refugees is a factor for stability in Gaza and the region. The immediate priority must be to reduce the tensions and avoid another conflict in Gaza. We expect the de facto authorities in Gaza to do their utmost to prevent further escalation. The EU urges all actors concerned to act with the utmost restraint to avoid further loss of life, prevent any escalation and not resort to violence or exploit peaceful demonstrations for other means.

While recalling Israel's right to self-defence, we expect the Israeli authorities to fully abide by the principles of necessity and proportionality in its use of force. A return of the Palestinian Authority to the Gaza Strip is indispensable to durably improve the conditions and humanitarian situation. However, to ensure lasting results, a fundamental change to the situation in Gaza is crucial. That needs to include an end to the Israeli policy of closure and the full opening of crossing points, while addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns.

The EU will continue to support the United Nations and Egyptian efforts towards the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank under one single and legitimate Palestinian Authority. The EU will continue to work with its partners, the Israelis and the Palestinians, regional actors and the Middle East Quartet to that end. There is a pressing need for a political horizon to be restored. That is why, in recent months, the EU and its member States have been so vocal in reconfirming their united, consolidated position in support of the two-State solution, with Jerusalem as the future capital of both States.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms its steadfast position in support of the brotherly Palestinian people and all efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace between Palestinians and Israelis, leading to the establishment of the independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative, the principles of the two-State solution and relevant resolutions of international legitimacy and the United Nations.

The Kingdom of Bahrain strongly condemns and rejects all forms of violence, extremism, aggression and terrorism against civilians, regardless of the causes and motivations. We stress the importance of respecting relevant laws and conventions.

Mr. Hattrem (Norway): Norway voted in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.42 and would like to deliver an explanation of vote.

The text of the draft resolution is, in our view, not strong enough with respect to the principle of a negotiated two-State solution as our strategic goal. The references in the text to the requirements of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions are, in our view, too weak in that respect. Norway supports Egypt's work for Palestinian reconciliation and rapprochement. The draft resolution, as we see it, is unclear regarding the fundamental requirements for a Palestinian national unity Government, as expressed in the Quartet criteria.

Norway will continue its work as Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians to stabilize the situation in Gaza, reinforce international support for the Palestinian Authority and increase humanitarian efforts in Gaza.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiola (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Mexico voted in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.42, because it emphatically condemns all forms of violence committed against civilian populations and humanitarian assistance workers by any actor and in any circumstances, as well as all forms and manifestations of terrorist acts.

Mexico supports a resumption of dialogue in order to reach a fair and lasting solution that is based on the two-State solution, namely, with Israel and Palestine both able to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

Mr. Nguyen (Viet Nam): Viet Nam highly appreciates and supports all efforts of the international and regional communities to move the Middle East peace process forward for the sake of peace, stability, cooperation and development in the region. We are of the view that the conflict can be settled only through peaceful negotiations aimed at a comprehensive and just solution, on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions and respect for the fundamental rights of

the Palestinian people and the legitimate right of all countries to live side by side in peace and security.

We regret that we were not in a position to vote in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.42, on the activities of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza. At the same time, we reiterate our firm position of condemning all acts of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Mr. Skoknic Tapia (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Chile voted in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.42, and wishes to clarify our position on the issue.

Chile reiterates its full and unconditional support for resolution 181 (II), whereby the international community decided to establish two States — one Arab and one Jewish. Accordingly, Chile recognizes and maintains diplomatic ties with both the States of Israel and Palestine. We also confirm that both have the right to live as independent and democratic States, in peaceful coexistence and within safe and internationally recognized borders that must be determined through bilateral negotiations between the parties.

For our country, there is no reason or context that can excuse or justify acts of terrorism. We also reaffirm that the measures adopted by States to fight terrorism must fulfil commitments arising from international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. Chile calls for an intensification of efforts to reach a lasting peace and for the Palestinian Authority to return to Gaza without delay. We urge Israel to lift the severe restrictions imposed on Palestinian citizens in Gaza and to improve the critical difficult living conditions affecting 2 million people in those territories. We condemn all acts of provocation and violence, which above all affect the civilian populations of both sides, and we regret the disproportionate use of force by Israeli forces, especially the use of munitions and weapons of war as a tool to repress unarmed protesters.

To conclude, Chile rejects any attempt to link or associate terrorism with the Palestinian people as a whole. Our country hosts the largest number of Palestinian people outside the Middle East. In that regard, Chile is deeply grateful for the contribution of the Palestinian community to the development and progress of our country.

Ms. Yáñez Loza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation abstained in the voting and would like to make the following explanation of vote.

As a Member State, we have a duty and responsibility to support diplomatic, regional and international efforts between the parties to ensure progress towards a political, definitive and fair solution for all parties with regard to the situation in the Middle East and the Palestinian question. Such a solution must be based on the existence of two States — Palestine and Israel — as the only path to achieving peace and stability in the Middle East.

Ecuador has reiterated its full support for the spirit and nature of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2334 (2016), and all initiatives that have accompanied the process of dialogue and negotiation between Israel and Palestine. Ecuador believes that the situation in the Middle East and the Palestinian question should not be limited to condemning Hamas alone and urgently require a peaceful and negotiated solution.

In conclusion, Ecuador condemns all forms of terrorist acts and reiterates its call for a cessation to violence, regardless of where it originates.

Mr. Blanchard (Canada): The fact that today a plurality of countries condemned the role of Hamas in perpetuating Gaza's misery, as well as the threat it poses to Israel, is a positive step. Today, we still see an opportunity for a more comprehensive approach to this issue in the General Assembly, but we all know that votes and resolutions will not be the solution to the conflict. Let us use this opportunity to encourage and help both sides to resume direct negotiations and work towards achieving a lasting peace for their people. Canada remains committed to the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, including the creation of a Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 38.

Agenda item 38 (*continued*)

The situation in the Middle East

Draft resolution (A/73/L.49)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.49.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): Ireland is pleased to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.49, entitled “Comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.”

Such a peace, unfortunately, is not currently in sight. Resolving the Middle East conflict, 25 years after the signing of the Oslo Accords, will require a reversal of the current negative developments on the ground. Settlement activity, violence and terror all lead us away from progress towards a negotiated two-State solution, with Jerusalem as the future capital of both States.

As the draft resolution before the General Assembly indicates, a two-State solution must be based on long-standing and agreed parameters, including an end to the occupation that began in 1967. A settlement of the conflict must meet Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations to statehood and sovereignty, and resolve all final status issues. Ireland, along with its partners in the European Union, will continue to work towards that end with both parties and its regional and international partners.

As a country that has endured and overcome conflict and has nurtured a successful peace process with important international support, Ireland remains hopeful that divisions can be overcome and long-standing enmities set aside. That will require leadership and vision, along with the active support of the international community. A comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East is possible. It must be based on agreed and long-standing parameters that recognize the legitimate aspirations and security needs of both the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples. We believe that it is important to reaffirm those shared understandings, and we urge all our fellow Members of the United Nations to support the draft resolution today.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.49, entitled “Comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.”

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.49?

Mr. Wagner (United States of America): The United States requests a recorded vote on draft resolution A/73/L.49.

The President: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Israel, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, United States of America

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Honduras, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/73/L.49 was adopted by 156 votes to 6, with 12 abstentions (resolution 73/89).

The President: I will now give the floor to those delegations wishing to deliver explanations of vote after the voting. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): Singapore voted in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.42, which was not adopted, and resolution 73/89, which was just adopted. We believe that both the resolution and the draft resolution are interlinked, which is why they were considered at the same plenary meeting.

Singapore's position can be understood by taking into account the content of the resolution and draft resolution. I wish to underline that our position today has also been guided by two key principles.

First, Singapore does not condone acts of violence against civilian targets, including the launching of rockets into civilian areas. We acknowledge Israel's right to self-defence and to take proportionate measures in the protection of its civilian population. Secondly, we reaffirm our long-standing position in support of a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian issue through a negotiated two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

Singapore encourages renewed dialogue among all concerned parties and calls on all of them to exercise restraint and to do their utmost to protect civilians on both sides of the border, while taking urgent measures to de-escalate the situation. All parties must bear the responsibility of ending the violence, restoring calm and achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Danon (Israel): The United Nations has adopted yet another anti-Israel resolution (resolution 73/89), adding to an ever-increasing pile of resolutions that de-legitimize my country.

This body has missed another opportunity to condemn terrorism and make a clear statement against Hamas, a terrorist organization that harms and kills innocent Palestinians and Israelis, denies Israel's very right to exist and derails all hope for peace. On the same day, the General Assembly has adopted the resolution put forward by Ireland. That reminds me of the infamous comments of Israel's former Ambassador

to the United Nations, Abba Eban. He spent many years in this building, and once said:

"If Algeria introduced a resolution claiming that the earth was flat and that Israel had flattened it, it would pass by a vote in the General Assembly of 164 to 13."

Since he said that over 50 years ago, nothing has changed in this Hall. If the United Nations seeks to bring about real change in the Middle East, it must start with the basics and condemn terrorism unequivocally, recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish and democratic State and clearly reject all actors that do not recognize Israel, while rejecting the kind of double standards and hypocrisy that we have witnessed here today.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I thank you, Madam President, for your most skilled conduct of the General Assembly on this important issue.

We must begin by reaffirming our sincere, deepest gratitude to all the member States that today stood on the side of justice, in support of the just cause of Palestine, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the global consensus on the terms of reference for a just and lasting peaceful solution to the Palestinian question, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Unwavering in principle, they have helped to push back attempts to undermine the decades-long efforts to resolve this injustice, on the basis of law and relevant United Nations resolutions, which form the backbone of the international consensus and are the key to peace.

That international consensus has been reinforced today by the strong support for resolution 73/89 on a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, reaffirming the General Assembly's commitment to the basis and parameters for a peaceful solution, as enshrined in the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map. That unequivocal affirmation, in line with numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), is significant in view of the actions aimed at eroding the global consensus for achieving a just solution that realizes the rights of the Palestinian people and the two-State solution of Palestine and Israel living

side by side in peace and harmony, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

We thank Ireland for presenting the resolution and Bolivia for amendment A/73/L.46, on which the draft was based. We express deep appreciation to delegations that voted in favour, confirming their principled positions and solidarity. It is clear that the international community will not accept that international law, United Nations resolutions and the long-standing terms of reference for a solution be cast aside. That is the fundamental and minimal basis for any engagement on the issue in a fair and constructive manner. We will not relent on that, whether with regard to actions taken here at the United Nations or in the political process. Peace negotiations can never be credible — nor will they ever succeed — if detached from this space, as evidenced by the historic failures of the peace process and the current political deadlock.

Member States that have long supported United Nations resolutions on the Palestine question should not accept offensive allegations that demean their national positions, shared values and multilateral efforts on this issue of global importance. We reject any slander or insult directed at them for standing on principle. We reiterate that those resolutions are not one-sided or anti-Israeli; rather, they are serious pieces of legislation that are pro-law, pro-rights and pro-peace. Claims to the contrary are false, and those resolutions address all aspects of the issue, based on the law and in a reasonable and non-provocative manner.

As to the calls for balance, we say that there is absolutely no balance or symmetry in the conflict. There is an occupier and an occupied people, and the rules of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, are patently clear in that regard. We therefore reject the premise of the need to bring balance to United Nations resolutions as a pretext to undertake what is clearly an anti-Palestinian action — another in the list of punitive actions taken by the current United States Administration, which began with the provocative decision on Jerusalem, in violation of Security Council resolutions and global consensus, which was taken one year ago on this very same day and that has obviously only emboldened Israel to commit crimes and act with impunity, to the detriment of the Palestinian people, the two-State solution and the goal of peace.

What happened today in the Assembly was brought about by instigating an unnecessary confrontation,

with questionable motives and objectives. Exploiting the issues of violence and terror, the overt purpose of that confrontation was to name and shame in a biased and flagrant manner. That is not the business of the General Assembly; its role is to promote cooperative and sustainable solutions to the complex problems and conflicts in our world. That United States action does the opposite, exacerbating tensions and undermining the collective and serious efforts of concerned parties to de-escalate, build trust and confidence and truly pursue reconciliation and peace.

Violence and terror are a serious aspect of this conflict, as in other conflicts around the world, but we reject cynical attempts to reduce the Palestine question to a matter of violence and terror. This is a political, territorial and human rights issue. It is an issue about ending occupation. It is about a people denied their right to live in freedom, dignity and peace in their own homeland. False narratives that further malign the Palestinian side and absolve Israel of its responsibilities are unacceptable and flatly ignore the root cause of the conflict and recurrent crises, the illegal Israeli occupation, colonization and blockade of our land and oppression of our people.

We therefore sincerely thank all those delegations that voted against the United States draft resolution A/73/L.42, rejecting that false narrative and disruptive approach, and we stress that this is not just about Palestine; it must be rejected in all instances. The international community cannot allow the rules-based order to be so easily dismantled. Multilateralism and international institutions must be preserved, as they are vital for human progress and for overcoming the many challenges that we collectively face.

The pretext for such an initiative was directly contradicted by the fact that General Assembly resolutions on our issue are replete with clear condemnations of violence and terror against civilians in all circumstances. Those are properly drafted, within the framework of international law and with due regard to the overreaching context of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem since 1967 — an illegal occupation that is not the preordained eternal fate of the Palestinian people and must end.

We cannot accept a one-sided narrative that attributes violence to the Palestinian side, while ignoring the daily Israeli violence and terror against Palestinian children, women and men that is manifested in

countless ways, necessitating international protection, which those people continue to be unfairly denied. This initiative offers no solutions. The humanitarian catastrophe and human misery in the Gaza Strip will not be resolved by such hostile actions. Political and humanitarian solutions are urgently needed. The illegal Israeli blockade must be lifted.

We also once again pay tribute to fraternal Egypt's efforts towards Palestinian reconciliation. It remains a national priority to end this harmful division, reunite our people and land and restore Palestinian national consensus, Government control and functions in the Gaza Strip, as in the West Bank, with one law, one Government and one security force, based on the principles of the Palestine Liberation Organization. We call for an end to the hypocrisy that calls on Palestinians to reconcile, on the one hand, but threatens to punish them for doing, so on the other.

To the delegations that voted in favour of the United States draft resolution, I say that we are deeply disappointed but understand that each State has a sovereign right to determine its vote. However, we view today as an anomaly and remain reassured by the principled support and solidarity extended to Palestine

from across the globe. We firmly reject might over right and reiterate that punitive measures meant to undermine our rights, humiliate our people and wear us down will not bring us to submission. Our rights are inalienable, our cause is just and we stand firmly in their defence.

I must ask what honour or glory there can possibly be in attacking an occupied, defenceless people that has been denied liberty for so long and has suffered so greatly. What honour can there be in using power to harm, rather than to rectify injustice and truly help those in need? There is absolutely none. The Palestinian people are a proud and steadfast people. They will not surrender to this injustice; rather, they will persist in seeking a peaceful end to it in a way that ensures the realization of their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and return and to a life of freedom, dignity, peace and security in their independent, sovereign State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 38.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.