



# Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

**9462**<sup>nd</sup> meeting

Monday, 30 October 2023, 3.40 p.m.

New York

*Provisional*

---

*President:* Mr. Vieira . . . . . (Brazil)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Mr. Hoxha
China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Jun
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Pérez Loose
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon . . . . .	Mr. Biang
Ghana . . . . .	Mr. Agyeman
Japan . . . . .	Mr. Ishikane
Malta . . . . .	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Kumanga
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
Switzerland . . . . .	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Mrs. Nusseibeh
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield/Mr. Wood

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

---

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room AB-0601 ([verbatimrecords@un.org](mailto:verbatimrecords@un.org)). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



*The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question**

**The President:** In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Israel and Jordan 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 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 the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; Ms. Catherine Russell, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund; and Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director, Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Lazzarini.

**Mr. Lazzarini:** The past three weeks have been horrific. Almost everyone in Israel, the occupied Palestinian territory and the broader region is in mourning. The horrific attacks by Hamas in Israel on 7 October were shocking. The Israeli forces' relentless bombardments of the Gaza Strip are shocking. The level of destruction is unprecedented and the human tragedy unfolding under our watch is unbearable. One million people, half the population of Gaza, have been pushed from the north of the Gaza Strip towards the south in the space of three weeks. However, the south has not been spared from the bombardment, and a significant number of people have been killed there. I have said it many times, and I will say it again — no place in Gaza is safe. The civilians who have remained in the north are now receiving evacuation notices from

the Israeli forces, urging them to go south to receive scarce humanitarian assistance. But many, including pregnant women, people with disabilities, the sick and the wounded, cannot move. What has happened and is continuing to happen is forced displacement. More than 670,000 displaced people are now in overcrowded schools and buildings run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). They are living in appalling, unsanitary conditions, with limited food and water, sleeping on the floor without mattresses or outside in the open. Hunger and despair are turning to anger against the international community — and in Gaza the international community is better known as UNRWA.

Almost 70 per cent of those reported killed are children and women. Save the Children reported yesterday that almost 3,200 children have been killed in Gaza in just three weeks. That is more than the total number of children who have been killed annually across the world's conflict zones since 2019. That cannot be termed collateral damage. Churches, mosques, hospitals and UNRWA facilities, including those sheltering displaced people, have not been spared. Too many people have been killed and injured while seeking safety in places protected under international humanitarian law. The current siege imposed on Gaza is collective punishment. The two weeks of full siege, followed by a trickle of aid last week, have meant that basic services are crumbling, medicine is running out, food and water are running out and fuel is running out. The streets of Gaza are now overflowing with sewage, which will cause a massive health hazard very soon.

In the latest blow, the communications blackout over the weekend has aggravated people's panic and distress. The blackout meant that people could not communicate with their loved ones inside Gaza in order to know who was dead and who was alive. They no longer knew whether they would receive bread from UNRWA. They felt abandoned and cut off from the rest of the world. The communication blackout has accelerated a breakdown of civil order. Panic has pushed thousands of desperate people to head to the UNRWA warehouses and distribution centres where we store the food and other supplies we started receiving via Egypt last week. Any further breakdown in civil order will make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for us, the largest United Nations agency in Gaza, to continue operating. It will also make it impossible to bring in convoys. I say this in full awareness of the

fact that UNRWA is the last remaining lifeline for the Palestinian people in Gaza.

UNRWA is calling on members of the Security Council for support. I have lost 64 colleagues in just over three weeks. The most recent tragic death happened two hours ago. Samir, our head of security and safety in the middle region, was killed, along with his wife and eight children. That is the largest number of United Nations aid workers killed in a conflict in such a short time. My 13,000 colleagues in Gaza are from a community of 1.7 million Palestine refugees out of 2.2 million residents in the Gaza Strip. Most of those who are alive have lost relatives, friends or neighbours and are now displaced, like the majority of Gazans. Many of my own colleagues are now living, sleeping and working in UNRWA shelters. Yet they are showing exceptional dedication to United Nations values.

No words can do justice to the thousands of UNRWA staff members who continue to work tirelessly to support their communities. They are teachers, doctors, social workers, engineers and support staff. They are mothers and fathers. If they were not in Gaza, they might be your neighbours or friends. They are operating 150 UNRWA shelters. They are keeping one third of our health centres open and running 80 mobile health teams. They are supporting the entry of humanitarian convoys and the storage and distribution of aid. They are distributing the little fuel that we have left to hospitals, bakeries and shelters. My UNRWA colleagues are the only glimmer of hope for the entire Gaza Strip — a ray of light as humankind sinks into its darkest hour. But they are running out of fuel, water, food and medicine and will soon be unable to operate. Let me be clear — the handful of convoys being allowed through Rafah is nothing compared to the needs of more than 2 million people trapped in Gaza. The system in place to allow aid into Gaza is geared to fail unless there is political will to make the flow of supplies meaningful, matching the unprecedented humanitarian needs.

Gaza has more than 2 million people, half of whom are children. Gazans are vibrant, educated people who aspire to have normal lives, families, children, education and dreams of a better future. Today Gazans feel that they are not treated as other civilians are. Most of them feel trapped in a war they have nothing to do with. They feel that the world is equating all of them to Hamas. That is dangerous, and we know that all too well from previous conflicts and crises. An entire population is

being de-humanized. The atrocities of Hamas do not absolve the State of Israel from its obligations under international humanitarian law. Every war has rules, and this one is no exception. Hannah Arendt said that the death of human empathy is one of the first and most revealing signs of a culture that is about to fall into barbarity. More than ever, Gazans deserve our empathy. Its absence will deepen the polarization in the region and further push away any prospect for peace.

While a lot of the focus is on Gaza, I would like to reiterate that another crisis is unfolding in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The United Nations has been sounding the alarm for months about the increased violence. Palestinian fatalities this year are the highest since the United Nations started to keep records in 2005. At least 115 Palestinians have been killed since 7 October, including 33 children. The movement restrictions imposed across the West Bank are affecting our services, including schools and health centres. Meanwhile, the situation on the Israel-Lebanon border is getting worse, with regular exchanges of fire and civilian casualties reported.

In conclusion, I am very worried about the potential spillover of this conflict beyond Gaza unless the following is enforced.

First, there must be strict adherence to international humanitarian law. That means that civilians and civilian infrastructure, including United Nations premises, schools, hospitals, places of worship and shelters hosting civilians, must be protected all over the Gaza Strip — north and south — at all times. That is not an option, but an obligation.

Secondly, we need a safe, unimpeded, substantial and continuous flow of humanitarian aid, including fuel, into the Gaza Strip and across it. For that, we need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

Thirdly, UNRWA still needs funds. We have the necessary and largest presence on the ground. We can deliver if we have the means and the resources, including the funding to pay the staff on the frontlines. UNRWA has received generous contributions towards its initial flash appeal, but without a fully funded core budget, we cannot pay salaries and deliver.

Finally, in these dark times, we must not lose sight of our humanity. Our empathy should apply to all — Palestinians, Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims. The rules of war must be followed by all parties,

at all times, in all places. Civilians must be protected, hostages released, and a genuine humanitarian response facilitated. An immediate humanitarian ceasefire has become a matter of life and death for millions. The present and future of Palestinians and Israelis depend on it. I urge all Member States to change the trajectory of this crisis and work towards a genuine political solution, before it is too late.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Lazzarini for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Russell.

**Ms. Russell:** I would like to thank Ambassador Nusseibeh and Ambassador França Danese for convening this meeting, and the members of the Security Council for giving me this opportunity to speak to them about the humanitarian situation in the State of Palestine and Israel.

At UNICEF, we firmly believe that the true cost of this latest escalation will be measured in children's lives — those lost to the violence and those forever changed by it. After little more than three weeks, the devastating tally is quickly adding up, with rampant grave violations being committed against children. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, more than 8,300 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, including more than 3,400 children, with more than 6,300 children injured. That means that more than 420 children are being killed or injured in Gaza every day — a number that should shake each of us to our core.

Of course, the violence being perpetrated against children extends beyond the Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, at least 37 children have reportedly been killed. And, of course, more than 30 Israeli children have reportedly been killed, while at least 20 remain hostage in the Gaza Strip, their fates unknown.

Civilian infrastructure has also come under fierce attack. According to the World Health Organization in Gaza, 34 attacks have been reported against health-care facilities, including 21 hospitals. Twelve of Gaza's 35 hospitals — which are also being used as shelters for displaced people — can no longer function. At least 221 schools and more than 177,000 housing units have been damaged or destroyed.

Meanwhile, what little clean water remains in Gaza is quickly running out, leaving more than 2 million people in dire need. We estimate that 55 per cent of

the water-supply infrastructure requires repair or rehabilitation. Only one desalination plant is operating, at just 5 per cent capacity, while all six of Gaza's wastewater treatment plants are now non-operational owing to a lack of fuel or power. The lack of clean water and sanitation is on the verge of becoming a catastrophe. Unless access to clean water is urgently restored, more civilians, including children, will fall ill or die from dehydration or waterborne diseases.

As if that was not enough, children in both Israel and the State of Palestine are experiencing terrible trauma, the consequences of which could last a lifetime. Studies have shown that violence and upheaval can induce toxic stress in children that interferes with their physical and cognitive development and causes mental health problems in both the short and long term. We are doing our best to reach all children in need, but the delivery of humanitarian aid — especially into Gaza — is now extremely challenging. That is due to both the current siege conditions imposed on Gaza and the highly dangerous circumstances under which our staff are operating. Some of our staff have lost close family members, including spouses and children. And of course, we are grieving with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for their staff members who have been killed. Two days ago, we lost contact with our colleagues in Gaza when telecommunications were disrupted. That left them at even greater risk and made their work to help children even harder to accomplish.

UNICEF and our partners are committed to staying on the ground to deliver for children. But make no mistake, the situation grows worse by the hour, and without an urgent end to the hostilities, I am deeply afraid for the fate of the region's children. But we — and Council members — have the power to help lift children out of that spiral of violence. I implore the Security Council to immediately adopt a resolution that reminds parties of their obligations under international law, calls for a ceasefire, demands that parties allow safe and unimpeded humanitarian access, demands the immediate and safe release of all abducted children and urges the parties to afford children the special protection to which they are entitled.

The Council should prioritize what is now a worsening displacement crisis, with more than 1.4 million people in Gaza, the majority of whom are children, now displaced. As the Secretary-General has said, the order for 1.1 million Palestinian civilians to

leave northern Gaza should be rescinded. Demands for hospital evacuations should also cease, given their protected status under international humanitarian law. All parties must stop violence and prevent any grave violations committed against children. We must have humanitarian access through all crossing points into the Gaza Strip, through safe and efficient supply routes. And the parties must ensure the safe and unimpeded movement of humanitarian supplies and personnel throughout the Gaza Strip for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including, but not limited to, food, water, medicines, fuel and electricity.

Finally, measures to prevent electricity, food, water and fuel from entering Gaza from Israel must be immediately reversed so that civilians have access to the services they need to survive.

UNICEF was created almost 77 years ago out of the ashes of the Second World War. Since then, our commitment to our mission has never wavered — we advocate for the rights of every child. On behalf of all the children caught up in this nightmare, we call on the world to do better. Whether they are young people attending a music festival or children going about their daily lives in Gaza, they all deserve peace. Children do not start conflicts, and they are powerless to stop them. They need all of us to put their safety and security at the forefront of our efforts and to imagine a future in which children are healthy, safe and educated. No child deserves any less.

**The President:** I thank Ms. Russell for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Doughten.

**Ms. Doughten:** I deliver this statement on behalf of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Martin Griffiths, who is currently on mission in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

The events that have unfolded since 7 October have been nothing short of devastating and heartbreaking. We do not forget the 1,400 people killed and the thousands more injured or taken in the brutal Hamas attack. Indiscriminate rocket fire continues from Gaza into populated areas of Israel, causing more civilian casualties, displacement and trauma.

We deplore the fact that 230 people are being held hostage in Gaza. All hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally. We welcome all diplomatic efforts to secure their release and demand

that, in the interim, they be treated humanely and be allowed to receive visits from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

As members just heard from Commissioner-General Lazzarini, the situation of the more than 2 million people trapped in the Gaza Strip is catastrophic. They have now endured a siege and continuous bombardment for 23 days. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, more than 8,000 people have been killed, 66 per cent of whom are said to be women and children. Tens of thousands more have been injured.

The scale of the horror people are experiencing in Gaza is really hard to convey. People are becoming increasingly desperate, as they search for food, water and shelter amid the relentless bombing campaign that is wiping out whole families and entire neighbourhoods. In their desperation, people have resorted to breaking into United Nations warehouses in search of food and water. Dehydration is an increasing concern, as is the possibility of the spread of disease and other health concerns due to unsafe water and the breakdown of sewage treatment services.

More than 1.4 million people are internally displaced in Gaza, while hundreds and thousands of children, women and men are crammed into overcrowded shelters and hospitals. Many of those people have moved south in search of safety, but the reality is that nowhere is safe, and we simply do not have enough essential supplies to provide for the survival of internally displaced people at this scale.

As we heard from Executive Director Russell, the health-care system is in tatters. Patients lie on floors and in corridors. Surgeons operate without anaesthesia. Out of an estimated 50,000 pregnant women, 5,500 are due to deliver in the next 30 days. For the 1,000 patients who are dependent on dialysis and the 130 premature babies in incubators, life hangs by a thread as hospital backup generators run on fumes. Some 9,000 cancer patients are not receiving adequate care. We are deeply concerned about the allegations of military installations in close vicinity of hospitals and the request by Israeli authorities for hospitals, including Al-Quds and Al Shifa, to be evacuated. There is nowhere safe for those patients to go, and for those on life support and babies in incubators, moving would almost certainly be a death sentence.

The provision of humanitarian relief is extremely complex and challenging due to the bombardment,

the destruction of infrastructure and, as we have said repeatedly, the lack of fuel. We mourn the loss of 64 colleagues of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other humanitarian staff who have been tragically killed, and we extend our deepest condolences to their families and colleagues. We have the utmost admiration for the bravery, selflessness and commitment of the humanitarian workers who are delivering aid to those in need in this perilous environment.

We welcome the agreement that has allowed us to get some relief into Gaza via the Rafah border crossing. But those deliveries are a drop in the ocean as compared to the vast scale of needs. It is imperative that we be able to get humanitarian supplies and relief into Gaza safely, reliably, without impediment and at the scale required. In particular, it is urgent for us to replenish fuel supplies, which are vital for powering most essential services, including hospitals and water desalination plants, and to transport humanitarian relief inside Gaza. And more than one entry point into Gaza is indispensable if we are to make a difference. Kerem Shalom, between Israel and Gaza, is the only crossing equipped to rapidly process a sufficiently large number of trucks.

Meanwhile, in the West Bank, scores of civilians have been killed and incidents of settler violence have increased, causing hundreds of civilians to be displaced. Similarly, the violence and the closure of checkpoints have impeded access to essential services and food distribution. The permits of some 150,000 to 175,000 Palestinians from the West Bank working in Israel and settlements are now suspended. The situation is causing significant damage to the West Bank economy and Palestinian institutions. We have very real fears about what lies ahead. The current situation may pale in comparison with what is to come. There is a genuine risk that this war could escalate further and spill over into the wider region. We must take urgent collective action to prevent that.

In the light of all that has been described today, what we are calling for is for the parties to agree to pause the fighting on humanitarian grounds. That would provide the required calm and safety for hostages to be released and for the United Nations to replenish supplies, relieve exhausted personnel and resume assistance throughout Gaza wherever civilians are in need. It would also provide much-needed respite to civilians who are living under unimaginably traumatic conditions.

But with or without a pause in the fighting, I reiterate that all parties, on all sides, must respect international humanitarian law. That means allowing relief in and taking constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects, including humanitarian and medical workers, facilities and assets — and it applies whether civilians move or stay. We are relying on the responsibility of every Member State here and across the United Nations to use all their influence to ensure that the rules of war are respected and that, as far as is possible, civilians are spared further suffering.

**The President:** I thank Ms. Doughten for her briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil.

I thank the briefers for their extensive information on the humanitarian situation on the ground and commend the work of their teams, both on the ground and elsewhere. They once again honour the work of the Organization and everything it stands for.

Following the instructions of President Lula da Silva, I come back to the Council today with a profound sense of urgency and dismay. We must always bear in mind the human faces on both sides of the conflict. Therefore, I extend Brazil's deepest condolences to the families and friends of all civilians, including the brave and dedicated United Nations personnel, who have lost their lives in the ongoing crises stemming from the protracted conflict in Israel and Palestine, which was tragically reignited by the terrorist actions of Hamas against Israel on 7 October.

Nothing justifies such crimes. All hostages must be immediately and unconditionally released and access to them by the Red Cross must be immediately granted.

At the same time, the current situation in Gaza is deeply appalling and indefensible by any humane standard and under international humanitarian law. An alarming humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding before our eyes, with thousands of civilians, including an overwhelming and intolerable number of children, being punished by crimes they have not committed. In three weeks, we have watched the conflict claim the lives of more than 8,000 civilians, more than 3,000 of whom are children. Since I last spoke in the Council, just last week (see S/PV.9451), the death count for children has increased by 1,000.

Meanwhile, the Security Council is holding meetings and hearing speeches without being able to take a fundamental decision to end the human suffering on the ground. As thousands in Israel and Palestine mourn their loved ones, as Israelis agonize over the fate of hostages and Gazans suffer under relentless military operations that are killing civilians, including an intolerable number of children, we have the means to get something done and yet we are failing, repeatedly and shamefully. We have met several times since 7 October and have considered four draft resolutions. However, we remain at an impasse because of internal disagreements — particularly among some permanent members — and because of the fact that some are using the Council to achieve their own purposes rather than putting the protection of civilians above everything else. The grave and unprecedented human crisis before us demands that sterile rivalries be relinquished. The fact that old antagonisms are rendering the Council unable to discharge its responsibility for safeguarding international peace and security is morally unacceptable.

Let us not fool ourselves. The eyes of the world are on us, and they are not going to ignore our distressing inability to act. They all see that our incapacity to unite in response to the human crisis facing us today puts the Council's very *raison d'être* in question. Someone has even said that it is this body, the Security Council, that is lying beneath the rubble in Gaza along with the bodies of civilians. The difference is that we can be our own saviour. We just need to do what is right — to spare innocent lives from the scourge of war. There may still be time to rescue the Council and sustain the hopes that many of us still have for our capacity to be true to our mandate under the Charter of the United Nations. That will be possible only if there is enough political will to compromise, and to be minimally balanced and inclusive in our diagnosis and on the way forward. Failure to do so — yet another failure — will result in an increasingly higher cost, above all in human lives, but also in the cost to multilateralism in general and to the United Nations and the Council in particular.

A hope for consensus seemed to emerge last week in the echo of the Secretary-General's call for a humanitarian ceasefire, as the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session adopted resolution ES-10/21, calling for a humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities. There also appeared to be a light at the end of the tunnel when the Secretary-General, who had personally visited the region to assess the

situation on the ground, announced the opening of the Rafah border crossing for some initial aid deliveries. Moreover, some hostages were released.

The United Nations, through its Secretariat, under the leadership of Secretary-General António Guterres, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other bodies and agencies, has been working tirelessly to address the human crisis facing us. The responsibility for following through rests with the Security Council. The price of inaction is unacceptably high. The growing urgency of the need to take action for the families of the hostages and to address the unbearable pain for the civilian population of Gaza cannot be understated. The positive first steps taken by United Nations bodies and agencies do not go far enough, as the escalation of the conflict is making the situation more dire by the hour.

The relevance of the Security Council's adoption of a draft resolution lies in the need for sustained humanitarian aid and for ensuring safe working conditions for those involved in rescuing hostages and doing humanitarian work. A cessation of hostilities is therefore to the benefit of the civilian population on both sides. At the risk of stating the obvious, I want to put it bluntly: hostages cannot be rescued, and humanitarian aid cannot be delivered, under shelling. That is why Brazil and its fellow elected members have been working tirelessly to try to get the Council to act more decisively since the previous showdown around proposed draft resolutions on the subject.

In Brazil's view, the main goals are clear. They are an immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and an end to the violence, through whatever modalities can be agreed, without further delay, so that rapid, safe, unhindered and sufficient humanitarian aid can be delivered to the people of Gaza, who are under such strain. Besides the 8,000 lives that have already been lost, many more people are about to meet the same fate, as hospitals have no means to keep providing patients with basic treatment. Providing essential resources to everyone in Gaza, including water, food, medical supplies, fuel and electricity, is therefore urgent and imperative. Surgeries are being performed without anaesthesia and lives are being lost in hospitals due to a lack of electrical power and the most basic medical supplies. Food and water are scarce and prices have skyrocketed. The flow of humanitarian aid so far amounts to little more than a photo opportunity. Tanks

and troops are on the ground in Gaza, and time for action is running out.

These are my questions for members. If not now, when? How many more lives will be lost before we finally move from rhetoric to action? It is also critical and urgent to enable foreign nationals' safe and immediate evacuation from Gaza and elsewhere in the region if they feel threatened.

While all States have a right and duty to protect their citizens, their actions must be consistent with international law and international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of distinction, proportionality, precaution, military necessity and humanity. The right and duty to protect a State's population cannot and should not come at the cost of more civilian deaths and more destruction of civilian infrastructure. As Secretary-General Guterres has repeatedly reminded us, even wars have rules. Any indiscriminate attacks on civilians and critical infrastructure, besides depriving civilians of basic goods and services, are morally unjustifiable and illegal under international humanitarian law. Brazil strongly condemns actions that blur the line between civilians and combatants.

Today the Commissioner-General of UNRWA shed light on the grim and disheartening reality in Gaza, highlighting the terrible level of destruction of civilian infrastructure and the tragic loss of innocent lives, including of women, children and at least 35 members of its staff. The World Health Organization has continued to emphasize the urgent need for a cessation of violence and for humanitarian action at a time when Gaza's health infrastructure is on the verge of collapse. Beyond the immediate and very urgent humanitarian considerations, a threat to regional stability looms and any repercussions could be catastrophic. Brazil urges a united shift towards de-escalation and calls on all the parties to act with the utmost restraint. A cessation of hostilities is urgently needed to create the conditions for a full, durable and respected ceasefire and a resumption of a credible peace process. All of that is at stake as we continue in our efforts to get the Council to act with a unified voice.

International humanitarian law provides a clear path for avoiding, or at least greatly alleviating, civilian suffering. The framework for collective action is clear. Our collective response to the crisis, which we all fear will only worsen if nothing is done, will be a defining moment for the United Nations. The staggering fact is

that the Security Council does not have a reasonable record when it comes to maintaining international peace and security in the Middle East. Issues related to the region, in general, have received 35 per cent of the 250 vetoes of the permanent members. Since 2016, the Council has not been able to pass a single resolution on the situation in Palestine. The situation in the Middle East is therefore by far one of the most blocked issues in the Council. This speaks to the governance system's ineffectiveness and the lack of representation of certain parts of the world in this body.

A decision on the humanitarian aspects of the current crisis will certainly not redress the historic failure of the Council regarding the situation in the Middle East. It will, however, stop further human suffering now.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

**Mrs. Nusseibeh** (United Arab Emirates): Mr. President, thank you for your presence here with us in New York today and for the special dedication that Brazil has shown to peace in our region. I also pay special tribute to our briefers today and to their teams' dedicated work in the most unimaginable circumstances on the ground in the Gaza Strip.

I was very shaken by Commissioner-General Lazzarini's recent message to his staff over the weekend in which he said that he is constantly hoping that this hell on Earth will soon come to an end. I want to extend the United Arab Emirates' deep condolences for the 64 United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) workers killed in this war. They paid the ultimate sacrifice for the life-saving work that the United Nations does every day around the world, and we have failed to protect them.

Last Friday, 121 countries, representing an overwhelming majority of the world, issued an unambiguous call for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce in Gaza. They stood up for the humanitarian imperative, human rights, international law and most importantly the self-evident truth that Palestinian life is precious, equal and deserving of the full protection of the law. We have heard many say that the 2.2 million Palestinians in Gaza are not Hamas, that this is not a war against them, and, while those are welcome words, it is time that action reflected them. The more than 8,000 people who have been killed in Gaza — and as we have heard today,



70 per cent of whom were women and children — were surely not all Hamas. Nearly 1,000 children are missing and may be trapped or dead under the rubble. They are not Hamas. Will we help them? The number of Palestinian children killed in just three weeks of Israel's bombardment of Gaza exceeds the total number of children killed in conflicts worldwide in each of the last four years. As Ms. Russell so eloquently said, that should stain our moral conscience if nothing else does. Children do deserve our special protection and are entitled to it today.

If we lean on the General Assembly's moral authority in other settings, we must also respect it in this one. Indeed, members of the Security Council have repeatedly expressed their concerns about the fraying of the international order. The Council, ignoring the expressed will of the majority of the world, may be what breaks it. We need a ceasefire now. As Foreign Minister Vieira said, we must ensure that safe, sustained and at-scale humanitarian aid reaches Gaza now and that access to electricity, clean water and fuel is restored now.

The shut-down of cellular and Internet services over the weekend as part of the offensive meant that wounded civilians were searching for help in the dark. As we have heard today, there have been over 76 attacks on health-care facilities, including 20 hospitals and clinics damaged or destroyed. More than 650,000 people are sheltering in UNRWA facilities. Let me be absolutely clear on this point: those sites are protected by international humanitarian law. Announcements that they are targets or warnings for them to be evacuated, do not — I repeat, do not — alter their protected status. We must see the rescission of dangerous, unrealistic evacuation orders. On Saturday, the Palestinian Red Crescent reported warnings from Israel to immediately evacuate Al-Quds Hospital, which hosts hundreds of patients, including newborn babies in incubators. Around 12,000 civilians are also seeking refuge there right now, as we sit here in this Chamber in New York speaking to each other again and again, debating the language of our humanitarian draft resolution and response. An evacuation order in those conditions is cruel and reckless, and so is our delay as a Security Council.

All of Gaza's civilian population is at risk from the escalating hostilities, as are the Israeli and international hostages wrongly taken by Hamas. While our eyes have been trained on Gaza, the occupied West Bank has not

been spared from violence either. Israeli settlers are escalating their attacks against Palestinian civilians and forcing their displacement. Those attacks must be prevented by the State of Israel. Across the region, there have been several credible warnings of wider escalation. The drums of war are beating. Taking those warnings seriously begins with stopping the war in Gaza. We do not serve Israel's security by enabling it to go on. We cannot reverse the heinous 7 October attacks by condoning this war, in which civilians are paying the price. Ignoring what could happen day after day will have devastating consequences, not only for Israelis and Palestinians but for the prospects of peace and stability in our region.

As we work on responding to the General Assembly's clear call on this body to live up to its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations, we should also always keep in mind the dying words of the dead so that their memories are a blessing to us. I would like to quote today an Arab poet, Heba Abu Nada, a Palestinian woman killed in Khan Yunis several days ago:

"My friend circle diminishes, turning into little coffins scattered everywhere. As missiles launch, I can't grasp the fleeting moments with my friends. These aren't just names; they are reflections of us, with a unique face and identity."

We may have failed the dead, but we must channel our sorrow into saving the living. The time to reverse course is running out. What we and 121 countries are advocating for may be the harder road, but history warns us of the consequences of not taking it.

**Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, I would like to thank Brazil for organizing today's meeting at the request of the United Arab Emirates and China. I thank Commissioner-General Lazzarini, Executive Director Russell and Ms. Doughten for their briefings. IS/11. The briefings underscored once again the gravity of the situation in Gaza and the urgent need for the Council to act. Last Friday, at its tenth emergency special session, the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/21 by an overwhelming majority, which calls for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities, reflecting the widespread calls of the international community. Regrettably and unacceptably, however, Israel has turned a deaf ear to the common concerns of the international community, has chosen to further

escalate its military operations in Gaza and has formally declared the launch of a ground assault.

Secretary-General Guterres has warned that the population in Gaza is facing an avalanche of disaster. With one of the highest population densities in the world, Gaza is a territory that has been under blockade for 16 long years. Its 2.3 million innocent people are living in utter fear amid the indiscriminate bombardment and have been cut off from water, electricity, food and fuel for 21 days. Just last weekend, they experienced a communication blackout that lasted for nearly 36 hours. If left unchecked, the situation will spiral further out of control and an even greater humanitarian catastrophe will be inevitable. We express our deep sympathy with the people in Gaza, who are struggling on the brink of life and death, and we are equally, if not more, deeply worried about prospects for the Middle East peace process, which is on the brink of collapse.

China solemnly calls on the parties to the conflict to cease all hostilities, disengage immediately, establish a humanitarian truce and make every effort to prevent the situation from escalating further. China solemnly calls on Israel, as the occupying Power, to fulfil its obligations under international humanitarian law, lift its siege on Gaza, immediately rescind its evacuation order and quickly restore the supply of basic necessities so as to prevent an even larger humanitarian disaster. China solemnly calls for diplomatic efforts to be intensified in order to facilitate the release of the hostages without delay and for work to be done on that basis to open up space for dialogue so as to return to the track of a political settlement. China solemnly calls on the Powers that have special influence on the parties concerned to put aside their own self-interest and geopolitical considerations and to make every effort to stop the war and restore peace.

The decades-long history of the Palestinian-Israeli issue has taught us that military means are not the solution. Absolute security cannot be achieved by imposing collective punishment on civilians, while responding to violence with violence will only exacerbate hatred and confrontation. We call on the parties to the conflict to abandon their blind faith in the use of force and to commit themselves to breaking the cycle of violence and achieving common security.

There is no firewall in Gaza. It is a dangerous myth to think that a contained war is possible there. Allowing the fighting in Gaza to continue could very

well turn it into a military catastrophe that will engulf the entire region. The situation in the West Bank and along the Lebanese-Israeli border has already sounded the alarm. We call on all parties that are concerned about the spillover of the conflict to devote their efforts to promoting a ceasefire in Gaza. As long as the war rages, more violations of international humanitarian law are bound to happen. Without a comprehensive ceasefire, humanitarian assistance, no matter how much of it there is, will be a mere drop in the ocean. What the people of Gaza need now is more than just a reiteration by the Council of the importance of international humanitarian law and a repetition of unfulfilled promises of protection. What they need are concrete actions to restore peace, uphold the rule of law and save lives.

The Council has held several meetings on the situation in Palestine and Israel to date, and it cannot be said that there was a total absence of consensus. Moreover, the resolution just adopted by the General Assembly has pointed the Council in the right direction. In the face of the current critical situation, China once again solemnly calls on the Council to strengthen unity, build consensus and undertake responsible and meaningful action as soon as possible. We believe that, as long as we focus on the most pressing issues at hand — such as a ceasefire, an end to the fighting, the protection of civilians and the prevention of a larger humanitarian disaster — it is possible for Council members to reach consensus. Indeed, that is what they should do. At this juncture, silence means acquiescence and inaction is tantamount to a green light. The eyes of the world are upon us, and history will recall our choice.

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Commissioner-General Lazzarini, Executive Director Russell and Director Doughten and their teams for the courageous work done by them under the most difficult circumstances.

Humanitarian actors have stepped up, as they always do, to try and save lives in the midst of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. That work is heroic, but tragically it comes with great risk. We mourn the more than 60 United Nations staff who have been killed in Gaza since the start of this conflict. The lives of United Nations personnel must be protected. The lives of humanitarian workers must be protected. The lives of journalists must be protected. The lives of all civilians — innocent civilians, Israelis and Palestinians, men and women,

children and the elderly — must be protected. There is no hierarchy when it comes to protecting civilian lives — a civilian is a civilian is a civilian.

It has been three weeks since Hamas killed more than 1,400 innocent civilians and took more than 200 people hostage. Gaza-based militants continue to fire barrages of rockets towards Israel. The citizens of dozens of Member States are still being held hostage by Hamas. In addition, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza is growing more dire by the day.

At this moment of pain and sorrow and suffering, we must all come together. We must all come together to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, address the immense humanitarian needs of Palestinian civilians in Gaza, affirm Israel's right to defend itself from terrorism and remind all actors that international humanitarian law must be respected. That means that Hamas must not use Palestinians as human shields — an act of unthinkable cruelty and a violation of the law of war. That also means that Israel must take all possible precautions to avoid harm to civilians.

Yesterday President Biden spoke to Prime Minister Netanyahu and reiterated that, while Israel has the right and the responsibility to defend its citizens from terrorism, it must do so in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law. The fact that Hamas operates within and under the cover of civilian areas creates an added burden for Israel. However, that does not lessen its responsibility to distinguish between terrorists and innocent civilians.

The United States is also deeply concerned by the significant uptick in violence against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank. We condemn the killings of Palestinian civilians and urge Israel to prevent those attacks, working with the Palestinian Authority. The Biden Administration also shares the international community's concern about telecommunications shutdowns in Gaza. We have made that clear to Israeli leaders, and we understand that communication networks have started to be restored. That is essential. A shutdown of telecommunications imperils the lives of civilians, United Nations personnel and humanitarian workers — and risks exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Lives hang in the balance, and we must all step up — as the United States has done. We are the single-largest donor to the Palestinian people, having contributed more than \$1 billion to the United Nations

Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East since 2021, and President Biden recently announced an additional \$100 million in humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank.

But of course, no amount of aid will matter if it cannot reach people in need, and the United States continues to work with Israel, Egypt, the United Nations and other partners to facilitate the rapid and sustained flow of assistance. Food, fuel, water, medicine and other essential services must be restored. And while the number of trucks entering Gaza continues to increase, it is not nearly enough. The amount of humanitarian assistance flowing into Gaza must be scaled up urgently. We must do everything possible to save lives, and President Biden has expressed his support for humanitarian pauses in the fighting so as to allow hostages to get out, humanitarian aid to reach and be distributed within Gaza and safe passage for civilians, which will help people access humanitarian assistance or move to safer locations.

We also continue to urge all Member States to work to prevent a spillover of the crisis. Last week, Secretary Blinken asked the Council to send a firm, united message to any State or non-State actor that is considering opening up another front against Israel or who may target Israel's partners, including the United States — do not do it. This is a matter of international peace and security, and the Council must speak out.

That is one of the many reasons that, last week, the United States put forward a strong and balanced Security Council draft resolution (S/2023/792), on which we consulted with all Member States and worked to forge consensus. The draft resolution received the support of the majority of the Council, but Russia and China blocked its adoption (see S/PV.9453). Following the veto, action moved to the General Assembly, where Member States were asked to vote for draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, which was grossly one sided and was missing two keywords — “Hamas” and “hostage”. Those deliberate omissions give cover and empower Hamas's brutality. During the emergency special session, we also heard a few Member States implicitly endorse Hamas's acts of violence. Frankly, I was shocked and appalled. It is outrageous, and it must be called out. It is unconscionable that Hamas's actions are not condemned by the General Assembly.

As I have said before, the United States will continue to engage with any Council member and any Member State that is committed to adopting a strong and balanced draft resolution. But any Council product must support direct diplomacy efforts that can save lives and advance the prospects of a more peaceful and secure future for the region. Even at this difficult moment, we must keep hope alive. We must work towards a brighter future, a future where Israelis and Palestinians have equal measures of security, freedom, justice, opportunity and dignity, a future where Palestinians realize their legitimate right to self-determination and a State of their own, a future where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace. That is not the future that Hamas wants to see, but it is the future that we must all work to advance together.

**Mr. Pérez Loose** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, Ms. Lisa Doughten and Ms. Catherine Russell for their grim reports this afternoon and for all the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNICEF in these difficult circumstances on the ground.

The developments in Gaza are of great concern. The situation of the civilian population is desperate, the aid arriving insufficient and the future uncertain and threatening. The shut-off of telecommunications, just mentioned, and the start of military action on the ground aggravate the situation.

Ecuador appreciates the efforts that have been made to make the entry of vital supplies from Egypt viable and hopes that a system can be established that will allow sufficient and constant supplies to the civilian population. We recognize the right of countries to protect their populations, where permitted under international law, while recalling the obligation to do exercise that right in full respect of international law and international humanitarian law at all times, as we and other members of the Council have stated on several occasions.

Ecuador reiterates its support for the work of the Secretary-General, the United Nations system, as well as the work of its agencies mandated to provide humanitarian assistance to the population affected by this conflict.

My country has insistently called for the prevention of the spread of violence to other parts of the region.

On this occasion, I make special mention of the need to avoid exacerbating tensions and fuelling violence in the West Bank and on the Lebanon-Israel border and I reiterate the call to act responsibly and with common sense. Otherwise, there will only be more death, pain and suffering.

As I have said repeatedly in recent weeks, it is necessary for the Council to express its voice in the face of the explosion of violence in the area and its very serious humanitarian consequences. It is essential to exhaust all efforts to do so, above all by trying to reach agreements between those who have the power to prevent, by their will alone, a majority decision of the Council from being adopted.

It is worth remembering that exercising greater power also entails greater responsibility. The Council must bear in mind that this Organization was born to defend the dignity and value of the human person, to ensure that reason prevails in human relations and to seek a better world for all. It is our duty to strive to always live up to that mission.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for chairing — for the second time this month — an emergency meeting of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East. I would also like to thank Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); Ms. Catherine Russell, Executive Director of UNICEF; and Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director of the Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings and, above all, their efforts in these particularly tragic circumstances.

We offer our condolences to the United Nations, in particular UNRWA, for the dozens of staff who died in the course of their duties. Our condolences also go to the relatives of the thousands of Israeli and Palestinian civilians — more than a third of them children — who, tragically, lost their lives in recent weeks.

Since 7 October, Switzerland has strongly condemned the acts of terror, the indiscriminate firing of rockets against the Israeli population and the taking of hostages by Hamas. In that context, Switzerland has expressed its solidarity with the Israeli population. All hostages held in Gaza must be released immediately and unconditionally. We have recognized Israel's

legitimate desire for national defence and security, recalling that legitimate security and military necessity are recognized under international humanitarian law, which must be respected by all parties to the conflict. We stress once again the binding nature of all its rules, without exception, in particular the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution in the conduct of hostilities. All violations of international law must be investigated so that the perpetrators can be brought to justice.

As it has done on multiple occasions, Switzerland reiterates that the application of international humanitarian and human rights law, and in particular the protection of civilians, is and must remain a priority for the Council. It is therefore imperative to protect civilians and people no longer taking part in hostilities. We must protect them from acts of terror in Israel, and we must protect them in Gaza and the West Bank, where the increase in violence, particularly by settlers, is worrisome. We must exert our influence on the parties to the conflict to ensure respect for international humanitarian law, to halt the current spiral of violence and prevent it from spreading throughout the region.

We heard that, in Gaza, the entire population—almost half of whom are children—is now entirely under siege. Civilian infrastructure, including UNRWA schools and, in particular hospitals, are protected under international humanitarian law. They must be able to provide security and assistance to civilians. The population must have access in sufficient quality and quantity to essential goods and services, including drinking water, food, medical care and fuel.

Switzerland has been working very actively within the Security Council and the General Assembly to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and to introduce measures, such as humanitarian pauses or truces, to guarantee access to aid. Such measures, accompanied by security guarantees, are necessary to enable the staff of impartial humanitarian organizations to work effectively to meet the needs of the population and alleviate the worsening health crisis in Gaza. That is all the more necessary in the light of the intensification of hostilities in recent days.

Unified action by the Council is therefore more necessary than ever to put an end to the violence, ensure respect for international law and work towards peace. Switzerland will continue to do everything in its power

to ensure that the Council takes such action, so that it assumes its responsibility in the face of this crisis.

**Mr. Biang** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini, Executive Director Catherine Russell and Director Lisa Doughten for their briefings on the situation in Gaza in the past hours. I am deeply moved by their various briefings and accounts.

I would like to thank the United Arab Emirates and China for their initiative in organizing this emergency meeting, because we, as the Security Council, cannot stand idly by in the face of the unbearable scale of the horror unfolding before our eyes.

The intensification of the Israeli air strikes, together with the ground operations of forces in Gaza, is dramatically increasing the heavy death toll of this heinous war, which is morally harrowing. The Council's paralysis is inconceivable and unacceptable, at a time when 10,000 people, including 1,000 children, have been killed since the heinous attacks of Hamas in Israel on 7 October. It is high time that this bloodbath came to an end.

Gabon reiterates its firm condemnation of all indiscriminate violence. We want to make it very clear that civilian populations must not be used as bargaining chips, human shields or objects of collective punishment. All hostages must be released unconditionally, and Israel's right to legitimate self-defence must be exercised in accordance with international humanitarian law and the principles of proportionality, precaution and distinction. The dehumanizing cycle of violence against civilians must immediately cease.

Within the Council, we must move beyond the political and geopolitical alliances that lead us to inaction, as well as unproductive divisions and rivalries, to demand an immediate cessation of hostilities and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance to those in need trapped in the ruins of Gaza.

Gabon calls for the respect and implementation of General Assembly resolution ES-10/21, adopted by the General Assembly on 26 October. We commend the efforts undertaken by the countries in the region to ensure calm and echo the call of the Secretary-General for a humanitarian ceasefire. We reiterate our call for restraint and encourage all States with influence over the parties to redouble their efforts to lead the parties to choose peace and preserve human lives.

We are all aware of the risk that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict poses to the peace and stability of the entire region and beyond. We must avoid a conflagration that would be a path of no return into chaos.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming my country's conviction that diplomacy, dialogue and negotiation, with a central role played by the United Nations, are and remain the essential channels for achieving a lasting solution to this deadly crisis. We reiterate our commitment to the two-State solution.

**Mrs. Frazier** (Malta): I thank today's briefers for their stark briefings and also thank and applaud their teams for their important work on the ground. We convey our sincere condolences to Commissioner-General Lazzarini for the tragic loss of the staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the past weeks. For years, the Agency has been an important stabilizing force in the region. In recent days, his work has been nothing short of heroic, and he can count on our full support.

Malta is gravely concerned by the desperate situation in Gaza. Such military operations will undoubtedly have a devastating impact on the more than 2 million civilians trapped in the enclave. Let us not forget that those civilians were already perilously vulnerable and living in dire conditions.

During the past days, thousands broke into UNRWA warehouses and distribution centres, taking wheat, flour and other basic items. That illustrates how desperate the situation on the ground is and is a worrisome sign that civil order is starting to break down.

In parallel, Hamas's continuous rocket barrage into Israeli territory, with some rockets reaching Tel Aviv, is completely unacceptable. We unequivocally reject and condemn those barbaric attacks, including the 7 October attack and the taking of hostages. Those are heinous acts of terrorism. We reiterate our call on Hamas to immediately release all hostages safely and unconditionally and urge parties with influence to continue negotiations to that end.

Malta condemns all violence against civilians. All parties to the conflict are obligated to abide by international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. They must take all feasible precautions to avoid, and in any event minimize, harm

to civilians and civilian objects. Those include objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.

We are utterly devastated to note the effects the conflict is having on Palestinian and Israeli children. Thousands have perished, while the rest are suffering unthinkable psychological traumas. We underscore that the killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools, hospitals, places of worship and the denial of children's access to humanitarian assistance are all grave violations. We also echo the concerns raised regarding the children being held by Hamas. We reiterate our call for their immediate release and for their special protection needs to be prioritized.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza can no longer be ignored. Urgent action is needed. That is why we voted in favour of General Assembly resolution ES-10/21 on Friday at the tenth emergency special session. We welcome the provisions of the resolution that call for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities, which is the minimum requirement to ensure the protection of civilians.

Meanwhile, we remain concerned that the Council has been unable to act in the face of the accelerating crisis. We echo the Secretary-General's message that this is a moment of truth. Our immediate priority must be to address the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe and reverse the current escalations. We urge Council members to unite in good faith and act decisively for the sake of regional and international security. We also stress that it is unacceptable that humanitarian actors working through the most life-threatening and extraordinary conditions to protect Gazan civilians must also contend with communications blackouts. Connectivity is of the utmost importance, not only for the civilian population but also so that aid responders can continue doing their critical work.

Malta reiterates the call also made in the European Council conclusions for continued, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access in Gaza, including through humanitarian corridors and pauses. All efforts made by international actors in that regard are welcome. Furthermore, we are alarmed at the precarious developments in areas outside Gaza. It is critical that the international community work together to prevent a spillover, which would further increase internal tensions and destabilize the entire region. Malta underscores that any lasting and sustainable plan

for peace in the Middle East must be based on a two-State solution, in line with relevant Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters. De-escalation, restraint and mediation are critical. The longer we fail to address those imperatives, the harder it will become to climb out of the abyss and towards the path of peace.

**Mr. De Rivière** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Executive Director of UNICEF and the Director of the Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for their briefings.

The 7 October terrorist attacks by Hamas and other groups against Israel have triggered an unprecedented crisis. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire. Civilians, many of them children, are dying every day. The people are hungry. The lack of water poses the risk of epidemics, while the hospitals are already overwhelmed. It is urgent to guarantee unhindered humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip, which is in need of food, water and electricity. The number of convoys must be meaningfully increased to meet current needs. There must be a humanitarian truce that can eventually lead to a ceasefire. France has significantly increased its humanitarian aid through a special charter flight last weekend. France welcomes the commitment of the Secretary-General and the work of the United Nations agencies and humanitarian actors on the ground, who are working in extremely difficult conditions. We extend our deepest condolences to the United Nations on the deaths of 63 members of the UNRWA staff.

Civilians must be able to leave Gaza without being prevented from doing so. Moreover, we have consistently called for that with regard to our own nationals and their families since 7 October. Nothing can justify the suffering of civilians, who must be protected. All victims deserve our compassion, and all lives are equally precious. Israel has the right to defend itself and the duty to do so in compliance with international humanitarian law, while ensuring the protection of civilians. France voted in favour of the General Assembly resolution ES-10/21, submitted by Jordan on behalf of the Group of Arab States, which calls for a truce, humanitarian access and the protection of civilians; condemns all acts of terrorism; and calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. I also recall our condemnation in the

strongest terms of the terrorist attacks by Hamas, which in no way represents the Palestinians and has nothing but contempt for their suffering. Furthermore, I reiterate our demand for the hostages' immediate and unconditional release. Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution ES-10/21, the Security Council must be able to fully assume its responsibilities and reach a just decision based on our shared values. France will continue to work on the new draft resolution submitted by Brazil so that it can be speedily adopted.

The extreme gravity of the situation in Gaza must not allow us to forget what is happening in the other occupied Palestinian territories. France firmly condemns the violent acts perpetrated by settlers against the Palestinian population, which are on the rise in the West Bank, and calls on the Israeli authorities to put a stop to them. We are duty-bound to prevent the spread of the conflict throughout the region. France is extremely concerned about the shelling of the headquarters of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon in southern Lebanon on 28 October. France is committed to preventing the spread of the conflict.

The war has reminded us — if we needed to be reminded — that the world can no longer disregard the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace and security. We all know the conditions necessary for achieving that objective — to provide Israel with vital guarantees for its security and a State for the Palestinians. We must all make a concerted effort to find a new political horizon. The only viable solution is a two-State solution. France will pursue its engagement within the Council to ensure that it adopts a draft resolution as soon as possible. We owe it to the Israelis and the Palestinians.

**Mr. Hoxha** (Albania): Let me thank Commissioner-General Lazzarini, Executive Director Russell and Ms. Doughten for the information provided. We pay tribute to them and their work and teams on the ground, and mourn the loss of more than 60 United Nations workers in the line of duty.

The past three weeks have been dramatic for Israelis and Palestinians and a torment for the Middle East and many people elsewhere. The overall death toll in terms of civilian casualties is frightening and unsustainable. We extend our condolences and deepest sympathy to the families of all victims, Israelis and Palestinians alike.

The day of 7 October will remain a defining moment in the never-quiet history of the Middle East. Hamas, its brutality and terror — the worst human behaviour — will not and must not be forgotten. In the current utterly complex situation, there is an accumulation of competing urgencies — the response to terror and the continued rocket launches from Gaza, the liberation of hostages, the protection of civilians, the provision of humanitarian aid and the increased risk of the conflict's spillover.

Let me quickly go through each of them.

First, in its exercise of the right of self-defence, which we recognize and support like every other country under attack, Israel is determined to eradicate Hamas. That should not be portrayed mistakenly as a licence to punish Palestinians. It is beyond any doubt that conducting war in such a densely populated area as Gaza is difficult, challenging and very demanding, and that it must be conducted prudently, professionally and in compliance with international humanitarian law. We profoundly regret every innocent life lost, without distinction. While circumstances may be different, a loss is always a loss. Therefore, there is a need for maximum precaution not to harm those who are doubly in danger: from Hamas and its policies on the one hand, and from a fight that they have not chosen on the other. It is therefore extremely important and urgent to do everything possible so that civilian populations are not found in that hopeless place from which there is no escape.

Secondly, nothing can ever justify abducting innocent people — children, women and the elderly — and holding them hostage, and even less using them as Hamas is doing. They must be liberated. They must be brought home. We welcome efforts by various actors in that respect and urge them to continue.

Thirdly, unhindered humanitarian aid at scale must be urgently provided to all those in need. We cannot contemplate children dying in hospitals because of the lack of medicine, electricity, water or communications. We cannot contemplate the lack of food for entire families, adding to an already difficult situation the total breakdown of law and order because of the lack of basic commodities. The Government of Israel has promised that aid will flow in abundance soon. It should happen immediately. Those who are spared from the fighting do not need to die of hunger.

We are trying to put ourselves in Israel's shoes, feeling the trauma of terror striking with a ferocity that one cannot forget and faced with an existential question, with countries and proxies that are seeking openly to destroy it. I do not think that anyone here or anywhere would feel at ease knowing that their next-door neighbour was lying in wait for the right moment to kill them. How can that not bring back horrible memories and the fear and anxiety that were summarized in the "never again" pledge?

But in the very same way, we are also putting ourselves in the Palestinians' shoes, feeling the inexplicable pain of the civilians caught in the war that has befallen them — a war first imposed by Hamas and their like and decided elsewhere, by their masters, who are rubbing their hands in the face of the casualties they had anticipated and hoped for as the turmoil of every possible danger unfolds. We feel for the Palestinians who for decades, every time they neared the horizon of their future in their State, were met with the opposition of those against it, who were always quicker to disrupt it and push it further away. We feel for the thousands on both sides of this terrible divide who have lost their loved ones, as well as the families of the hostages and all who have been torn apart by death, grief and the insecurity of tomorrow.

Wars are sometimes unavoidable because they are imposed, but they are always brutal. They bring inevitable destruction. They create victims and sadly, often casualties among people who do not deserve it. But even wars have laws, and they must be respected. We believe and hope that there is and must be a way to ensure the security of Israel and its people while ensuring security and prospects for all Palestinians who do not want war.

Beyond the tragedy unfolding in Israel and Gaza, the magnitude of the human suffering is affecting people across borders and identities, and we have noticed a sharp increase in hate and division, including through threats of terrorism and targeted violence. That sharp and often confusing polarization fails to acknowledge our common humanity and the fact that the killing of innocent civilians, regardless of their religion or ethnic background, is wrong and unacceptable. The frightening images of the bloodthirsty mob yesterday in Dagestan hunting for Jewish people is another appalling illustration of the intolerable increase in antisemitism. No one should be indifferent or allow rallies to take place in which people chant "Kill the Jews" or "Destroy



Israel". That is why there is such a great need for wisdom, responsibility and action both on the ground and in the Council. Because otherwise confusion, hatred, tensions and violence will continue not only in Gaza and the West Bank but elsewhere, dividing societies in the Middle East and beyond, fuelled by strong emotions, ideologies and beliefs, overpowering cool heads and reason and overshadowing forward-looking perspectives.

Last but not least, there is a serious risk of a spillover. Hizbullah is playing with fire, and attacks from the northern border are becoming increasingly threatening. If that continues, it may be only a matter of time before a point of no return is reached. That must be resisted, because it can only bring the region and all the countries involved to the brink of catastrophe. In that respect, we are also very concerned about the situation in the West Bank. We condemn the extremist settler violence against Palestinians, which is totally unacceptable. Such acts must be fully investigated and those responsible held accountable.

In the face of so much complexity and adversity, we believe it is urgent that we start thinking about the Gaza of tomorrow — a Gaza without Hamas or extremists. Palestinian civilians in Gaza need to be offered prospects and a new organization of life under a new administration. Hamas has let them down. Hamas has brought war to them. Hamas did not bring them prosperity, because it invested in tunnels and rockets and in hatred and death. We need to start thinking about how the fabric of the society can be repaired so that children know what *shalom* means, instead of being raised to hear and repeat "Death to the Jews". If not, the Hamas of today will be replaced only by the Hamas of tomorrow, maybe with another name, but with the same hatred, ideology and goals, embroiled in a never-ending cycle of hurting the other, acting falsely in the name of God, which they disrespect, and in the name of a future that they simply oppose.

That is why the political process should be revived as soon as possible, because in its absence there can only be unhappiness, poverty, discrimination, hatred, tension, never-ending violence, victims and, as has happened many times, exploitation by terrorists, extremists and their supporters. And let us not fool ourselves. The next war will only be deadlier. But it is preventable if we all work together, with conviction and in good faith, for peace — lasting peace.

**Mr. Kumanga** (Mozambique): Mozambique thanks Brazil's presidency for its timely convening of this meeting. We also thank the briefers, Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director of the Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and Ms. Catherine Russell, Executive Director of UNICEF, for their insights and updates on the current situation in the Gaza Strip.

A gloomy and tragic situation is taking place in Gaza. We are horrified by the reports of the suffering and deaths of children, women and men there. It is clear that the protection of civilians in time of war is not being observed. In that context, Mozambique joins its voice with those of many others in reiterating the need for an immediate and unconditional humanitarian ceasefire to ease the suffering of millions of our brothers and sisters, Israelis and Palestinians, in the Gaza Strip.

We should remind ourselves that the laws of war have established clear rules to protect human lives and human dignity and respect humanitarian needs. Those laws cannot be altered or sidelined in any circumstances. They must be respected and observed by everyone, everywhere, at all times, without any exception or excuse. We condemned Hamas's attacks on 7 October against Israeli children, women and men. We strongly condemn the attacks on civilian populations, in particular children, women and the elderly and United Nations humanitarian staff. We call for their protection, which is vital. It is therefore imperative that we continue to work together to ensure the safety and protection of civilians in the conflict zones.

The world looks to us and expects us, as members of the Security Council, to respond expeditiously to the situation in the Gaza Strip. The United Nations is awaiting action and leadership from the Council. Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations clearly states:

"[i]n order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security."

Accordingly, we reiterate our appeal to the members of the Council to fulfil their functions and powers in order to change the course of action in the Gaza Strip.

Mozambique is a strong advocate for peace and dialogue in the Middle East region, particularly in Palestine. We echo the Secretary-General's repeated calls to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is the key to sustainable peace in the Middle East. For this desirable purpose, we firmly believe that the parties can work together, through constructive dialogue, for lasting peace, in full compliance with the principles of the two-State solution, based on Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and decisions.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We fully support the initiative of the delegations of the United Arab Emirates and China to convene this emergency meeting of the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Gaza. It was with utmost concern that we listened to the assessment of the situation on the ground by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini; the Executive Director of UNICEF, Catherine Russell; and the Director of the Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Lisa Doughten.

The time has come to call things by the right name — a humanitarian catastrophe of biblical proportions is unfolding in the occupied Palestinian territory — the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. According to incoming information, the death toll in the enclave has exceeded 8,000, half of whom are children, women and the elderly. More than 2,000 people remain buried under the rubble, half of them also children. More than 21,000 people have been injured. The number of internally displaced persons in Gaza has reached 1.6 million. Some 640,000 Palestinians have found refuge in UNRWA camps alone. In the West Bank, more than 100 people have been killed and 3,000 have been injured.

These chilling numbers are growing by the hour. We express our gratitude to all humanitarian workers on the ground, who are working to exhaustion, given the catastrophic shortage of basic supplies, including medical supplies, and with extremely high risks to their own lives. The scale of losses on the part of United Nations agencies is shocking — 63 staff members have been killed, 22 have been injured and 42 UNRWA facilities have been destroyed. We pay tribute to the United Nations personnel who continue working in

unimaginable conditions and those who have paid the ultimate price.

According to media reports, two peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon were wounded in Israeli shelling of the Blue Line. Al-Quds, the largest hospital in Gaza, has been under threat of attack by the Israel Defense Forces, with the Israeli air force hitting sites that are but 50 metres away from the hospital, which makes immediate evacuation absolutely necessary. Nearly 640,000 internally displaced persons have taken refuge in 150 UNRWA facilities across the Gaza Strip. As a result of the bombing, nine hospitals are out of service and the remaining ones are facing a severe shortage of medicine.

The blockade on the Gaza Strip has become essentially all-encompassing. Internet and cell phone service in the enclave has been cut, and it is now simply cut off from the rest of the world. No one knows for sure what is happening there. Such a blockade not only sows more panic among civilians but also directly undermines the work of medical and rescue services, which will lead to further civilian casualties. For the same reason, the passage of a humanitarian convoy through the Rafah crossing point on 28 October could not be agreed upon. We strongly condemn such actions, especially in a situation in which, after cutting off communications, the enclave has faced the most powerful air strikes since the beginning of the escalation.

Given the active hostilities, the humanitarian response remains marginal. Since 21 October, only 94 trucks from Egypt have entered through the Rafah crossing point, which is the only crossing point, and Israel reportedly obstructs even those meagre deliveries. As a result, in the Gaza Strip, there is a severe shortage of everything — water, fuel, food and medicine — and the people are frightened and driven to despair.

On 28 October, based on a decision by the military and political leadership of Israel, the armed forces of the country launched a military ground operation in the Gaza Strip, while ignoring the position the global community had clearly expressed the day before in a General Assembly resolution (resolution ES-10/21). After intensive air strikes, the Israeli army began to enter the enclave from several directions — in the south in the area of the Bureij refugee camp and the town of Khan Yunis, and in the north, in the area of Beit Hanoun.

The Israeli authorities describe their actions in various ways — expanding operations or preparing a bridgehead. But that is not the point. The point is that, despite the unequivocal reaction around the world, West Jerusalem has started to implement its plans to “clean up” the enclave.

What we heard in response was the assessment of the Israeli Foreign Minister, who said, “we reject outright the General Assembly’s despicable call for a cease-fire”. The comments by the Permanent Representative of Israel that the United Nations has lost its legitimacy have not gone unnoticed. Truly shocking are statements made by a number of representatives of the Knesset, which were widely circulated in the media, who said there is “no symmetry” in Israel’s response and that “the children in Gaza brought this on themselves”.

Unfortunately, what clearly follows from this is that Israel is blatantly ignoring the views of the vast majority of United Nations Members, including many Western nations, on the need to end the violence. The appalling situation was brought about by the fact that, because of the United States position, the Security Council has virtually been paralysed. It has not yet been able to adopt a resolution demanding an urgent ceasefire. We have made two attempts to do so, but Washington and West Jerusalem have quite different plans — to exterminate the population of Gaza or force it out of the Gaza Strip, and force the rest of the Palestinian population to assimilate into Israel in order to resolve the Palestinian problem.

In the context of the unprecedented escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, we must note the current increase in tensions on the Syrian-Israeli border, which is linked to the active external interference combined with the illegal military presence of the United States in the north and north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic.

On 26 October, United States forces, under orders from President Joe Biden, carried out strikes on two sites near the town of Abu Kamal, in eastern Syria. Washington said that the attack was undertaken as part of the exercise of the so-called right to “self-defence”, American-style of course, thousands of kilometres away from United States territory. Such illegitimate and unwarranted actions by Washington are nothing but a gross violation of Syria’s sovereignty and the norms of international law. Today such illegitimate and forceful actions are fraught with extremely dangerous

consequences, as they may provoke an armed escalation encompassing the entire region.

The time for half-measures and half-hearted, vague appeals has passed. No humanitarian pause will help. Humanitarian aid cannot be provided amid hostilities on the ground. I hope that everyone here understands that. The number of casualties among humanitarian workers is already in the dozens, ambulances have been destroyed by bombs, and those left cannot operate due to a lack of fuel. Noble humanitarian passages are certainly important, but they alone will not stop the war.

The priority of the international community today is to stop the bloodshed, minimize harm to the civilian population and move the situation to a political and diplomatic track. There must be a consolidation of collective measures, aimed at relaunching a full-fledged negotiation process between Israelis and Palestinians in order to implement the United Nations-endorsed two-State solution. The solution should be the basis for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, coexisting in peace and security with Israel.

There is a question I would like to pose to the representative of the United States. Why is the representative opposed to a ceasefire? Does this mean that the United States, a permanent member of the Security Council, supports the doctrine of “massive retaliation” in Gaza? Where is the compassion for civilians, which the representative so eloquently expresses at every meeting of the Council on Ukraine? And that is despite the fact that the threat posed to civilian lives in Ukraine is nowhere near the threat posed to Palestinian lives in Gaza. Or does the representative think only of those on the European continent and care nothing about Palestinian lives?

I would like to pose the same question to the other Western delegations on the Council, who shamefully abstained in the voting on all the draft resolutions proposed by Russia, calling for a ceasefire. The double standards are more than obvious. The people of their own countries, in which mass demonstrations in support of Palestinians are taking place, are already demanding accountability for this double-dealing.

In the current situation, the Russian Federation is undertaking intensive efforts aimed at de-escalating the situation on the ground and rapidly resolving the crisis. We have conveyed a clear message to all parties involved that there is a need for an immediate ceasefire

and to ensure humanitarian corridors for the urgent provision of assistance to all those in need.

President Putin has been extremely clear that Russia categorically rejects and condemns all terrorist acts. We express our condolences to all those who have lost loved ones in Israel, Palestine and elsewhere. However, while condemning all acts of terrorism and hostage-taking and demanding the unconditional release of hostages, we wholly disagree with the notion that the terrorist threat can be responded to by violating the norms of international humanitarian law, including the indiscriminate use of force against civilian infrastructure in which civilians are known to be located.

While addressing the urgent task of ending the current spiral of violence, it is necessary to begin working immediately to reach agreement on a strategy for collective action for a political settlement of the conflict. In the past, the task of promoting such a settlement was carried out by the Middle East Quartet of international mediators. However, the United States has done everything in its power to undermine that effective instrument.

On the agenda now is the establishment of a collective mediation mechanism, with an active role for the States of the region. That is supported by the positive trends that had emerged following developments in the Middle East before the most recent escalation involving Gaza, such as the normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, Syria's reintegration into the League of Arab States and the gradual improvement of inter-State relations between Syria and Türkiye. All of that proves that, when countries in the region take matters into their own hands and are not subject to pressure from extraregional players, they can achieve great progress towards stabilization in the Middle East.

Taking into account the growing escalation in the Palestinian enclave and the unimaginable consequences for the civilian population who find themselves cut off from external supplies, we deem it important to hold open briefings such as today's briefing on a regular basis. The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip must remain the focus of our close attention without any discrimination, as has been the case in the context of other crises.

Some colleagues, in an attempt to shift the focus of attention from the dramatic events around the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, touched on the

29 October incident at the airport in Makhachkala, Republic of Dagestan, Russia. The Russian leadership, representatives of regional authorities and Muslim clergy have already provided exhaustive comments on the matter. The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, which has started a criminal case over the rallies, will give a legal assessment of the actions of the protesters. Dozens of the rioters have been detained and questioned, and proceedings are under way.

Any unlawful action is unacceptable. However, the attempt to present an unauthorized rally at the airport as an "outburst" of some kind of antisemitic sentiment in Russian society, particularly in the North Caucasus, is unacceptable. That region has long been a showcase of peaceful and friendly coexistence among representatives of numerous ethnicities. Russian society, unlike the one in the West, is alien to manifestations of hostility or ethnic, racial or faith-based intolerance. Representatives of all major confessions — Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism — have coexisted peacefully in our country for a long time.

As confirmed by reports from the Russian enforcement agencies, the events that took place yesterday in Makhachkala clearly show traces of external interference, including massive influence from the outside through social networks. Do not be surprised, but the traces lead to Ukraine. Russia's ill-wishers are keen to take advantage of the situation and play upon feelings of Russian Muslims against the background of shocking images from the Gaza that show the horror of what is happening there — the deaths of women, children, the elderly and medical personnel.

We recommend that some of our Western colleagues should not try to shift focus but instead pay attention to the situation in their capitals, where numerous Muslim demonstrations are raging and are suppressed violently by the police. That is despite the declared commitment of the authorities of Western countries to multiculturalism and the freedom of expression.

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Commissioner-General Lazzarini, Executive Director Russell and Director Doughten for their stark and clear briefings.

Let me start by recognizing the courage, commitment and sacrifice of the United Nations employees and humanitarian workers in Gaza, in particular the 103 aid workers — including the 64 staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works

Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East — who have been killed in Gaza in the past 22 days. We also offer our sincere condolences to all Palestinians and Israelis who have suffered or lost loved ones.

Since Hamas's terrorist attack against Israel on 7 October, the United Kingdom has underscored Israel's right to self-defence against terrorism. We continue to be clear that this must be done in accordance with international humanitarian law. Our efforts with our international partners have focused on the protection of civilians, securing and scaling up humanitarian access and the release of hostages. Sadly, despite those efforts, the situation in Gaza deteriorates daily. Hamas bears sole responsibility for starting the conflict.

I would like to highlight three priorities.

First, we call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law, including the principles of proportionality, distinction and necessity. That requires all parties to take every possible step to avoid the harming of civilians and to bring about the immediate and unconditional release of hostages.

Secondly, we must urgently cooperate to scale up aid into Gaza and to ensure that sufficient access points are open. For that to happen successfully, there needs to be a safer environment, which necessitates humanitarian pauses. We support United Nations-led efforts in that regard. Since the latest escalation in Gaza, the United Kingdom has committed more than \$36 million in additional aid to the occupied Palestinian territories. A Royal Air Force flight arrived in Egypt on 25 October, carrying 21 tons of aid from the United Kingdom for Gaza. But the access environment needs to improve immediately so that those and other life-saving resources can reach the people who desperately need them.

Thirdly, we cannot allow the conflict to spread. We call on all countries in the region to help avoid escalation and warn non-State actors not to exploit the current situation.

The Palestinian Authority has a key role as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We call on Israel and other States to support the Palestinian Authority. We call on the Israeli authorities to tackle the rising number of settler attacks and killings in the occupied West Bank, recalling that it is their responsibility to protect Palestinian civilians there.

The United Kingdom retains the long-term goal of a two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine coexisting peacefully. To reach that goal, we have a responsibility to ensure a plan for Gaza that offers its population hope, security, stability, prosperity and effective governance so that their political wishes can be fulfilled. In that regard, some fundamental principles apply: there should be no mass displacement of Gazans to neighbouring countries, the Palestinian Authority should play a central role, and nothing should be done that cuts across progress towards a two-State solution, with Gaza as an integral part of a Palestinian State.

**Mr. Ishikane** (Japan): I thank Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Ms. Catherine Russell, Executive Director of UNICEF, and Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director of the Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings, and I join other colleagues in expressing our respect for all the humanitarian actors who are working tirelessly in unimaginable conditions.

Since 7 October, thousands of people have been killed or wounded. The tragic sequence of events shows no signs of abating, descending further into a devastating cycle with unimaginable loss of life and the destruction of civilian facilities. Just recently, Israel announced the expansion of its ground operations in Gaza. Japan has been paying careful attention to the situation, and we are gravely concerned. We have expressed our unequivocal condemnation of the terror attacks committed by Hamas and other militants, and we extend our sincere condolences to all the victims. We demand the immediate and unconditional release of the remaining hostages. The international community should never tolerate such a heinous act. Hamas does not speak for the Palestinian people.

Every Member State has a right to defend itself and its people in accordance with international law. At the same time, all parties must act based on international law. The deterioration of the situation in Gaza has led to a deepening humanitarian crisis that has reached an unprecedented level of severity. The loss of any more innocent lives, regardless of the people's nationality, religion or ethnicity, is simply unacceptable. No one person's life is more or less important than another's. Full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access consistent with international humanitarian law

must be allowed in order to alleviate the devastating humanitarian situation. While a number of trucks have passed through the Rafah crossing, hundreds more will have to follow suit to meet the dire needs of more than 2 million people. In that context, we should also immediately take further steps, including establishing humanitarian pauses and humanitarian corridors.

In addition, we express our profound concern about the disconnection of telecommunications networks, which disrupts vital communication channels between those in Gaza and the rest of the world and also impedes the work of the media and the humanitarian communities. It is especially vital for those networks to function reliably in order to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the safety of humanitarian workers. As the situation is rapidly evolving, it is critical that all parties in the region avoid exacerbating the conflict. The international community has a duty to redouble its diplomatic efforts in order to prevent instability from spilling over into the wider region and to show a sense of urgency in working to calm the situation. The Security Council must act to find common ground among all Council members in order to deliver a meaningful message and to help all parties in distress. While we remain unable to act, lives are being lost day by day, minute by minute. We must also recall that ultimately there can be no alternative to a two-State solution, and all the parties must make serious efforts to that end.

**Mr. Agyeman** (Ghana): Let me begin by thanking Commissioner-General Lazzarini, Executive Director Russell and Director Doughten for their briefings on the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza following the resurgence of conflict in the Middle East after the heinous terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel on 7 October.

Twenty-three days after the attacks in southern Israel, with the attendant loss of life and abductions, we are appalled at the many lives that are being lost in the ensuing conflict, as well as by its humanitarian consequences. We are equally concerned about the potential spread of the conflict to the wider region and the heavy toll that it could take on innocent civilian populations.

Last Friday, in the context of the resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly (see A/ES-10/PV.41), a majority of the Members of the Organization, through the residual role of the Assembly,

called for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce, demanded that all parties comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and asserted the need for the continued, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential supplies and services to the Gaza Strip. They also called for the immediate and unconditional release of all civilians held captive and demanded that their safety, welfare and humane treatment be ensured, in compliance with international law. Taking into account what the Assembly has said, as a Council we must build on the convergence of views on the crisis to support the Secretary-General and United Nations agencies and staff members, including the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to deliver critical care and support services to the nearly 672,000 internally displaced persons sheltering in 149 UNRWA facilities, as well as the many other innocent civilians who are living in desperate conditions.

According to recent UNRWA reports, the number of trucks being allowed into Gaza will have to be scaled up significantly if we are to make any impact in addressing the desperate humanitarian needs of the 2 million people in Gaza, especially where health, food security and supporting supply needs are concerned. In that context, we appeal to Israel, Egypt and other stakeholders to work constructively to enhance humanitarian access through the Rafah border crossing and to all donors to step up their financial and material contributions to UNRWA to meet the people of Gaza's growing and urgent humanitarian needs. We should also use the weight of the Assembly's decision to strongly encourage the efforts of leaders in the region — especially Qatar and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which have been at the forefront of the negotiations for securing the release of all Israeli and foreign hostages — and call on the Hamas militia to heed the international community's demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all captured civilians. Holding innocent civilian populations captive is wrong and unacceptable regardless of the motives.

The past 23 days have been days of blood, pain and anguish, the likes of which we have not seen in the region in recent times. It would be truly tragic not to make further efforts to stop the fighting. We encourage regional and international leaders to act as a moderating influence on the parties, help de-escalate the conflict

and prevent its spread in the region. The impact of the conflict on women, children and the elderly has been enormous, and we owe it to them, on both sides, to bring the crisis to an end.

In conclusion, we want to reiterate our condolences for all the lives lost and remind the Palestinian and Israeli people of their interwoven history and shared geography, both ancient and modern. The experiences of the past should reinforce the realization that violence cannot be a tool for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indeed, neither Israel's security interests nor the Palestinian people's inalienable right to their homeland can be secured by violence.

As we have often repeated, Ghana holds the view that a deepened commitment to a negotiated two-State solution, on the basis of the 1967 borders, offers the best prospect for peace and stability in the Middle East. We hope that in furthering the Council's responsibility we can find a consensus to end the conflict, bring the parties to the dialogue table and help deliver secure and assured statehood for both Israel and Palestine, sooner rather than later.

**Mr. President:** The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): My apologies for taking the floor, but I need to respond to some comments made by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation.

Since the beginning of this conflict, the Russian Federation has spared no effort in trying to either directly or indirectly blame the United States for this crisis. It is irresponsible. It is false that we are responsible in some way for what is going on. No State has worked harder than the United States to try to resolve this situation, and we continue to work hard to do so. This is a typical Russian narrative that has, again, no basis in fact. Frankly, Russia has no credibility. Its prevarication knows no bounds. It claims to care about the humanitarian situation in Gaza. I think it is pretty clear that Russia does not care about solving humanitarian crises — it creates them. If anyone has any doubts, they should just look at what is going on in Ukraine.

Regarding United States actions in Syria, we responded to attacks against United States personnel, acting in self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. I think that Russia will recall the

Charter of the United Nations — it has been working to drive a stake through the heart of that sacred document through everything it has been doing in Ukraine. Let me just close by saying that the United States will continue its efforts to do what it can to ease the situation in the region, and my hope is that Russia will step up and be a responsible player in the Security Council and work with the international community to try to bring about an end to this very sad situation.

**The President:** The Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will be brief. Taking stock of my American colleague's latest comment as an admission, we did not hear a response to the question we asked him. However, I would like to ask him a rhetorical question, to which I do not require an answer, and the answer is obvious anyway. How many times during the present crisis has the United States initiated a meeting on the humanitarian situation in Gaza?

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

**Mr. Mansour** (Palestine): I want to begin by welcoming you, Mr. President, to the Chamber and thanking you for leading the deliberation of this emergency meeting requested by our colleagues from the United Arab Emirates and China, which we appreciate. The fact that you, Mr. President, are with us for the third time this month is an illustration of Brazil's commitment at the level of the Foreign Minister, and, I am sure, of the urgency with which President Lula da Silva hopes to do everything possible in order to bring about an end to this carnage and to the tragedy that the Palestinian people are going through, particularly in the Gaza Strip. We, the Palestinian people in the State of Palestine, and our people everywhere, particularly in the Gaza Strip, along with our leadership, really appreciate Brazil's commitment and effort. In addition, I am personally delighted to see you, Mr. President, for the third time because I consider you a good friend from the time we served together as Permanent Representatives of our States.

I also want to thank the three briefers, Commissioner-General Lazzarini, Executive Director Russell and Director Doughten for their briefings and for their moving calls, as it is coming from people who are in the field, leading teams in the field and trying to save the

lives of the Palestinian people. We do not only express our gratitude and appreciation for what they do, but we also join them in accepting condolences for those who have lost their lives, paying the ultimate price for trying to save the lives of the Palestinian people. They are the best faces of the United Nations and the best among us, led by a hero by the name of António Guterres, who stood outside the Rafah crossing and made his brave humanitarian call for a peaceful ceasefire, for humanitarian convoys to reach everywhere in the Gaza Strip, for lives to be saved, for the war to be ended and for hospitals and every institution that is providing life to our people to be saved.

Those are the best faces of the United Nations, and if they are in fact the best faces — and we truly believe that they are and express our gratitude to them — I believe that we have to listen to everything that they have said and to their important call and requests for a humanitarian ceasefire and humanitarian convoys up to scale, as the Secretary-General requested, of a minimum of 100 truckloads every day. If we genuinely respect their calls and what they are doing, let us not only listen closely to them but carry out their requests. In that spirit, allow me to deliver my statement.

Dag Hammarskjöld said that “the United Nations was not created in order to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell”. Gaza is now hell on earth — that was said not by me, but by Mr. Lazzarini himself and many others. Gaza is now hell on earth. Saving humanity from hell today means for the United Nations to save Palestinians in Gaza. The 2.3 million Palestinians living there are enduring suffering that no human being should endure. They are besieged and bombed, with nowhere safe to go — again, Mr. Lazzarini himself said that there is no safe place in the Gaza Strip. Half the homes in Gaza have been destroyed or damaged. Refugees comprise 70 per cent of the population of Gaza. More than 1.4 million Palestinians have been forcibly displaced from their homes — again, I am citing Mr. Lazzarini. Virtually all of our people in Gaza are now homeless, displaced and moving from one family home to another, from a hospital to a church, from a mosque to an United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) school — sleeping in their cars, sleeping in the streets and still being killed wherever they go, convincing them they will not be safe anywhere in Gaza.

A leaked document prepared by the Israeli Ministry of Intelligence confirms that, in fact, relocating Palestinians from Gaza to tent cities in Sinai is not a threat we imagined but a reality Israel is trying to impose. They want to depopulate the Gaza Strip completely and throw its entire population into the lap of Egypt and the Sinai desert. More than 8,000 Palestinians have been killed, including more than 3,000 in the south of Gaza, where Israel has pushed — forcibly transferred — hundreds of thousands of people. Those staggering figures keep rising with every minute that action is delayed to stop the onslaught against our people. More than any other, one figure explains the magnitude of this human-made tragedy: 3,500 Palestinian children have been killed by Israel in just three weeks, which is more than the annual number of children killed across the world’s conflict zones since 2019, according to the Save the Children Fund, as mentioned by Ambassador Nusseibeh from the United Arab Emirates. Let me repeat — 3,500 Palestinian children have been killed by Israel in just three weeks, more than the annual number of children killed across the world’s conflict zones, combined, since 2019. Every five minutes, a Palestinian child is killed. How many more days will the Council wait — paralysed, not acting and not carried out its duty to maintain international peace and security by stopping the war — to say enough, to recognize that this is a war against our children? How long will it take the Council to recognize that thousands of children are being killed before its very eyes while it remains paralysed? These are our children, who, like all children, are children of God, children of light, angels on Earth. I say enough darkness, enough death. Let us save the lives of all children — our children and the children of others.

The General Assembly, representing the countries of the world, adopted a resolution grounded in humanity, morality, legality and the rejection of double standards, justifications for the killing of innocent civilians, the siege against them, their captivity and their forced transfer. It took a stand that we will not forsake humankind, we will not forfeit international law.

The General Assembly acted. The Secretary-General acted. The army of humanitarian agencies, the heroes leading them and those who are working to implement that message acted. But there is one important organ not acting; it is the Security Council.

The General Assembly called for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce (see A/ES-10/PV.41). That must happen immediately. It stressed that



humanitarian aid and access cannot be further delayed or obstructed and must be at levels that correspond to the immense needs created by this inhumane Israeli siege and the indiscriminate attacks Israel is perpetrating as we speak. Thousands more lives hang in the balance. General Assembly resolution ES-10/21, a powerful moral resolution that 11 members of the Security Council voted in favour of, three abstained and one voted against, must be immediately and fully implemented. If a vote took place in the General Assembly, why can it not happen here? Among the 11 members of the Council that voted yes and the three that abstained are four permanent members — three voted in the affirmative and one abstained in the voting. Do what the larger organ is doing. The Council should live up to its responsibility instead of maintaining this paralysis for who knows how long while thousands of Palestinian innocent civilians, including children, are being slaughtered.

The Security Council must follow the example of the General Assembly and its wisdom and uphold its responsibilities to put an end to this bloodshed, which constitutes an affront to humankind, war crimes and crimes against humanity and a clear and imminent danger for regional and international peace and security.

I want to thank the Group of Arab States, led by Ambassador Hmoud from Jordan, who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in steering the Arab Group during this very difficult month. We salute him, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and its Foreign Minister, who was participating with us, along with many others in the General Assembly, and we salute what we have accomplished together. We also salute the member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for their relentless mobilization, the countries of the global South for their support, as well as all the countries that engaged constructively and responsibly to allow us to adopt a substantive humanitarian resolution, with overwhelming support from across the globe — 121 countries versus 14.

Given that 11 members of the Council have voted in favour of the resolution, three abstained in the voting and one voted against, it is clear that the text enjoys broad support and must serve as the basis for a clear and unequivocal position of the Council at this critical juncture.

Every day and every night, 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza face death. Save them; look at them as human

beings. Do not look at one side only and completely ignore this tragic humanitarian calamity. Wake up from taking revenge. Look at us as human beings. Save them. We have 2,000 people under the rubble. Allow us to find them; save those who can still be saved and bury in a dignified manner those who have perished. Allow the 20,000 wounded to be properly treated. Allow doctors to fix broken bodies and God to heal wounded souls. Allow the brave humanitarian workers, the heroes, to perform their life-saving duties even as they mourn their colleagues — 64 UNRWA staff killed in Israeli attacks. Allow them to conduct their sacred mission in safety and not under the bombs. Allow hospitals to resume their work to save lives and not be transformed into morgues. Allow members of the same families who have survived to embrace each other and to mourn their loved ones who did not. Allow us to pay the tribute owed to the families wiped off the face of this Earth and whose names join the long list of bereaved families etched in our collective memory. Allow people who still have homes standing to go home and allow millions of people to start thinking once more about how to rebuild their lives despite the depths of the death, devastation and destruction they endured, despite the indelible traumas.

Treat us as human beings with the respect we deserve. We are not subhuman beings. We are not from another planet. We are exactly like each and every Council member. We are humans, human beings. Treat us in that manner with the respect we deserve. Show respect for our inherent dignity, not in words but in deeds, in action, by doing something to stop this crime against our people, our children, our women, our wounded and our sick.

No one should justify our killing or find reasons to give more time to the killer. Call for an end to this assault on an entire nation. Stop the killings in the West Bank by settlers and occupation forces and the forced displacement under way there.

Palestinians, as human beings, have rights that must be upheld, and they are entitled to protection and entitled to be defended.

Many Council members talk about one narrative, about one State to defending itself. When our children are being killed, do we have the right to defend them? Do we have the right to defend our families? Do we have the right to defend our schools? Do we have the right to defend our mosques? Do we have the right to

defend our churches? Do we have the right to defend our homes, our soil and our nation? Do we have rights or are rights only the monopoly of one side? Our people have, as a people, rights that have long been denied and must now be recognized, so we can all live in peace and security.

No assault or war will ever end the conflict or resolve the injustice, it will only deepen and widen it. We have said time and time again, there is no military solution to the conflict. We have yet to demonstrate that there is a peaceful one.

I listen to Council members all the time telling me about the two-State solution, and they repeat it and repeat it and repeat it, but they do not tell me what single step they are willing to take in order to stop the other side from destroying the two-State solution before their eyes. Is it not enough to wake up and say the resolution that the Security Council adopted calls for the implementation of the two-State solution? Show resolve to implement those resolutions. The representatives in this Chamber are the Security Council. Will Council members continue to be paralyzed or do they want to act on the advice they are giving the Palestinian people?

Implement the two-State solution that we accepted. Who is stopping Council members from implementing it? Who is stopping Council members from taking steps in order to push the occupation to an end, to allow for the independence of the State of Palestine? Who is stopping Council members? Do not keep repeating to me “two-State solution”. Tell me how Council members are going to defend it and how they are going to implement it, so our people can believe them and have faith in what they are saying and respect what they call for when they see them marching towards implementation. And whoever is standing in the path of the implementation of the Security Council’s will should be removed from the way so that we can see the implementation of the two-State solution based on the Council’s resolutions, based on international law and based on the terms of reference. Council members agreed to all those things, but they are not acting on them. They keep repeating them, and they think that, by repeating them, they did their duty. No, they have to do more. They have to take the practical steps to allow the two-State solution to become a reality.

We have said time and time again — I repeat — there is no military solution to the conflict. We have yet to demonstrate that there is a peaceful one. Prove us wrong.

Every minute counts. Every minute is the difference between life and death for Palestinians in Gaza.

I know that there is a short period of time until the end of your presidency, but if by any miracle you, Mr. President, can lead the Security Council to adopt a position of stopping this war and allowing the hundreds of trucks with humanitarian assistance to enter the Gaza Strip, we will tip our hat to you, Sir, and to the Security Council members.

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

**Mr. Erdan (Israel):** My grandfather Chaim was a farmer. He lived in a small village in Transylvania with his wife, Bracha, and their eight beautiful children. But in the spring of 1944, the small village ceased to exist. Their community was erased. The Nazis forced Chaim, Bracha and their eight children onto cattle cars hurtling towards Auschwitz. Upon arrival, Bracha and seven of their children — Pearl, Zvi, Sarah, Hodaya, Leah, Henya and little baby Mordecai — were murdered in gas chambers and turned to ash.

My grandfather’s story was once a horror story of a different era, of a distant time of unfathomable hatred, a time which, until three weeks ago, we referred to as “never again”. Yet “never again” happened again. The villages in southern Israel that were invaded by Hamas terrorists were peaceful agricultural villages, just like my grandfather’s village in Transylvania. Entire communities were exterminated, only this time the murderers were Hamas Nazis. Entire Israeli families were turned into smoke and ash, no different than the fate that my grandfather’s family met in Auschwitz. However, the brutality of the crimes is not the only thing that the savage Hamas Nazis share with the German Nazis. They both share a common ideology, and it is not the two-State solution.

The Einsatzgruppen Nazi death squads were committed to exterminating the Jews, just as the Nukhba Hamas terrorists are committed to exterminating the Jews and Israel. The Nazis sought a Judenrein — a Jew-free Europe — just as Hamas seeks a Judenrein Israel. The members of Hamas are modern day Nazis, from their appalling, inhumane violence to identical genocidal ideologies. Hamas is not seeking a solution to the conflict. It is not interested in dialogue. The only solution Hamas is interested in is the final solution — the annihilation of the Jewish

people. And may I remind my colleague: Hamas — not the representative of Palestine — is the ruler of Gaza.

Yet Ismail Haniyeh, the leader of Hamas, is no Adolf Hitler. He is not the Führer. He is not the leader of that genocidal death cult hell-bent on world domination. That role, as my colleagues know very well, is held by the Supreme Leader of Iran, the bloodthirsty Ayatollah Khamenei.

Hitler's Third Reich was envisioned as a 1,000-year empire, stretching across continents, just as Khamenei envisions that his radical Shiite hegemony will stretch across the region and beyond. The Ayatollah regime is a modern Nazi regime, and its death squads include Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hizbullah, the Houthis, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard and other savage jihadists. Instead of shouting "Sieg Heil", those radical Nazi Islamists scream "Death to Israel", "Death to America" and "Death to England". We can see it on Khamenei's Twitter account. Just like the Nazi regime, the Ayatollah regime sows death and destruction everywhere it goes. Just like the French under the Vichy regime or the Italians under Mussolini, the residents of Gaza, Lebanon, Yemen and Syria are enduring indescribable bloodshed and terror at the hands of Iran's jihadist Nazi forces. Just as Londoners suffered during the Blitz, Ukrainian civilians are being murdered from the skies with Iranian Nazi weaponry. Like the ever-reaching hand of the Wehrmacht, the Houthi group, an Iranian proxy, attacked Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. And Albania has been struck by unprovoked Iranian cyberattacks. The Islamic Nazi regime of Iran is responsible for aiding terrorists around the globe and working towards destroying every value our civilized world holds dear. Today the world is watching the rise of a Shia Islam Reich. Yet just as with the rise of Nazism, the world is silent — deafeningly silent.

Even if the Council insists on continuing to call this meeting "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question" for the rest of time, it will not change the truth. This meeting is only about the situation in the Middle East and the Iranian threat. It has nothing to do with the Palestinians. Three weeks ago, humankind witnessed Iran's Hamas death squads in action. As was done at Babiy Yar, they exterminated Jews in the hundreds as if they were insects. Hamas Nazis deliberately sliced open a pregnant woman's belly, removed her foetus and stabbed it before its mother's eyes while she was still alive. And even so

the Security Council still has not condemned Hamas for the intentional murder of Israeli civilians. That is unbelievable. More than 250,000 innocent Israeli civilians have been displaced since the war began. Millions of Israelis are living every day under constant and indiscriminate rocket fire in both the south and the north of Israel, at the hands of Hamas, Hizbullah and other jihadists. Does the Council have nothing to say about that? Is that not also part of the situation in the Middle East?

When my grandfather Chaim and his children were sent to Auschwitz, the world stayed silent. When his babies were sent to the gas chambers, the world stayed silent. When their bodies were burned together with those of millions of children, Jewish and others, the world was silent. Today, after innocent Jewish babies have been burned alive, the Council is still silent. Some Member States have learned nothing over the past 80 years. Some of them have forgotten why this organ was established. I will therefore remind them. From this day on, every time they look at me, they will remember what staying silent in the face of evil means. Just as my grandparents and the grandparents of millions of Jews did, from now on my team and I will wear yellow stars. We will wear this star until the Council condemns the atrocities of Hamas and demands the immediate release of our hostages. We will walk with a yellow star as a symbol of pride, a reminder that we swore to fight back to defend ourselves. "Never again" is now.

In the face of the silence at the United Nations, our enemies have been emboldened. They have seen the General Assembly applauding efforts to prevent the Jews from defending themselves. They have heard the Secretary-General express understanding for the Nazi slaughter. And that is precisely why we have seen the most staggering rise in hatred of Jews since the Nuremberg laws and their aftermath. The antisemites have been empowered. They now know that the slaughter of Jews in their beds will be met with silence. They have been so galvanized by the Organization's inaction that they cannot wait to butcher Jews themselves. Calls for gassing Jews are being heard in Sydney. Chants for a *judenrein* Palestine from the river to the sea can be heard from California to New York. Islamist battle cries against Jews are being screamed in London, Brussels and Paris. An airport in Dagestan, in the Russian Federation, was flooded yesterday by Islamist terrorist supporters searching for Jews to lynch. That is precisely where the world stood as the Nazis began

their rampage, precisely the same moment. Then too the world was silent. We must understand where we are right now, comprehend the weight of this moment and internalize the fact that the world is standing at a crossroads, just as it was in the 1930s.

Will the Council take the approach of Chamberlain and appease the Nazis and their sympathizers? Or will it take Churchill's approach and fight evil with blood, toil, tears and sweat? Israel has made its choice. We were attacked by the Hamas Nazis. We were shown that genocide and Jew hatred had not died with Hitler. It bubbled and grew until it invaded our homeland. But the difference between 1939 and today is that today Jews have a strong State and a powerful military. We are not defenceless. We are lions of Judah, and we will defend ourselves against those who seek to annihilate us. In the days leading up to and following the 7 October massacres, the Führer Khamenei continued to spread his poisonous, genocidal ideologies around the world. He tweeted about the end of Israel. He said that whoever normalized relations with Israel would lose. He claimed that Israel was dying, and on the day of the massacre he called for the eradication of Israel, alongside a video of Israelis running for their lives as his Hamas Einsatzgruppen mowed them down with machine guns.

If Hitler had a Twitter account, it would look exactly like Khamenei's. Shockingly, despite the blatant, genocidal Nazism of the Islamist Reich of Iran, the Secretary-General and United Nations officials, who are being applauded here, are still meeting with Iranian officials without a word of condemnation for their support of genocide. What a disgrace. The Secretary-General rolled out the red carpet for the Iranian Nazi Foreign Minister here in this very building last week, smiling and shaking his blood-soaked hand. Aside from empty words paid as lip service for media purposes, Secretary-General Guterres has not publicly demanded even once that the terrorists of Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS)/Hamas allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to at the very least verify some sign of life of the hostages as a condition that without such a step, Hamas will be held accountable for the humanitarian situation in Gaza. How can that be? Why are the humanitarian needs of Gazans the only issue that everyone here is focused on? Is that not the bare minimum that must be called for from those monsters? Where is the Council's voice as a Council?

The Hamas Nazis have spent the past 16 years ruling Gaza, abusing Palestinians and butchering

anyone who opposes them. When Hamas took power in Gaza in 2007 — and all members know that very well — they murdered hundreds of Palestinians with their own hands. They threw them off rooftops. They used Palestinians as human shields, building terror bases under hospitals and missile launchers next to schools. What does the Council expect us to do? They hoard medical supplies, food and fuel for themselves when those resources could benefit their people — I assume Mr. Lazzarini forgot to tell members about that. They also deleted the tweet that was telling people about it.

Hamas's leaders live in luxury in Doha and Istanbul. They do not even live in the Gaza Strip. While their people live in poverty, Hamas ISIS terrorists operate inside and under hospitals, including — and let me reiterate this — Al Shifa Hospital, which houses their command centre. Hamas is preventing Gazans from heading south to leave an active war zone. Hamas is holding roughly half a million litres of fuel right now as we speak, next to the Rafah crossing. All of that can be verified. In any discussion about the lack of fuel, the Council's demands should be directed at Hamas.

Israel has approved dozens — more than dozens — of daily trucks of humanitarian supplies, including food, water and medical equipment. But we refuse to supply the enemy, Hamas, with any aid, in accordance with international law. Hamas is the root cause of the situation in Gaza. Yet Council members continue to insist on calling this meeting a discussion of the Palestinian question. Can anyone here provide a solution to the Palestinian question as long as Hamas controls Gaza? Calling for an immediate ceasefire is ultimately asking Israel to tie its hands and maintain Hamas's rule in Gaza. Is that the future that the Council wants for the people of Gaza?

I am sorry to say it, but if the Council had existed on 6 June 1944, it would have intensely debated how much electricity and fuel the citizens of Munich had as the Allies approached the shores of Normandy. It would be fixated on debating the death toll of Germans versus British casualties. The Council would be calling for a ceasefire before the Russians retook Stalingrad. We all know Hamas's intentions, and we all know that, should they be given another chance, they would commit the same atrocities over and over again, but this time on a much larger scale. Yet our Organization, founded in the wake of the Holocaust, fails to act on its founding

principles. Calling for a ceasefire is no different than calling off D-Day in 1944.

Israel will no longer live with the brutal Hamas Nazis on its border. We will not have savage ISIS Hamas death squads invading our homeland again. I reiterate that Israel's operation in Gaza is not a response to the events of 7 October; it is an act of self-defence to ensure its future.

The Israeli people are strong. We are unbreakable. And we are not going anywhere. Many have tried to destroy us — the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Romans and the Nazis — to name just a few. But none have succeeded. And the Iranian Reich will be no different. Israel will prevail, God willing. We will bring our hostages home, and the citizens of the Jewish State will live in peace and freedom.

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

**Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*):** I would like to thank Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; Ms. Catherine Russell, Executive Director of UNICEF; and Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director of the Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

I am honoured to make this statement on behalf of the Arab Group in New York.

We address the Security Council today at this emergency meeting following the adoption of General Assembly resolution ES-10/21, on the illegal Israeli actions in East Jerusalem and the occupied Palestinian territories, which was submitted by Jordan as the Chair of the Arab Group for October.

The Arab Group and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation requested the President of the General Assembly to resume the Assembly's tenth emergency special session after it became evident that the Security Council, since the start of the war at the beginning of October, was not able to shoulder its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and stop the war against our people in Gaza.

The adoption by the General Assembly of resolution ES-10/21 sent an important and clear message that the international community stands in support of justice, the protection of innocent civilians and adherence

to legal, humanitarian and legitimate obligations, in addition to the immediate cessation of the Israeli war against Gaza that is currently raging. That message also includes calling for an end to war crimes, the killing of defenceless innocent civilians and the destruction of homes, civil facilities, hospitals, houses of worship and infrastructure. If that resolution is biased towards anything or anyone, it is biased towards the truth, justice and humanity. We were able to address a number of attempts to politicize the resolution.

General Assembly resolution ES-10/21 includes a number of elements that need to be implemented so that we can find a horizon for ending this war.

First, an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce, leading to the immediate cessation of hostilities and the protection of all humanitarian civil facilities, including hospitals and houses of worship, must be agreed.

Secondly, all parties must comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law.

Thirdly, humanitarian assistance, including supplies and basic services for all civilians that need them in the Gaza Strip, must be provided.

Fourthly, any attempt to forcefully transfer the Palestinian civilian population must be firmly rejected, and all civilians who are being illegally held captive must be released immediately and without conditions.

The Arab Group calls upon the international community to make efforts to bring decisive pressure to bear on Israel to stop delaying the entry of assistance so that it may be urgently provided in adequate quantities to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. In that regard, we would like to note that no more than 85 trucks have accessed the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing since the beginning of the war due to Israel's obstruction, as compared to the more than 500 trucks that entered the Gaza Strip every day before the war. We stress that the Arab Republic of Egypt has not spared any effort to ensure the expeditious delivery of relief and humanitarian assistance to our brotherly Palestinians in Gaza, despite the operational and logistical obstacles imposed by Israel for political considerations and false security pretexts, while it continues shelling the Rafah crossing.

The continuation of the Israeli war that currently rages against Gaza and the ensuing humanitarian

disaster threatens to spill over into the region. In that regard, we want to warn against the repercussions that the war will have for the security and stability of the region and the entire world. We stress the importance of ending the Israeli acts of aggression on Syrian territories and ensuring a ceasefire across the borders with Lebanon, along with an end to Israel's repeated aggression against villages in the south of Lebanon, which has led to the displacement of nearly 30,000 Lebanese, more than 50 people's deaths and the direct targeting of a position belonging to the Lebanese Army and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, as well as the martyrdom of some journalists.

The war on Gaza has entered a new phase, bringing more destruction, killing and oppression for the people of Gaza — much more than what we saw just days ago. When Mr. Ayman Safadi, Jordan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, spoke before the Council last Tuesday (see S/PV.9451), the total number of casualties martyred among Palestinian civilians was nearly 6,000. Today, less than a week later, the number is more than 8,300, including more than 3,400 children and 2,100 women killed, in addition to the more than 2,000 persons who have been under the rubble for many days now. The killing will not stop as long as Israel continues to hear justifications from some for its crimes. It has been covered and protected without having to show any accountability. Regrettably, so long as that continues and its actions continue to be met with silence, Israel will be emboldened and will continue committing such acts without being deterred or held accountable.

Is it not time for human consciences to wake up in response to the images we are seeing every day, every hour and every minute of the carnage and destruction in Gaza? Is it not time for the Council to heed the people of Gaza's cries for help? They have no safe place to shelter from the Israeli bombardment and destruction. Their homes, hospitals and houses of worship have collapsed on their heads, and even United Nations facilities that they took to be places of refuge have been shelled. There are 1.4 million people in Gaza who have been displaced from their homes and neighbourhoods. The deafening silence about the forced displacement must stop. Is it not time for the Council to heed the calls of human conscience and those of the Secretary-General — for which we are grateful, despite all the unfair attacks on him — as he has called for a ceasefire, for the delivery of medical and humanitarian aid, for

respect for international law and the protection of civilians and United Nations relief agencies? I do not know why the Secretary-General is being attacked for declaring those just positions.

Is it not time for the Council to prioritize the principles of justice and humanity and say to Israel that forced transfer is a crime that cannot be ignored? The choice of either dying in the north of Gaza or being transferred to the south of Gaza to be killed there is one that the Council cannot accept. Is it not time for the Council to say to Israel that human life is sacred, regardless of someone's religion, ethnicity or origin? Is it not time to protect United Nations facilities and the hospitals, infrastructure and facilities in Gaza? Is it not time for the Council to heed the calls of the humanitarian relief agencies that Mr. Lazzarini, Ms. Russell and Ms. Doughten expressed earlier when they called for an end to the human tragedy in Gaza? Is it not time for the Council to hold Israel legally accountable and punish it for the killings, ethnic cleansing and war crimes it is perpetrating in Gaza? We would like to remind the Council that those crimes, which are being committed as the international community looks on, are being documented daily by international accountability mechanisms.

Is it not time for the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and to respect the purposes and principles of the Organization, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations? Is it not time for the Council to go to work to stop the war and aggression and to protect our Palestinian people in Gaza and in the occupied Palestinian territory? That is the Council's choice at a pivotal point in the history of the Organization.

The Arab Group reaffirms that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, in accordance with the adopted terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative, is a strategic Arab choice. The only way for that choice to be implemented is through the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State, with occupied Jerusalem as its capital, based on the lines of 4 June 1967. I would also like to reiterate my gratitude to all the Member States that voted in favour of General Assembly resolution ES-10/21, thereby taking an established position against the application of double standards in international law and reaffirming the need to end the war, protect civilians and adhere to legal and humanitarian obligations, in line with the principles and values of this Organization and with a

view to promoting security and peace in the region and the world.

Having concluded my statement on behalf of the Arab Group, I would like to say that while throughout history there have been countries that have committed grave atrocities in the countries they occupied, until now I had never heard of an occupying State playing the victim, as Israel is doing today.

**The President:** The representative of China has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

**Mr. Zhang Jun (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): In her statement earlier, the representative of the United States accused China of vetoing draft resolution S/2023/792, put forward by the United States. I would like to respond to that.

The United States representative accused China of vetoing its draft resolution. That is the most unreasonable remark that I have heard today. To put it simply, the United States wants China to be responsible for what is happening now in Gaza. I want to inform her that we are not to blame for it.

The representative of the United States should know very well how the situation in the Middle East has evolved to the present stage and what the United States has done in this process. She should also be well aware that it is the United States that has vetoed dozens of Security Council draft resolutions on the issue of Israel and Palestine, making it very difficult for the Council to play its due, constructive and responsible role on the issue or act effectively to promote the implementation of a two-State solution. The United States representative should also be clearly aware of why China, along with some other countries, voted against the draft resolution put forward by the United States.

The United States hastily submitted draft resolution S/2023/792 after vetoing resolution S/2023/773, submitted by Brazil. However, the draft resolution submitted by the United States totally disregarded

the strong call of the entire world — especially that of the Arab countries — for a ceasefire and a truce. It confused right and wrong and attempted to divert the Palestine-Israel conflict into another narrative and onto another path. What is more dangerous is that such behaviour gives a green light to the further escalation of the situation. China has every reason to vote against a draft resolution of that kind. When it comes to the vote cast by China, our position is based on the facts, the law, conscience and justice. It is also based on the strong call of the entire world, especially that of the Arab countries.

The General Assembly subsequently adopted resolution ES-10/21, in which it conveyed an unequivocal message in favour of a truce and a ceasefire to prevent the worsening of the humanitarian crisis. That resolution received the strong and affirmative support of the overwhelming majority of United Nations States Members. The adoption of that General Assembly resolution is further proof that China's position is entirely correct.

I hope that the United States will sincerely adopt a responsible attitude and work together with the other members of the Council to focus on the most pressing issues, namely, a ceasefire in Gaza, the protection of civilians and the delivery of humanitarian aid, as well as the prevention of a further humanitarian catastrophe. We hope to consolidate our consensus on those pressing issues so that the Security Council can take more responsible action at an early date.

**The President:** The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

**Mr. Wood (United States of America):** I will be very brief. I think that, as the record shows, on Wednesday, 25 October, China voted against draft resolution S/2023/792, submitted by the United States (see S/PV. 9453). That is a fact.

*The meeting rose at 6.55 p.m.*