



General Assembly

Tenth Emergency Special session

39th plenary meeting
Thursday, 26 October 2023, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Resumption of the tenth emergency special session

The President: I declare the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, on illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, resumed.

Members will recall that, in paragraph 17 of resolution ES-10/20, of 13 June 2018, the General Assembly decided

“to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly at its most recent session to resume its meeting upon request from Member States”.

In that regard, I should like to draw the attention of delegations to document A/ES-10/958, which contains a letter dated 19 October 2023 from the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Mauritania to the United Nations, in their respective capacities as Chairs of the Group of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation group, and document A/ES-10/961, which contains a letter dated 18 October 2023 from the Permanent Representatives of Nicaragua and the Russian Federation and the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Syrian Arab Republic requesting the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly.

I intend to conduct the proceedings of this meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General

Assembly and the past practices of its emergency special sessions.

In accordance with rule 63 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the President and Vice-Presidents of the seventy-eighth session shall serve in the same capacity at the resumed tenth emergency special session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to decide that the Credentials Committee of the seventy-eighth session should serve for the resumed tenth emergency special session?

It was so decided (decision ES-10/101 J).

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/ES-10/787)

The President: In keeping with established practice, I should now like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/ES-10/959, concerning Member States that are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

The President: In that connection, may I further take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to follow the provisions of resolution 78/2, of 5 October

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2023, by which the Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia are permitted to vote in the General Assembly until the end of its seventy-eighth session and to also allow these Member States to vote at the tenth emergency special session?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 5 (continued)

Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

The President: I come before the Assembly this morning deeply disturbed and distraught.

Only this Tuesday we marked the anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations, the day on which our Organization was founded out of the ashes of the most heinous crimes against humanity in history. While there is little to incline us to celebration, we nevertheless honoured the values and principles that have anchored our Organization these past 75 years.

Yet again we gather amid the gravest escalation of violence and hostility in the Middle East in decades. Perhaps the most dramatic and difficult to countenance was the Al Ahli Baptist Hospital attack that killed several hundred people in a single incident. It is an unthinkable crime that must offend our human sensibilities. The worsening tension, the unspeakable violence, the harrowing suffering must end now.

I once again condemn the attack on Israel by Hamas on 7 October and reject the killings and the taking of civilian hostages, including women, children and the elderly. The brutality of the Hamas assaults is shocking and unacceptable and has no place — I repeat, has no place — in our world.

Similarly, I condemn and reject the indiscriminate targeting of innocent civilians in the Gaza Strip and the scale of the destruction of critical infrastructure by Israel. The ceaseless bombardment of the Gaza Strip by Israel and its consequences are deeply alarming. The right of self-defence does not and cannot lawfully give licence to undertake indiscriminate and disproportionate reprisal. Thousands — especially children, women and the elderly — are being killed, injured, maimed and forcefully displaced, and hospitals are running tragically low on basic medical supplies. The rules of war dictate that on the ground, civilians and civilian installations must always be protected at all costs. And here, in this Hall, our pre-eminent priority

must be to protect and to save civilian lives. It is also regrettable that among the appalling numbers of those who have lost their lives are United Nations personnel on whom the Organization depends on to provide and deliver critical humanitarian support and other services to millions of Palestinians in dire need. I would like to express my sincere solidarity with all who have lost their loved ones, their homes and their sense of security or belonging. I also join the Secretary-General in expressing my deepest condolences to the families of the 35 United Nations staff members who have lost their lives in the noble cause of humanitarian service. And I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the entire staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other humanitarian workers for their continued unwavering and heroic efforts in such distressing circumstances.

All the parties to the conflict must abide by international humanitarian law and immediately create the conditions needed to permit the opening of a humanitarian corridor to the Gaza Strip. We must ensure that urgently needed life-saving assistance reaches those in need, from the delivery of basic foodstuffs to the safe passage of humanitarian and medical staff. Any action to the contrary that deprives the people of Gaza of unimpeded access to essential livelihood supplies would be a clear violation of their human rights and an affront to international humanitarian law. We, the United Nations, cannot allow our fundamental principles of human rights and international law to be compromised. As the United Nations, we are obliged to uphold them, without any conditions or reservations, and certainly without any exceptions. Over the years, the United Nations has conducted successful humanitarian operations that have had significant impact. I both appreciate and am encouraged by the Israeli cooperation that has led to the successful passage into Gaza of some aid trucks from Egypt. But that is clearly a drop in the ocean for Gaza's 2.5 million inhabitants, almost half of whom are children.

At this juncture, the most immediate step is clear. The violence must cease, and further bloodshed must be prevented. I call for the prompt and unconditional release of all hostages, an immediate, unconditional humanitarian ceasefire and an immediate, unconditional opening of corridors for humanitarian assistance and relief. The only path to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace is a negotiated two-State solution, consistent with international law, the Charter and the

relevant United Nations resolutions — a solution that fulfils Israel's legitimate need for security and the State of Palestine's legitimate aspirations for an independent State. I urge all State and non-State parties to set aside their animosities and focus instead on averting war by prioritizing saving lives. That means focusing on the core purpose of our Charter. It means engaging in dialogue and harnessing the support of the Secretary-General and his Special Coordinator, Tor Wennesland. I also welcome international initiatives that focus on building consensus, spreading accurate and verified information and putting an end to the violence and despair.

Given the gravity of the situation on the ground, this cannot be just another business-as-usual session. I urge the membership to use today's meeting not to further fan the flames of hate, division and revenge. Let us seize the opportunity, instead, to unify our purpose and actions to save lives and end violence. I want to assure everyone of my deep personal commitment to supporting any and all initiatives to that end.

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

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): Let us all remember that we are meeting here while Palestinians in Gaza are being bombed. We should remember that while we are speaking, families are being killed, hospitals are coming to a halt, neighbourhoods are being destroyed and people are fleeing from one place to another with nowhere safe to go. I urge speakers in this Hall to choose their words carefully and act accordingly. For all who are mobilized against an even greater human-made humanitarian catastrophe or regional spillover — and they are worthy goals — we say stop the bombs, or both will happen. As the President has made clear, we must stop the bombs and save lives — all lives, the lives of children, of civilians, of the 2.3 million civilians in the Gaza Strip.

In Gaza, a father tells his daughter about the birthday he was planning for her and asks her not to miss it. A mother laments, "My children died before they had a chance to eat". Those are the thoughts that cross the mind of a mother in the face of such grief. In the past three weeks, Israel has killed 3,000 children in Gaza. Let me repeat that — 3,000 children, innocent children, angels, who have been killed in Gaza during the past three weeks. A man embraces his mother and pleads like a child, "Come back, I beg you, and I will

take you wherever you want". He hugs her and cannot let go. But there is no time to mourn. More death is on the way, and 1,700 women have been killed by Israel in the past two weeks. A young man wrote, "We will not leave Gaza. We will leave Gaza only to enter heaven". A few days later, that was what he did. Israel has killed 7,000 Palestinians in the past three weeks, and 70 per cent of them are women and children. Almost all the dead are civilians. Is this the war that some members are defending? Let me say that again. Is this the war that some members are defending? Can it be defended? These are crimes. This is barbarism. If members cannot end it for all who have been killed, they should end it for all whose lives we can still save.

Jenan, a little girl under the rubble, shouts at the people coming to rescue her, "What took you so long"? There are 900 Palestinian children under the rubble, dead or alive, wondering what is taking so long and if any help is on the way. Anas, a little boy now known as Anous, crawled out from under the rubble to find not light, but more darkness, devastation and death all around him. His ordeal had only started, not ended; 1,600 Palestinians are under the rubble, and no one can reach them to save or bury them. A doctor uses a term coined during the war — "Wounded child with no surviving family". Eighty Palestinian families have lost 10 or more members. Sometimes as many 45 members of the same family have been killed. Some 18,000 people have been wounded, many of them treated in hospital hallways, if at all, with no anaesthesia. Paramedics, who have seen death time and time again, break down and cry, because this time is just too much.

United Nations staff, humanitarian personnel and doctors are standing their ground and paying the ultimate price for it. Some honour their memory as if they were killed by a natural disaster, not a United Nations Member State. As hospitals turn into morgues, doctors and patients alike wonder if help is on the way. They are not listening to the explanations of some leaders about why the war has to go on. They just hear the bombs and feel the blasts. They are just facing all the deaths, trying to survive or to honour the pledge that they took to save lives, without the means to do so. People are ordered to evacuate. They look at their children. Should we head south? Will we be bombed on the way, or when we get there? Should we go to a hospital courtyard, a United Nations school, a church or a mosque, or sleep in our car in the street? But the bombs are everywhere. What choices do you make as

a parent when there are only impossible choices, when death and devastation are everywhere? A man stands in front of his house, which has been turned into rubble yet again. After a long pause, he asks, "How do you bury a house"? Israel has destroyed more than 40 per cent of all the homes in Gaza, leaving an entire population homeless and 1.4 million people displaced, in hopes of forcibly transferring them out of their territory.

The Israeli Foreign Minister came to the Security Council and said, "This meeting should conclude with the clear message: Bring them home." (*S/PV.9451, p.11*) For millions of Palestinians, there is no home to go back to. For thousands, there is no family left to embrace, not because of an act of God, but because of the acts of a Government represented here in this Hall. He spoke of families and their pain. There is not a single family in Gaza that has not endured epic suffering. The Israeli Foreign Minister told the Security Council how horrible the killing of civilians is. Right before he justified the killing of Palestinian civilians in the thousands, he spoke of the fear felt by people when rockets are launched. Israel's bombs have not spared a single square metre of Gaza. He believes that the difference between civilization and barbarism is based on who is doing the killing or how they do it. He believes that the laws of humanity and our international rules-based order apply to others but not to Israel, and that they protect Israeli lives while permitting the killing of Palestinians, the taking of Palestinian lives. He believes that Israel can pretend that it is abiding by the very laws it is breaking, broadcast live on our television screens and before our eyes. He believes that if one says "Hamas" enough times, the world will be unable to object to wiping entire families — four generations at a time — off the face of the Earth, or to a siege in which enough humanitarian aid is let in so that Israel can pretend that it has a sense of humanity, but not nearly enough to address the immense needs that are growing exponentially as it keeps bombing the besieged territory. He says, "Release the hostages", and takes 2 million Palestinians hostage.

Let me translate the numbers. Compared to the population of Gaza, that is the equivalent of 28,000 Israelis killed, including 12,000 children and 6,800 women, 72,000 wounded and 5.6 million displaced. Is it more shocking now, more unacceptable and more outrageous? Why do some feel so much pain for Israelis and so little for us Palestinians? What is the problem? Do we have the wrong faith, the wrong skin colour, the

wrong nationality or the wrong origin? Let me address all who in the past few days have explained why we should not call for a ceasefire.

How can representatives explain how horrible it is that 1,000 Israelis were killed and not feel the same outrage when 1,000 Palestinians are now being killed every day? One thousand Palestinians are killed every day. Why not feel a sense of urgency for ending their killing? Nothing can justify war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide. Nothing can justify the killing of a single Palestinian child — nothing at all. Why not feel a sense of urgency about ending our killing? As I said, nothing can justify war crimes. Members are setting us back 80 years by trying to justify what Israel is doing. How naive or hypocritical does one have to be to pretend that one does not know that Israel is voluntarily killing Palestinian civilians? Who can believe that Israel is trying to minimize civilian deaths when 70 per cent of those it is killing are children and women, and when entire families have been killed? They are killing all of us, thousands of us, and they say that they are trying to minimize killing civilians. How would it look if they were trying to maximize killing Palestinian civilians? If killing 7,000 is minimizing, perhaps 700,000 would be maximizing? We do not need representatives to offer us semantic assurances about international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians, we need them to honour those norms — not recall them only to justify their breach seconds later. Such selective outrage is outrageous and must stop now.

The people whom those here watch on their screens for a few minutes a day every night while they are being slaughtered have survived decades of military occupation, a 16-year blockade and five wars in the Gaza Strip. They have built and rebuilt and rebuilt their lives and their homes, again and again, against all odds, despite tremendous suffering. They are walking miracles. How can we leave them to be killed once again? The answer to the killing of Palestinian civilians is not the killing of Israeli civilians, and the answer to the killing of Israeli civilians is not the killing of Palestinian civilians. Vengeance is a dead end. The only path forward is justice — justice for the Palestinian people. Do not distort the law, do not bend it, do not break it, do not betray it to accommodate Israel. Uphold it and hold it up high. That is what we are here for as the United Nations, to save future generations from the scourge of war. Uphold it for the sake of all nations, for the credibility of these United Nations.

For those who do not know, Wael Al-Dahdouh is an Al Jazeera field correspondent in the Gaza Strip. He was reporting on the massacres in Gaza, as he had been doing relentlessly for days, when he received news that an Israeli air strike had killed his wife, his son and his daughter. He did something many parents do in such circumstances. He spoke to his son, waiting for an answer that never came. He asked him, “Did you not tell me you wanted to be a journalist?” His son wanted to be a journalist even though journalists are targets in Palestine — remember Shireen Abu Akleh — and now the dream of the son will haunt the father. Wael said a few words that I want the Assembly to hear, and to hear well. He said, “They took their vengeance out on our children”. He then said in a heartbreaking voice, “*Malish*”. Allow me to explain. Literally it means “That is okay”. But let me explain what I believe he meant, and let me do so in Arabic.

(spoke in Arabic)

Shame on a world where Gaza is once again being destroyed in front of the world’s cameras. Shame on all who do not respect our humanity, our dignity and our suffering. Shame on everyone who justifies the killer’s actions instead of standing with the victim. Shame on everyone who justifies the crime, offers condolences to the victims and explains to them that their killer is not responsible for the killing. Shame on all who do not stand with our people in Gaza and end the massacre. Shame on this platform if not a word of truth is said from it, and shame on the person who will speak after me to defend falsehoods and justify the killing of innocent people. There is no justice on this Earth. We have only God to turn to.

(spoke in English)

Lastly, I appeal to all Member States. Vote to stop the killing, vote for humanitarian aid to reach those whose very survival depends on it, vote to stop this madness. Members have a chance to do something, to send an important message. Choose justice, not vengeance. Choose to defend the law, not justify its breach. Choose peace, not more wars. Vote to put an end to almost three weeks of the worst double standards we have seen in decades, to restore some credibility to this place and the rules it is supposed to embody. Do not miss the chance. Lives are hanging in the balance, and every life is sacred. Please save lives, save lives, save lives. Vote for our draft resolution (A/ES-10/L.25).

Mr. Erdan (Israel): We are gathered here in this Hall today as a result of the Assembly’s adoption of resolution 377 (V), called “Uniting for peace”. Sadly, the tenth emergency special session has nothing to do with peace. Every Member State here today that is convinced that we are about to discuss yet another round of conflict in the Middle East, another dispute between Israel and the Palestinians, is wrong. The massacre of 7 October and what ensued have nothing to do with the Palestinians. They have nothing to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict or the Palestinian question. This is not a war with the Palestinians. Israel is at war only with the genocidal jihadist Hamas terror organization. It is the law-abiding democracy of Israel against modern-day Nazis. Those are the facts. Hamas does not care about the Palestinian people or about peace or dialogue. Hamas has only one goal, which is to annihilate Israel and murder every Jew on the face of the earth. Its original charter makes that very clear. Let me read a few lines. “Israel exists, and will continue to exist, until Islam obliterates it”; “There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by jihad”; and “The Day of Judgment will not come until Muslims fight Jews and kill them”.

On 7 October, it became clear to the entire world that Hamas’s charter was not a compilation of empty words but an action plan. Imagine a bright, sunny day with clear skies and music in the air. Young people are dancing at a rave. It is a concert for peace — yes, for peace. It is early morning on the holy Sabbath, and the sun has just risen to mark a new day. It is also a festive Jewish high holiday, Simchat Torah, which means “the joy of the Torah”, when we celebrate the book of books, our holy Bible. Then, in one split second, that idyllic Eden became hell on earth. The peaceful morning air was pierced by the wail of rocket sirens. Thousands of Hamas mortars and rockets rained down indiscriminately on many Israeli cities and villages. But the rockets were only cover for the pogrom that followed. Barbaric Hamas terrorists invaded Israel from the sea, land and air. They came with one purpose only, which was to savagely murder every living thing they encountered. Hamas’s Nazi murderers went from house to house with hit lists in a thoroughly planned, wilful, premeditated attack. They brutally murdered civilians in their beds. They drove pickup trucks with machine guns — yes, we all remember, just as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) did — and fired blindly at hundreds of young people at a concert.

Three hundred were burned alive or butchered at that concert. Much of what remained was clumps of flesh and bloody limbs. Parents had to bring their children's toothbrushes for DNA testing so they could figure out whose limb belonged to whom. Those Hamas monsters raped women and children, parading naked girls whom they raped and bodies that they defiled through the streets of Gaza, while thousands, as can be seen from the footage, jeered and cheered. The savages tortured small babies. Just like the Nazis, Hamas terrorists removed infants from their cribs — yes, we have it on video — and swung them repeatedly against the ground until their skulls were pulp. Children were murdered in front of their parents, and parents in front of their children. I have seen a video of a terrorist filmed by himself in which he tossed a grenade into a bomb shelter with a father and his two young boys inside. The father was killed instantly, and the two boys ran out of the shelter screaming that their father was dead and that they wanted to be dead too. All that was occurring, believe it or not, as the monster who murdered their father calmly helped himself to the contents of the family's fridge. No horror movie compares to the pure brutality that Hamas carried out.

Amit Mann was a 22-year-old from Be'eri kibbutz and a paramedic for Magen David Adom, Israel's Red Cross. She dedicated her life — literally, and the Assembly will understand why — to saving others. When the Hamas monsters invaded the kibbutz, Amit ran to the clinic to treat as many wounded as she could. For hours, Amit worked non-stop, trying to save lives. She knew the sadistic terrorists were outside her clinic because she heard the gunfire, but she stayed there. She was committed to saving lives, not running away. Finally, the terrorists burst into her clinic and put a bullet through her brain. She was a paramedic for Magen David Adom, the Israeli Red Cross, in uniform, but that did not stop those savages. That is how the rescue teams found Amit.

Ambulances were set on fire — not just one but many. Dozens of Magen David Adom medical teams were intentionally targeted on their way to tend to the wounded, and many other paramedics were murdered. Barzilai hospital, in my hometown of Ashkelon, in Israel, suffered direct hits from Hamas rockets, and not for the first time, because Hamas has been deliberately firing rockets at it for years. Yet there has not been a single condemnation of that barbarity here, not from the Security Council, not from the Secretary-General

and not from this absurd draft resolution (A/ES-10/L.25). It seems that hospitals and medical teams need to be protected only as long as they are not Israeli. The hypocrisy is beyond belief. The brutal ISIS-like monsters abducted more than 220 hostages from Israel and dozens of other countries, including babies, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and Holocaust survivors. Kfir Bibas is nine months old, and he is being held right now in Gaza as a hostage — at nine months old. What barbaric terrorists can do such a thing? And there are 30 other children there with him.

We saw Hamas's brutality in Israel. I cannot begin to fathom what horrors the hostages are enduring right now, as we speak. Twenty days have gone by and Israel is still counting its dead. It took weeks to collect all of the bodies. Some bodies are burnt like pieces of coal; it is almost impossible to identify them. Countless burned bodies have been found with ash in their throats, meaning they were still alive when lit on fire intentionally by the Hamas terrorists.

A clump of charred human remains that was burned beyond recognition was found and the medical personnel couldn't figure out what they were looking at. Yet, after a CT scan, it became clear that they were two spines, not one, but two spines bound together with wire — one belonging to an adult and the other, the small spine of a child. Just try to imagine that parent's feeling while they were burning alive with their child. The painful screaming of the love of their life was the last thing they heard.

Do you not think it is unbelievable that the draft resolution here today and this session are not focused solely on Hamas's atrocities? When reading the draft resolution, Hamas seems to be missing in action. The drafters claim to be concerned about peace, yet the depraved murderers who initiated this war are not even mentioned in the draft resolution. They see everyone here as puppets. They write a draft resolution completely devoid of any content related to the situation. They assume that everyone here has already forgotten who it is that is responsible for the inhumane violence, and they just expect everyone to support it automatically. This draft resolution is a disgrace to everyone's intelligence. It is unfathomable that such a draft resolution, one that does not even mention Hamas, could possibly be voted upon here. Let that sink in, please.

Hamas carried out atrocities the likes of which we have not seen since the Holocaust. Yet, unlike the

Holocaust, where the evidence we have is mostly black and white photographs and soundless footage, here the proof is in high definition because some of it is from security footage, but much of it is from the cell phones and GoPro cameras belonging to the Hamas Nazis themselves. Many may be asking — why did they film their sadistic violence? I will explain why; it is very simple. They filmed it in order to terrorize the Israeli public, to release these videos and put fear in the hearts of the citizens of Israel. By the way, that is what terrorists do — they terrorize.

I have seen a great deal of footage over the past weeks that will be seared into my mind forever, but there is one sight that I keep on seeing when I try to sleep. In the video, one can see a terribly injured civilian, bloodied yet alive, laying on the ground as a Hamas savage screaming “Allahu akbar” repeatedly pummels the man’s neck with a garden hoe in order to decapitate him. The man on the ground is an agricultural worker from Thailand. He is not Israeli; he is not Jewish. He was merely alive, trying to make a living for his family. But he was decapitated with a blunt gardening tool — horrifying. Israel is not at war with human beings; we are at war with monsters.

Here is the video.

A video recording was shown in the General Assembly Hall.

My mission distributed and will continue to distribute QR codes, with a direct link to files where you can see this horror and many other Hamas atrocities. What you see here are not pictures from Auschwitz, but Israelis raped, butchered and burned alive. This is not Auschwitz; this is Hamas. There are no words in the English language or in any language to describe the evil that we all just witnessed. The reason it is not describable is because it has no place among humankind.

More than 1,400 have been slaughtered, 1,000 injured and more than 220 hostages are being held right now by Hamas Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) terrorists. To say that this is Israel’s 9/11 would be an understatement. Proportionally, the death toll of this atrocity is 15 times bigger than 9/11. By the way, our enemies are not 7,000 miles away. They are 7,000 feet away, in our own backyard. So for that reason, Israel’s mission is to eradicate this evil from the Earth. ISIS was the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, and Hamas is the Islamic State of Gaza. So just as was done with

ISIS, Hamas must be no more. Our goal is to completely eradicate Hamas’s capabilities, and we will use every means at our disposal to accomplish that — not for revenge or for retaliation, but to ensure that such depravity and such atrocities never occur again.

Israel is at the forefront of the war on radical jihadi terror, and if Israel doesn’t succeed in obliterating Hamas’s terror capabilities, the whole world will pay the price. Hamas’s genocidal ideology, just like ISIS, Al-Qaida or Iran’s ayatollah regime in Tehran, is not just about destroying Israel. Everyone knows it. It is ultimately about world domination. It is about bringing the jihad war to the soil of each and every country. They will not stop until they murder all of the “infidels”, as they call us.

For the past 16 years, the international community and the United Nations have been complacent with the build-up of Hamas terror in Gaza. The world kept its head in the sand as Hamas embedded its missiles and rockets deep within and under the civilian population of Gaza. It accepted an absurd reality that a law-abiding democracy could live side by side with cancerous genocidal terrorists that fire tens of thousands of missiles indiscriminately at our civilians, unprovoked.

Sadly, we have seen that nothing can change Hamas’s genocidal ideology — not the rehabilitation of Gaza, not economic incentives, not the promise of a brighter future. The United Nations tried; many of you tried, but everyone failed. And why? Because nothing can change a genocidal ideology — nothing. There is only one solution to curing a cancer. It is the evisceration of every cancerous cell. The international community has poured billions of dollars into Gaza, and it all went to Hamas’s war machine. It went to its subterranean city of terror. It went to its missile manufacturing facilities. And I remind everyone that, 18 years ago, Israel unilaterally withdrew from all of Gaza. Hamas could have invested the international funding it received into building power plants, water desalination plants and other civil infrastructure. But no — instead, Hamas exploited every inch of the Gaza Strip for its violent goals. That is because to Hamas, Gazan civilians are nothing more than cannon fodder and human shields who in death become pawns in Hamas’s libellous propaganda campaign. Hamas is counting on the United Nations. It is certain that despite the terror and massacres, the United Nations will still come to its rescue and prevent Israel from defending itself.

We in Israel are on a rescue mission to save our hostages, to save our future and to save the people of Gaza from their savage tyrants. It is a rescue mission. That rescue mission can end quickly. It can end now. There is no need for complicated, empty draft resolutions. It can end now. If Hamas's elements laid down their arms, returned our hostages and turned themselves in, the war would end without another shot being fired. No even one. Why does the United Nations not unite and call on Hamas to do that? If the authors of the draft resolution truly want peace, if they truly want an immediate solution, why are they not demanding it of Hamas? Instead, the draft resolution does the exact opposite of finding a solution. Rather than promoting peace, it only ensures more violence. It should be called "uniting for terror", not "Uniting for peace".

Israel has been attacked and continues to be attacked. That is a fact right now, in the south from Hamas and in the north from Hizbullah. Meanwhile, the draft resolution calls for an immediate ceasefire. A ceasefire means giving Hamas time to rearm itself so that it can massacre us again. That is not speculation — it is what Hamas will do. We all know that. Any call for a ceasefire is not an attempt to achieve peace. It is an attempt to tie Israel's hands and prevent us from eliminating a huge threat to our citizens. But the draft resolution's distortions go even deeper than that. I reiterate that Hamas, the terror group that started this war, is not mentioned in it even once. In fact, the only hidden reference to those barbaric terrorists can be found in calls on both parties. Both parties? That is a false, immoral comparison between the law-abiding democracy of Israel and a group of genocidal jihadists. The draft resolution's authors are counting on the fact that each and every representative here will blindly go along with their ploy. The draft resolution is an insult to their intelligence. The only place it belongs is in the dustbin of history.

But the draft resolution is not the only thing here today that is detached from reality. In a little while, a representative of the evil regime that trained, funded and armed Hamas for the 7 October massacre will address members. The ayatollah regime of Iran has the blood of thousands of Israelis on its hands. It has the blood of hundreds of thousands of oppressed Iranians, Ukrainians, Americans, Emiratis and so many others on its hands. Iran is known as the world's number one State sponsor of terror, and for good reason. It is therefore completely natural that the Foreign Minister

of that brutal regime should be the speaker following the author of the draft resolution. That country with the Nazi ideology of annihilating Israel stands publicly in solidarity with its proxy, Hamas, which shares the same Nazi ideology and aims for our destruction. That is completely understandable. Indeed, mere days ago, the Foreign Minister spoke with the leaders of Hamas and its twin terror group, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, praising them for the slaughter. Today he is here to fill members' ears with poison. Indeed, uniting for peace may as well be uniting to butcher every Israeli to pieces. That man, a mass murderer — along with every other representative of the terror regime in Iran — has no place at the United Nations, let alone in the family of nations. It is a moral stain on the United Nations and the values it was founded on.

This week the United Nations celebrated its seventy-eighth birthday. However, looking at today's draft resolution and the honorary guests hosted here today in this Hall, the Organization has shown that it is so broken and morally corrupt that I do not have much hope that it will make it to 90 years, let alone 100. I am just a realist. Today serves as the clearest proof that this organ is bleeding out its relevance, legitimacy and justification. What we are witnessing today is a desecration of what the United Nations was meant to be. Following the horrors of the Holocaust, this institution was established to prevent atrocities from repeating themselves. Yet in this very Hall, we have perpetrators of the most grotesque human rights violations and crimes against humanity, who also exploit their power as so-called members of the family of nations only to single out law-abiding democracies such as Israel. If the Organization wants to maintain any shred of legitimacy, it is imperative to plead for representatives to no longer play along with the farce of anti-Israel double standards. They must vote against the biased draft resolution. I implore them to stand on the right side of history, not with the genocidal jihadists committed to their destruction. They must rise above internal political considerations and do what is moral and right.

Israel will not stop fighting for the truth, even if we remain the sole voice of reason in this Hall. Israel will continue combating the genocidal terrorists committed to our destruction. We will not rest until Hamas is obliterated and our hostages are returned home. And we will bring them home.

I would like to conclude with a moment of silence for all the victims of Hamas's atrocities. If the supporters

of the draft resolution choose to ignore the victims in their text, I will pay respect to their memory.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Jordan.

Mr. Safadi (Jordan): It is at times such as these, of cruelty, inhumanity and total disregard for international law, that we must speak out clearly and unequivocally. There is no room for grey areas here. We must stand for life, for justice and for peace. We must stand against the war in Gaza and the humanitarian catastrophe that it is causing. We must stand on the side of our human values and for the Charter of the United Nations.

History will judge us. Let us not fail the Palestinian people — a besieged and occupied people whose days start and end with death and whose nights are engulfed by a total blackout, punctured only by the lightning of Israeli missiles taking away their lives, shattering their dreams and killing their hope. We must say no to war. We must say no to the killing, call out war crimes and defend the right of Palestinian children, women and the elderly to food, water, medicine and fuel. We must speak out against using starvation as a weapon. Children are falling dead under the rubble of homes destroyed by Israeli precision bombs. Some are still alive under the rubble. There is not sufficient equipment to pull them out. Their parents can still hear them. They talk to them helplessly, knowing that they are running out of air and are slowly dying. Children who might miraculously survive face dehydration and starvation.

Israel has killed more than 7,000 innocent Palestinians since this new vicious cycle of violence and war erupted on 7 October. These are people with names, with faces, with memories and loved ones left behind. Among them were 16 health workers, 39 employees of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and 22 journalists. Wael Dahdouh, a journalist, had his eight children living separately in three different houses so that they would not all be killed at the same time if one of the houses was bombed. Yesterday, his wife, Amina, 45 years old, his son Mahmud, 16 years old, his daughter, Sham, 7 years old, and his infant grandson, Adam, 45 days old — listen to me, 45 days old — were stolen from him by Israel's war. They are not soldiers, and yet "at the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them".

The Israeli Government, which has Cabinet members who openly and shamefully call for Palestinians to be wiped off the face of the Earth and call them animals unworthy of life, claims that this is not a war on the Palestinian people. If it is not, then why on Earth did they kill Adam?

(spoke in Arabic)

May God rest his soul, their souls and the souls of all the departed.

(spoke in English)

A doctor in Gaza has described how a boy with injuries and facial burns told him how his house was hit after he had just finished a meal with his parents. His father, sitting next to him, he says, was killed outright. His mother suffocated in the smoke. I do not have videos to show. We respect the dead too much. We respect the pain of their families too much to show videos, but such videos can be found on mobile phones. There are thousands of videos depicting the abomination, the horror and the inhumanity to which thousands of Palestinians are being subjected and have been subjected. Israel is making Gaza a perpetual hell on earth. The trauma will haunt generations to come.

We should not be fooled. We must not let Israel tell us that this is a war between Muslims and Jews. I stand here before the General Assembly as a Jordanian, an Arab and a Muslim, and I proclaim that we value life — Muslim life, Christian life and Jewish life. We value the sanctity of life. The Israeli representative did not say a word about the Palestinian lives shattered in this war, but the Palestinian representative before him said, as do I, that we care about all lives, about all civilians — Muslims, Christians, Palestinians, Jews, Israelis, all lives. We must not let them tell us otherwise. That is the definition of an insult to intelligence.

Rage must not blind us to the futility of violence. It must not desensitize us to the pain of fellow human beings. We condemn the killing of all civilians, regardless of their race, their identity, their nationality or their religion, because those are our human values and that is our morality. Israel must uphold those values too. How many wars and how much death has our region suffered? And what good have they done for all of us? They did not bring security to Israel. They will not. They did not bring security to any of us. The right to self-defence is not a licence to kill with impunity. Collective punishment is not self-defence, it is a war

crime. We must say it as it is. We must refuse the double standards and selective application of international law. Israel cannot remain above the law. A just and lasting peace is the best defence for all. Let the guns go silent and let the will to live and let live prevail. Let us restore faith in the peace process as the only path to ending this conflict once and for all.

Many among us believe that they are helping Israel by supporting its war. They are not. Instead of sending weapons to Israel, they should send delegations to open an immediate and viable path to peace. That is how to help Israel. And many among us feel that they are doing their ethical and legal duty to Palestinians by urging that humanitarian supplies be sent to them. But they are not demanding an end to this war, and they are not doing their duty to Palestinians. The responsibility towards Palestinians requires working for their protection and for peace — peace that will ensure a viable, independent and sovereign Palestinian State, with occupied Jerusalem as its capital, on the 4 June 1967 lines, living side by side with a secure Israel, so that Palestinians can live free from occupation and its indignity, and so that no Palestinian or Israeli mother has to mourn her child again.

Jordan, on behalf of the Arab countries, will put forward a draft resolution (A/ES-10/L.25). We are doing that because the Security Council has not fulfilled its responsibility. The draft resolution simply seeks what our United Nations was established to achieve — peace and compliance with international law. We all know that Israel will ignore it. It has ignored countless United Nations resolutions in the past. Nevertheless, all of us should vote for it and take a stand.

A month ago, His Majesty King Abdullah II stood here before the General Assembly (see A/78/PV.4). His words rang true then. They are even more relevant now. He said,

“Our region will continue to suffer until the world helps lift the shadow of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the central issue in the Middle East. No architecture for regional security and development can stand over the burning ashes of that conflict. But seven and a half decades on, it still smoulders. Where are we going?” (A/78/PV.4, p.20)

Let us raise a collective cry and cry out against more bloodletting. Let us unite for peace. Let us unite for justice. Let us unite for the right of every Palestinian and Israeli child to live free from the horrors of war

and free from fear, and to look forward to a life full of promise and opportunity. For the sake of the Palestinian people and for the sake of the Israeli people, vote yes. And contrary to what the Assembly just heard, the draft resolution contained in document A/ES-10/L.25 does recognize the pain and the killing on the Israeli side as well, and it does condemn the killing of Palestinian and Israeli civilians. Do not be fooled.

Let the adoption of the draft resolution be a message to the Palestinians suffering the inferno of this Israeli war on them. Let it be a message that the international community sees them, feels their pain and believes that Palestinian lives matter too. Make a stand for peace and a stand for life — and make it clear and make it firm.

Before I conclude, I too want to call for a moment of silence, but not just for one side or the other. I want to call for a moment of silence for all the civilians — for all the innocent — who have fallen and who continue to fall in this ugly, abominable war.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Amir-Abdollahian (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. The world knows that the Islamic Republic of Iran plays a highly constructive role in helping to achieve peace and security and fighting terrorism and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham.

It has been three weeks that we have been bearing witness to the war crimes and genocide of the occupying Israeli regime in Gaza and the West Bank of Palestine. The United States and several European countries have sided with the occupying regime of Israel, without observing the Charter of the United Nations and international law. They call the Palestinian liberation movement — which has the right to self-defence and self-determination — a terrorist movement. But they refer to the occupying and war criminal regime that is committing genocide in Gaza as having the right to self-defence.

Unfortunately, that is the state of our world today. That is the situation of the Security Council, which was supposed to try to establish world peace and security. Today the United States and several European countries have been watching and supporting the killing of about 7,000 civilians in less than three weeks by the Israeli regime in Gaza and the West Bank of Palestine — and they have helped that regime militarily and financially.

We recommend that the United States work for peace and security, and not for war against people, children and women. Instead of sending rockets, tanks and bombs to be used against Gaza, the United States should stop supporting genocide in Gaza and Palestine.

The history of the Iranian civilization shows that we have always supported peace and security. But today in New York at the United Nations, I say frankly to the American statesmen who are now managing the genocide in Palestine that we do not welcome an expansion of the war in the region. And I warn that if the genocide in Gaza continues, they will not be spared from the fire. It is our home, and West Asia is our region. We do not compromise with any party or any side, and we have no reservations when it comes to our home security. The genocide in Gaza must stop immediately. The forced displacement of the people of Gaza must be stopped immediately. Today Gaza is waiting for urgent and vital humanitarian aid. According to international law, the Palestinian liberation movement, Hamas, is fighting the occupation and has a legitimate right.

According to our negotiations, Hamas is ready to release civilian prisoners. On the other hand, the world should support the release of the 6,000 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons.

(spoke in Persian; English interpretation provided by the delegation)

According to history and based on documents of the United Nations, the Palestinian issue has a history of about 80 years. Trying to reduce its dimensions to just one attack and one Palestinian liberation group is therefore a big lie. According to international law and hundreds of resolutions of this very General Assembly, the entire Palestinian territory is an occupied territory, and according to that, the Zionist regime is recognized as an aggressor and occupier.

The Palestinian nation, like any other nation under occupation, has the indisputable and inherent right to self-determination and the right to decide directly and freely on its independence and to create an independent Government to decide for itself. According to international law and as specified by Security Council resolutions 309 (1972) and 323 (1972), in the case of Namibia, the inalienable right to self-determination and independence is permanent and does not disappear with the passage of time. Therefore, just as the prolonged occupation of the land does not create any rights for the occupier, the passage of time does not diminish in

the slightest way the right to determine the fate of the occupied nation.

According to the principles and rules of international law and hundreds of the Assembly's resolutions, the Palestinian nation, as a nation under occupation, has the legitimate right to resist the occupation by using all available methods, including armed struggle. Therefore, the recent hypocritical attempts to designate the liberation struggle of the Palestinian nation against the occupiers as terrorist actions will not deceive the free nations and the awakened conscience of the world. The United States of America, as the unwavering and permanent supporter of the occupying regime, is the main cause for the failures of the United Nations, especially the Security Council, in upholding the rights of the Palestinians. That country has prevented the Council dozens of times from fulfilling its duties in that regard.

We believe that a complete and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue is possible only through the full realization of that nation's inalienable right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in all the Palestinian territories, with Al-Quds as its capital. The entire land of Palestine, from the sea to the river, belongs only to the original Palestinians, including Christians, Jews and Muslims, and no institution or country has the right to give any part of it to another person or group. The Islamic Republic of Iran, believing in the right of Palestine to resist the occupation, has presented a political and democratic initiative that includes holding a referendum on self-determination among the original residents of Palestine, including Jews, Christians and Muslims, which has also been registered by the United Nations.

The essence and nature of the Zionist regime is based on aggression, occupation, crime, lies and deception. To date, the regime has launched more than 20 wars in the region, invaded all its neighbours without any exception, attacked a number of countries outside its immediate region and neighbourhood and still occupies the territory of some other Arab countries, in addition to Palestine. It has committed all the four main international crimes, namely, aggression, war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, not once, but many times, and in some cases, all four crimes simultaneously. To advance its illegitimate goals, it has failed to adhere to any humane principles or legal rules.

We must see reality as it is. The reality is that brutal occupation has transformed over time into brutal and deep apartheid. It is that terrible combination of chronic occupation and deep apartheid that has given the occupying regime the psychological permission to butcher and mass kill the people under occupation. It is therefore now the time to consider the real face of this regime and recognize it for what it is, as the General Assembly did in 1975 through resolution 3379 (XXX) by identifying Zionism as apartheid and racism.

I would like to emphasize that the recent action of the Palestinian nation, as well as the action of the Hamas liberation organization, against the occupiers is a legitimate practice and their inherent right according to the applicable rules of international law, and attributing any other title to those actions is absolutely illegal and unacceptable. The claims, among others, that the right of so-called legitimate defence should be granted to the occupying regime, are also a very ridiculous joke. It is certainly not possible to change the places of the killer and the victim by misusing some expressions.

The Al-Aqsa storm operation is only a reaction to the continued occupation and aggression against the Palestinians and to the widespread crimes of the Zionist regime in recent months. In fact, the operation was the volcanic eruption of the concentrated anger of the entire Palestinian nation against 75 years of continuous and widespread crimes by the Zionist regime, especially the extremism of the Netanyahu Government in recent months.

According to international law, resisting aggression and occupation, including by armed means, is the inherent and legitimate right of every nation, including the Palestinian nation, and it does not require the permission or order of any country or institution to exercise it. The time, place and way in which a nation exercises that right is also its own independent decision, based on the well-known principles of international law. To those who repeatedly talk about the need to prevent an expansion of this conflict — of course, we, as the Islamic Republic of Iran, have never sought to spread the war and will never seek to do so — if they truly do not want to expand the scope of the war, they should put pressure on the Zionist regime to immediately and completely stop its war crimes.

The recent statements by the official and military authorities of Zionist regime and its actions in Gaza prove that the killing of more than 7,000 civilians — more than

62 per cent of whom were women and children — the wounding and maiming of more than 17,000 civilians and completely cutting off water, electricity, fuel, food and medicine for a population of several million people and preventing any effective humanitarian assistance to them, in addition to the brutal and widespread destruction of residential areas, mosques, churches, hospitals and infrastructure facilities, carried out deliberately and with the clear intent of revenge and collective punishment — which is explicitly prohibited under international law — leaves no room for doubt that those actions are a clear violation of international law and a clear example of the crime of aggression, war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

The actions of the United States, which directly participates in this war by providing financial and arms support, direct military action and effective political support, are in clear violation of the Charter and the international legal obligations of that country, which clearly makes it internationally responsible. In addition, given that the United States itself is in fact directly involved in committing crimes against Palestinians, it is not in a position to invite others to exercise self-restraint and refrain from spreading the war. We therefore strongly warn against the uncontrollable consequences of the White House's unlimited financial, military and operational support to the Tel Aviv regime, which has led to the expansion and added to the severity of the bombing of Palestinian civilians, women and children in Gaza and the West Bank.

The current developments in Palestine also clearly prove that the only result of any normalization of relations with Tel Aviv is tantamount to ignoring the legitimate and historical rights of the Palestinian nation. Any normalization of ties with the Israeli regime is also doomed to failure.

Preventing an escalation of the Palestinian situation, especially given the turbulent and tumultuous conditions in the various regions of the world, is a global and collective responsibility. For our part, we are ready to play a more serious role in this area, in line with our recent efforts to restore peace and security in West Asia. In that connection, the leaders of the Hamas liberation Palestinian movement have voiced their readiness to release non-military prisoners to us, and the Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to play its part in this very important humanitarian endeavour, along with Qatar and Türkiye. Of course, the release

of the 6,000 Palestinian prisoners is a requirement and another responsibility of the global community.

Mr. Milambo (Zambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In conclusion, I would like to express appreciation for the positive and realistic position of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and his efforts on the ground to send humanitarian aid to Gaza and immediately stop the war. I would like to emphasize that we expect the United Nations to use strong rhetoric and, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, force the Zionist regime to immediately stop its war crimes, genocide and mass killing of civilians and lay the ground for the full realization of the Palestinian nation's right to self-determination. Of course, that is the inherent duty and obligation of the United Nations, which has been delayed for decades for the reasons I mentioned earlier.

We all expect the current session of the General Assembly to address the Gaza and Palestinian crisis. We expect the General Assembly to adopt a strong draft resolution that is effective and influential to immediately stop the war crimes in Gaza, lift the humanitarian blockade, allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid and stop the forced displacement of the residents of Gaza.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean Asselborn, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg.

Mr. Asselborn (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I thank the President for convening today's resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly.

Regrettably, as the war rages on in the Middle East and the risk of regional escalation remains very real, we deplore the fact that the Security Council has not yet been able to shoulder its responsibility by adopting a draft resolution on the situation because of the use of the veto and divisions in the Council. In those circumstances, it is important for the General Assembly to address the issue and for all Member States that wish to do so to be able to take the floor. Regional and international peace and security are at stake.

As I already said in the Security Council at the high-level public debate convened by Brazil the day before yesterday, nothing can justify the atrocities committed by Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists against Israeli

civilians on 7 October (see S/PV.9451). Nothing can justify those barbaric acts that have shaken the world, and we condemn them in the strongest possible terms, just as the Secretary-General did earlier.

Luxembourg unequivocally reaffirms Israel's right to defend itself under international law. At the same time, I would like to refer to President Biden's remarks reminding Israel not to be guided by rage and recalling that the United States had made mistakes in its response to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. Israel must act in line with international humanitarian law and ensure the protection of civilians.

The people of Gaza are not Hamas. They should not be held responsible for crimes committed by terrorists, and neither should they be punished collectively for those crimes. The Secretary-General has called for de-escalation and for a humanitarian ceasefire.

First, humanitarian pauses should be established, as they could eventually lead to a ceasefire. That would allow for the delivery of emergency humanitarian assistance and would also facilitate the immediate and unconditional release of hostages and help ensure the safety of civilians in Gaza to save lives. Too many civilian lives have already been lost.

Rapid and unfettered humanitarian access must be restored without delay. We welcome the first batch of humanitarian aid deliveries to the people on the Gaza Strip in the past few days. We thank the Secretary-General, Egypt and the United States for facilitating the safe passage of those goods. Nonetheless, the people of Gaza need lasting humanitarian assistance that covers all those in need.

Up until now, deliveries of emergency assistance have not included fuel, although fuel is vital for hospitals to operate and for the desalination of water. United Nations facilities and all hospitals, clinics, schools and humanitarian personnel should never be targeted by parties to conflict. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which is currently providing shelter to 600,000 people on the Gaza Strip, as well as other humanitarian agencies on the ground, must receive the emergency assistance they need to discharge their mandate.

Our country, Luxembourg, has decided to contribute an additional €2.5 million to humanitarian efforts in Gaza and the region, in particular in

support of UNRWA, the World Food Programme, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. That emergency assistance will bring our total support to nearly €12 million for 2023.

The conflict that began on 7 October has already resulted in more than 6,000 lives lost in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. Hundreds of children have been killed. Thirty-eight UNRWA personnel have been killed. I would like to pay tribute to the heroic work carried out by all humanitarian actors on the ground, braving every danger to tend to civilians affected by the conflict. In particular, I would like to pay tribute to the ICRC, whose teams in Gaza work in very challenging conditions. I echo the ICRC's call for all parties to respect international humanitarian law.

I have visited Gaza on several occasions since 2004, when I assumed my role as Minister. For years now, Gaza has been an open-air prison where the living conditions are extreme. Civilians in Gaza are suffering from a double blow — from the Israeli blockade and bombing and from Hamas using them as human shields. There is a serious risk of the conflict becoming a regional conflagration. That also applies to the West Bank, where an increase in settler violence and the forced transfer of Palestinian communities have reached alarming levels.

We must absolutely avoid any spillover of the conflict. To that end, we must work together within the international community and with the main actors in the region. The international community must urgently relaunch the Middle East peace process and give it the attention it deserves. The Peace Day Effort for the Middle East, which was held in New York in September, was the first step in that direction.

Luxembourg remains committed to a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that would ensure Israel's right to security while respecting the Palestinians' right to self-determination and dignity. Just, lasting and comprehensive peace, based on the two-State solution, within the 1967 borders, with two democratic States living side by side and maintaining the status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem, is the only viable path to breaking the cycle of violence.

That is the path to which we must be committed for the sake of our common humanity — the humanity we share with Israelis and Palestinians and Palestinians share with Israelis.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mario Adolfo Búcaro Flores, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guatemala.

Mr. Búcaro Flores (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are participating in the resumed tenth emergency special session at a time of profound sadness and pain for humankind. We extend our deepest condolences to the families of the many victims. We stand in solidarity with their families and demand the release of the hostages, among them babies, children, women and older persons.

The General Assembly cannot forget that the crisis we are currently facing was triggered by the reprehensible terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October, which have affected Israelis and Palestinians alike and people of other nationalities. The attacks have resulted in death, harm, suffering and destruction and a humanitarian situation of considerable proportions. We also stand in solidarity with the humanitarian workers who are dealing with this serious situation and extend our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives while carrying out their noble duties.

Guatemala again condemns in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks committed by Hamas against the State of Israel and its civilians. Hamas is confusing the Palestinian cause with justifying terrorism, and that is a very serious moral and strategic error for the cause and for international efforts that have been made to bring about peace in the territory.

We also condemn the attacks of the Hizbullah terrorist group on Israel, in breach of the resolution (resolution 425 (1978)) that establishes the Blue Line — the border between Israel and Lebanon. Those attacks have claimed the lives of Israeli and Palestinian civilians alike. Today more than ever before, it is worthwhile to recall the words of Golda Meir — if pro-Palestinian groups put down their weapons today, there would be no more violence; but if Israelis put down their weapons today, there would be no more Israel.

The General Assembly must recognize the right of the State of Israel to self-preservation and to defend its people against terrorism. That lack of such recognition will not contribute to dialogue, peace or security in the region, or the world in particular. On the contrary, it will put all of humankind at risk.

The General Assembly should take action in order to reduce polarization and discourage actions and

rhetoric that promote hate. And the only way to do so is to stand together against terrorism, while clearly and unequivocally condemning the actions of Hamas and other terrorist organizations with extremist ideologies and demanding that they stop their practice of placing terrorist arsenals and infrastructure in the basements of hospitals, schools and religious centres. That undermines efforts to protect civilians, who are used as human shields.

In the face of the catastrophic situation produced by this terrible conflict, we are pleased to learn that humanitarian assistance is reaching people, and we encourage humanitarian pauses. However, at the same time, care must be taken to verify that the pauses are not used by terrorist groups to carry out new attacks that would affect civilians and worsen the disastrous situation.

For the United Nations to effectively exercise its responsibility to prevent and resolve conflicts that affect international peace and security, be it through the Security Council or the General Assembly, balanced draft resolutions must be adopted that take into account all elements of the situation, including, in this case, Israel's right to its legitimate defence, to protect the people of Israel and its right to self-preservation.

There is still time to save lives and promote dialogue and negotiation between the parties to achieve comprehensive peace based on the vision of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace. It must be recalled that the State of Israel has the sovereign right to protect its citizens and ensure their safety. That element is absent from the draft resolution (A/ES-10/L.25) submitted to the General Assembly and, for that reason, Guatemala will vote against the draft resolution. We urge all Member States represented here today and all Member States in general to consider doing the same.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia.

Mrs. Marsudi (Indonesia): I stand here not only as the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, but also as a woman, a mother and a grandmother. I am pleading — stop the killing, protect the civilians, let in humanitarian assistance, use your heart. Use your heart for justice and humanity.

Countless times, we have stood here in Hall to relieve the plight of our Palestinian brothers and sisters. Countless times, we have asked the General Assembly for an emergency session on the fate of the Palestinian people. Countless times, our hopes have been crushed due to narrow political interests. The world seems divided in different realities, as if there is a refusal to see the catastrophe in Gaza.

The fact is that attacks and killings continue to take place. Yet, amid such a large number of victims, the Security Council has failed to take action — decisive action. Two days ago, we reminded the Security Council of its moral obligation to save the lives of innocent people (see S/PV.9451). We must bring humanity back to the Security Council. Humanity must come first.

My presence here today is to defend justice and humanity. Indonesia condemns in the strongest terms Israel's violence against Palestinians, hospitals and places of worship in Gaza. Indiscriminate killings, kidnapping and the collective punishment of civilians must also be condemned because it is inhuman and against international law.

This session must rise to the occasion where the Security Council has failed to do so. The General Assembly must prove that we the peoples of the United Nations believe in the dignity and worth of human lives. In that regard, three concrete steps should be taken.

First, we must stop the aggression to prevent more civilian casualties. The General Assembly should demand an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire. We must be able to avoid a future recurrence of atrocities. The Assembly should call for accountability, including the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry to investigate this horrifying humanitarian situation.

Secondly, humanitarian access and the protection of civilians must be ensured. I call on the General Assembly, together with relevant United Nations agencies, to step up efforts in providing humanitarian assistance in Gaza. We must continue to support the efforts of the Secretary-General and key countries to allow humanitarian assistance to take place. Given the destruction and human suffering in Gaza, 10, 20 or 100 truckloads of humanitarian goods are just not enough. Therefore, the General Assembly must call for immediate, unrestricted and sustained humanitarian aid. For our part, we will triple our voluntary contribution to the United Nations Relief and

Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and call on the international community to support UNRWA. Indonesia is also committed to sending humanitarian assistance.

Thirdly, the forced transfer of civilians in Gaza must be rejected. People should not be forced to move against their will. The call to evacuate the areas of northern Gaza adds to the devastation caused by the continuous bombardment of homes, the cutting off of electricity, gas, fuel and water and the years of collective punishment. This is a crime against humanity. The General Assembly should call for the rescinding of the evacuation orders, protect civilians and ensure their safety and well-being, in particular children, and allow their safe movement.

My final point is that there will be no peace until we solve the root causes of the conflict. A resumption of the peace process to realize the two-State solution is a must. We must stop the systematic efforts of the occupying Power, which might leave nothing left to be negotiated and no one left to negotiate with. We must not allow the Palestinians to have no other choice but to accept injustice for the rest of their lives. It is our duty to stop the injustice now. Enough is enough.

In conclusion, if members care about humanity, then they must use their heart to vote yes on the draft resolution (A/ES-10/L.25). Indonesia stands with the people of Palestine.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Attaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria.

Mr. Attaf (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Algeria thanks the President of the General Assembly and expresses its gratitude for the re-convening of this emergency tenth emergency special session at the joint request of the Arab and Islamic Groups. We did so following the failure of the Security Council to genuinely protect the Charter of the United Nations, the purposes and principles contained therein and international peace and security.

We are once again speaking before this inclusive United Nations body in order to offset the Security Council's inability to afford the necessary protection to the Palestinian people and to confront the miseries that are befalling the Gaza Strip, which is wounded, oppressed and the bereaved. Once again, we are having recourse to the General Assembly owing to the

paralysis of the Security Council in shouldering its responsibilities and obligations vis-à-vis the Palestinian question, its failure to act, to dissuade the Israeli occupier and to prevent its tyranny and domination over innocent people in Palestine, and specifically in the Gaza Strip.

Here we are yet again having recourse to the General Assembly in order to ensure that justice be done for the Palestinian people and that their just cause be upheld. We are here to ensure respect for their legitimate aspirations to establish a national sovereign State. We are here for a people whose rights were stolen from them but whose resilience remains intact. The territories of this people were seized. Their property has been destroyed. And yet they remain determined to impose their presence. This people and their requests have been ignored. And yet they are tenacious and resilient. They will continue to robustly defend their rights. The Palestinian people have paid, and continue to pay, a very heavy price. That price can be paid only by those fighting for a noble and lofty cause, an inalienable cause that is part and parcel of a steadfast national project.

The complicity within the Security Council is something that has been familiar on countless occasions over the past 70 years. We have seen a vicious cycle over and over again, one that cannot be, and has not been, broken despite its ramifications and all of the repercussions and damage it has caused consistently and repeatedly. Today, much like in the past, we are bearing witness to the following: the same causes; the same terrible consequences; unbridled Israeli occupation; the most abominable and heinous crimes; no definitive, lasting and just solution to the Palestinian question. We are also bearing witness to the fact that peace, security and stability in that part of the world are being held hostage.

The Palestinians are fed up with the double standards and excessive tolerance that benefit the Israeli occupation. What is worse is that the Palestinian people are suffering from the international community's indifference vis-à-vis the oppression and tyranny to which they have been subjected. When the situation calms down, the Palestinians are told that their cause is not a priority for the international community. When Palestinians are subjected to attacks, all meagre and modest efforts are directed to addressing the consequences of an absence of peace, instead of working towards establishing peace.

An entire generation of Palestinians has never experienced the path to peace. An entire generation has not seen a single serious initiative to revive that path. There is an entire generation of Palestinians that has not seen a single international action geared towards addressing the situation, responding to their legitimate aspirations to restore their freedom, putting an end to the occupation of their land, enjoying their rights and creating an independent State.

Is it not high time to address that abnormal situation, which constitutes a violation of the values and principles of our Organization? Is it not high time to put an end to that historical injustice of a people that have no more patience against a tyrannical and arrogant occupier? Is it not high time to start an international movement for peace that can rekindle hope among Palestinians? Such a movement would be serious and honest and geared towards upholding the national, inalienable and non-time-barred rights of the Palestinian people, rights that cannot be rescinded.

Addressing the dangerous situation in the occupied Palestinian territories requires swift and urgent action to put an end to the unjust Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip. We must aid the Palestinian people and afford them international protection. We need to take collective action with the involvement of all active and influential international parties. That would achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the terms of reference adopted by the international community.

The General Assembly has always been the venue from which to support just causes, first and foremost the Palestinian question. Under these dire circumstances, it is up to the General Assembly to reaffirm its steadfast approach and its commitment to uphold the legal pillars that would allow for establishing an independent and fully sovereign Palestinian State. From that perspective, Algeria reiterates its call on the United Nations for full-fledged membership to be conferred upon the State of Palestine, thereby enshrining the legal, political, moral and ethical rights of the State of Palestine. Doing so would allow that State to join the community of nations, to be heard and to defend its priorities. That would be a decisive step that addresses attempts to distort and dilute the Palestinian question, which is wanted to be buried alive but refuses to perish. That is an important goal that deserves all means and opportunities provided by the General Assembly that enable it to play a key and

decisive role in achieving that lofty objective that can truly lead to achieving the Palestinian national project.

Ms. Taylor Jay (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the initiative to reconvene the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, which gives the international community an opportunity to raise its voice in rejection and strong condemnation of the violence and suffering caused to the civilian population, especially its most vulnerable members — women, children, older persons and the sick — in the Middle East.

Colombia reaffirms its historical support for a peaceful, definitive and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question, based on the solution of two States living side by side within secure borders, in accordance with the provisions of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. We deeply regret the chilling escalation of violence that we have witnessed in recent weeks and the continued violations of international humanitarian law. Resuming the tenth emergency special session of the Assembly demonstrates that the absence of a definitive response in accordance with international law to the conflict between Israel and Palestine has deplorable consequences for the civilian population, destabilizes the region and calls into question the meaning of life and humanity itself.

Every conflict is complex, with multiple variables that require attention if a peaceful and definitive solution is to be reached. That is a lesson that my country, Colombia, knows, having been affected by, and having suffered from, conflict. Throughout decades of armed conflict and multiple attempts to negotiate peace, we have learned that genuine renunciation of the expression of differences through violence is essential for societies to transition to peaceful coexistence. That is the invitation that the Government of President Gustavo Petro Urrego has made every day of his mandate, both within our country and in various international settings, because we know first-hand that violence leads only to more violence and more loss of life, leaving in their wake an unfortunate and disastrous legacy for future generations.

Colombia regrets the inability of the Security Council to unanimously and decisively condemn the violations of international humanitarian law that we continue to witness every day, and emphatically calls on the international community to show unequivocal signs

of its will and commitment to comply with the mandates expressed through current regulatory instruments. We welcome the efforts of various countries to stop the violence and ensure the access of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip and other territories affected by the conflict. We reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of life. Finally, we insist on the call made by President Gustavo Petro Urrego concerning the necessity to convene a global peace conference to seek a definitive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Ms. Štiglic (Slovenia): The unprecedented and dire situation unfolding before our eyes is a test for the Security Council, the General Assembly and this Organization as a whole. We hope that the Security Council will soon be able to unite its voice and speak to the civilians in the region. The current silence is deafening.

As Special Coordinator Wennesland has stated,

“we are at the brink of a deep and dangerous abyss that could change the trajectory of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, if not the trajectory of the Middle East as a whole.” (S/PV.9443, *p.2*)

Like most representatives in this Hall, Slovenia is deeply troubled by the speed of the deterioration of the situation. The conflict could easily spiral out of control, escalate and spill over in the region. We recognize the efforts made by the United Nations, several States and leaders to avert the crisis and humanitarian disaster. We call on all countries in the region and beyond to act responsibly and to cooperate and engage in a constructive dialogue to de-escalate the conflict.

There can be no justification for the brutal terrorist attack of Hamas on Israel, and we strongly condemn it. It has triggered a new cycle of violence and civilian suffering. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. Israel has a right to self-defence in line with international law. At the same time, international law provides all civilians protection during conflict. The scenes we are witnessing are heartbreaking. The majority of those suffering the most are women and children. No civilian should be a target; neither should civilians be used as hostages or shields.

Slovenia calls on all parties to fully respect international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles. We support all efforts of the Secretary-General and other parts of the United Nations system

in addressing the pressing humanitarian situation. Without access to water, food, medical supplies, fuel, gas and electricity, and with constant attacks on civilian objects, schools, hospitals and protected shelters, the already dire situation in Gaza is turning into a human catastrophe. There is an urgent need for a humanitarian ceasefire or pauses and humanitarian corridors that will enable rapid, sustained, unimpeded and safe access for humanitarian aid, equipment and personnel to Gaza and its distribution within Gaza.

We should massively scale up our humanitarian assistance to respond to the immense needs on the ground. Slovenia commends the work of humanitarian agencies and their personnel in Gaza, who continue to provide assistance and protection to the people, often at great sacrifice, paying the ultimate price with their own lives. Recognizing the deteriorating humanitarian situation, Slovenia recently substantially increased its funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and its activities in support of the Palestinian people.

The resumption of a meaningful political process that will lead to the solution of two States living side by side in peace and security is of urgent and paramount importance. Slovenia has supported, and will continue to support, initiatives that reinforce the Middle East peace process, including the Peace Day Effort. The Palestinian question has been a testing ground for this Organization for far too long. It is high time to turn to the Charter of the United Nations and what it mandates us to do — save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Let us make sure that humanity prevails.

Mr. Sztáray (Hungary): While we align ourselves with the statement that will be delivered by the observer of the European Union. On behalf of Hungary, I wish to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

On 7 October, Hamas launched operation Al-Aqsa Flood, a brutal surprise attack into Israel that included a barrage of over 3,000 missiles. Around 1,500 terrorists infiltrated Israel, targeting civilians and civilian locations, including residential areas and residential locations. That resulted in more than 1,400 fatal casualties, more than 4,000 wounded and more than 200 soldiers and civilians taken hostage. I am here today to condemn in the strongest possible terms those barbaric and heinous terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas and the ongoing indiscriminate missile attacks against Israeli civilians.

Palestinian civilians must also be protected. In that context, Hamas must cease using civilians as human shields. In the face of such violent terrorist attacks executed by Hamas, Hungary strongly emphasizes Israel's right to self-defence. We call on Hamas to cease its attacks on Israel and immediately release all hostages without any conditions, to stop the bloodshed and spare all civilians from further suffering.

The region is witnessing one of the most difficult crises in its modern history. Therefore, we must utilize our collective diplomatic efforts and our collective capabilities and engagement in order to achieve de-escalation of the tensions and avoid this fight against terror turning into a full-fledged military conflict among countries, engulfing the region in the horrors of war. Make no mistake: armed and extremist groups operating in the region will make every effort to take advantage of this conflict to further their disruptive agenda.

The immediate, safe, sustainable and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid should reach those vulnerable civilians that are in real need in Gaza, while ensuring that such aid is not abused by terrorist organizations. It is also crucial for humanitarian assistance and medical support to reach those held in captivity as hostages. It is essential that warring parties maintain a minimum of humanity, even during the worst of war. We appreciate the extensive efforts made by Egypt, the United Nations specialized agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross to support the delivery of aid.

The President returned to the Chair.

As I mentioned at the beginning, it must be a priority to prevent a regional escalation, including the deterioration of the situation in the West Bank. We call on all regional actors to refrain from any action that could further aggravate the situation. We underline the need to engage broadly with the Palestinian Authority, the Israeli authorities, as well as regional and international partners who could have a positive role to play in preventing further escalation. We remain committed to lasting and sustainable peace through reinvigorated efforts.

We are at a global inflection point. International peace and security has not faced such a serious challenge since the Cold War. Yet the international community, and the United Nations, once again has not been able to fulfil its mandate, stabilize the conflict and

restore peace. While acknowledging that the situation in the Middle East in general is extremely complex and multifaceted, offering no easy solutions, we have to emphasize that we must not let terrorists achieve their goal. We must not let these terrorist attacks jeopardize the hard-won recent achievements, including in particular the Abraham Accords. We should not let the darkness of terrorism extinguish the beacon of hope. Terrorist attacks must never be condoned, as this would undermine the very fabric of democratic and peaceful societies.

Mr. Peñalver Portal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have been following with great consternation and emotion the grave events taking place in the Middle East. In that context, Cuba supports the resumption of the tenth emergency special session. The main priority for the General Assembly at this moment should be to bring about a cessation of violence and the administration of urgent and adequate humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people.

We demand an immediate ceasefire and call for an end to bellicose rhetoric. We must prevent the forced displacement of Palestinians from the land, which by right belongs to them. Cuba reiterates its deep concern about the escalation of violence in the region, which is the result of 75 years of the Israeli practice of illegal occupation and colonization, in flagrant violation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people on their own land. It is also the result of the protracted lack of respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including the many relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

Amid the current humanitarian disaster in the occupied Palestinian territory of Gaza and the West Bank, Cuba reiterates its unwavering solidarity with the Arab and Palestinian cause. We condemn in the strongest terms the killing of civilians, especially women, children and humanitarian workers of the United Nations, the indiscriminate bombing of the people in Gaza and the destruction of homes, hospitals and civilian infrastructure.

Cuba is opposed to, and has always been opposed to, the death of civilians and innocent people of any of the parties involved in this conflict, regardless of their ethnicity, nationality or religious belief, as mentioned by the Deputy Prime Minister of Jordan in his statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States. We also condemn the fact that the supply of water, food,

electricity and fuel has been cut off for the people of Gaza, which considerably worsens an already precarious humanitarian situation caused by the embargo on the Gaza Strip — itself a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.

Nothing can justify such actions, which are collective punishment, grave violations of international humanitarian law, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The impunity with which the Israeli Government acts can be explained only by its confidence in the fact that it will not be held accountable for its actions and that it has the support of the Government of the United States.

It is shameful that, once again, the Security Council has been unable to fulfil its mandate. It is disappointing that the United States has vetoed 46 draft resolutions in the Security Council related to the situation in the Middle East, including those on the Palestinian question — the most recent (S/2023/773) just a few days ago (see S/PV.9442).

We must put an end to double standards, selectivity and political manipulation, which undermines international peace and security. We demand that the Government of the United States not to continue to paralyse the Security Council by using the antidemocratic and obsolete power of the veto to protect the excesses of the occupying Power. It is time for the Security Council to fulfil its functions and uphold its own resolutions on the Palestinian question.

We reiterate once again our emphatic opposition to Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as Israel's illegal annexation policy and all of its settlement policies. We condemn the veiled plans to further annex Palestinian territory in the Jordan Valley and other parts of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

We call for the urgent mobilization of humanitarian emergency relief, under the coordination of the United Nations, to address the catastrophic situation in Gaza. We call upon all the parties involved to facilitate the entry and distribution of that vital humanitarian aid. We call on Member States to ensure adequate, predictable and sustained funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. It is now more important than ever before that we provide all possible support to the Agency so that it can carry out its important work on the ground.

We underscore the urgent need for a broad, just and lasting solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine based on the establishment of two independent States that enables the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and for an independent sovereign State, within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and ensures the right of return of the refugees.

Cuba will support and contribute, to the best of its ability, to all international legitimate efforts to put an end to the massacre that has been taking place now for 20 days. Every moment of inaction will cost the lives of more innocent people. We must act without delay.

Mr. Mohamed Laghdaf (Mauritania): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in my capacity as Chair of the OIC Group in New York.

We convene today for the resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly in the wake of the Security Council's failure due to the use of the veto by a permanent member, once again undermining the Council's ability to uphold the duty imposed on it by the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security and protect civilians, with regard to the grave situation in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Despite the Assembly's repeated affirmation that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with regard to the question of Palestine until it is justly resolved in all its aspects, in accordance with international law, the international community continues to fail the people of Palestine when it comes to their inalienable right to self-determination and right of return. They continue to be denied those rights and to be systematically and grossly abused by Israel.

Israel, the occupying Power, persists in its blatant contempt of the rule of law, including the Charter, international humanitarian law and international human rights law, while committing grave breaches with impunity. We are therefore witnessing yet another Israeli onslaught against the Palestinian people on the Gaza Strip — an assault that has surpassed all levels of brutality and inhumanity and is terrorizing the entire civilian population and resulting in thousands of innocent victims.

So far, as of 24 October, more than 6,000 Palestinians on the Gaza Strip have been killed in Israeli air strikes and bombardments, with 68 per cent

of the victims being women and children. More than 16,291 Palestinians have been injured. More than 1,550 people are missing, presumed to be trapped and dead under the rubble, among them hundreds of children.

It is shocking that, in the span of two weeks since the Israeli military aggression on Gaza was launched, approximately 1.5 million Palestinian civilians have been forcibly displaced from their homes, with nearly 590,000 people crowded into 100 emergency shelters, designated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), according to available data provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. They have fled to those shelters in fear, seeking refuge under the United Nations flag, as their homes, neighbourhoods, schools, hospitals, mosques and churches have been indiscriminately and deliberately destroyed by Israeli air strikes — all in grave breach of international humanitarian law. Indeed, as we all know by now, even United Nations facilities have not been spared: 39 UNRWA schools and facilities have been hit by Israeli strikes, causing death and injury to civilians, damage to facilities and widespread fear and panic; and 29 UNRWA personnel have been killed in Israeli attacks, along with other humanitarian workers in the Gaza Strip.

We reiterate the call made by the OIC Executive Committee at its extraordinary open-ended meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers held on 18 October for an immediate cessation of the illegal and inhumane Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, rejecting the targeting of civilians under any pretext. Actions such as the forced displacement of civilians from their homes, their starvation and denying them safe access to humanitarian aid and essential supplies for survival are all in contravention of international norms and law, including the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and human rights law, as well as the most basic shared human principles and values. Such actions are illegal and reprehensible. They must be firmly condemned and cease forthwith. Meanwhile, Israel, the occupying Power, must be compelled to comply with all of its obligations under international law without exception and be held accountable for its breaches thereof.

We hereby underscore the fact that a ceasefire is urgently needed and that protection must be ensured for the civilian population in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. All efforts at this time must prioritize

the protection and safety of human lives in accordance with international law and our shared moral and humanitarian obligations and values.

Moreover, Israel must end its inhumane siege on Gaza. In that regard, the OIC underscores the urgent need to provide immediate and sustained humanitarian, medical and relief aid, including food, water, fuel, electricity and non-food emergency items, to the Gaza Strip, including through United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Assistance is desperately needed, especially by the 1.4 million people who have been forcibly displaced from their homes and have lost everything as a result of the aggression.

The OIC wishes to also draw attention to Israel's systematic violence, human rights violations, acts of provocation, incitement and acts of terror against the Palestinian civilian population in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which have not ceased for a single day. Since the beginning of the month, Israeli occupying forces and extremist settlers have escalated their rampage through the population in cities, villages and refugee camps, killing thousands of Palestinians, including children. They have demolished thousands of civilian homes, desecrated Islamic and Christian holy sites, torched properties and destroyed crops and uprooted trees. They have forcibly displaced thousands of people, the majority of them children. Hundreds of Palestinians have been arrested and imprisoned. All of that constitutes a grave breach of international law and a violation of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The General Assembly, as we gather at this session under the "Uniting for peace" mechanism, must address this grave situation and make its contribution to upholding international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law. It must also continue to call on the Security Council to uphold its duty under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, which will be threatened by the ongoing injustice and its far-reaching consequences for as long as accountability and a just solution remain elusive.

Clearly, the absence of any moral, legal or political deterrence has only emboldened Israel, the occupying Power, to pursue with impunity its illegal policy of colonial settlements, annexation and blockade; the forced displacement of Palestinian civilians; systematic ethnic cleansing; organized acts of terrorism; and the

desecration of holy places, especially the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Israel persists in its denial and violation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence. That illegal situation must be brought to an end.

The OIC expresses its deep regret that the Security Council's paralysis left it unable to fulfil its duty and implement its own resolutions. The Council is failing in its historical obligation towards the question of Palestine — obligations that have remained pending despite the passage of over 75 years — thereby severely undermining its key role in maintaining international peace and security and protecting defenceless civilians, including the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory.

The continued use of the veto is unacceptable and irresponsible in this crisis situation. Consequently, there is an urgent need for immediate action by the international community, including the Security Council, to bring to a halt the Israeli aggression, to end impunity and ensure that Israel, the occupying Power, is held accountable for its war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the present aggression and its 60-year illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip. The international community must ensure protection for the Palestinian people and the opening of humanitarian corridors in order to allow all necessary supplies of medicine, food, water, fuel and other necessities to reach the civilian population in Gaza without delay. We express our hope that the General Assembly's action will make a tangible contribution in that regard, and we call for full respect for its decisions.

In conclusion, I reaffirm the historic support of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for the realization of the legitimate and inalienable rights of Palestinian people to self-determination and for the sovereignty and independence of the State of Palestine throughout the entire Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

(spoke in Arabic)

I would like now to deliver a statement on behalf of Mauritania pertaining to what is happening in the Gaza Strip.

At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations for his

quick response to our request to reconvene the tenth emergency special session.

My country's delegation would like to align itself with the statement of the Group of Arab States, delivered by His Excellency Mr. Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the sisterly Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, following the regrettable failure of the Security Council to arrive at a solution to this ongoing tragedy.

Members of the Arab Group and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and other States, decided to submit a request to the President of the General Assembly to resume the tenth emergency special session to discuss the situation in Gaza.

The current situation in the Gaza Strip is tragic at all levels. Thousands have been killed by the continuous and indiscriminate shelling using various internationally prohibited weapons, in an aggression that completely disregards the sanctity of hospitals, mosques, churches and schools. Staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and journalists have not been spared from killing. Civilians are living in unprecedentedly difficult times while being forcefully displaced, and 2 million people have been deprived of all means of basic subsistence, in breach of international law and international humanitarian law.

The current situation requires us to combine our efforts to reach an immediate ceasefire, allow for the unconditional delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance and put an end to forced displacement of Palestinian civilians. The current situation is also a natural result of decades of ignoring the need for a political solution to the Palestinian question based on establishing an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital and in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

In that regard, I would like to quote the speech that was delivered by the President of Mauritania last Saturday at the Cairo peace summit, which was held in the Arab Republic of Egypt:

“The time has come for all of us to be convinced that no one in this region will enjoy peace or sustainable security unless others enjoy them as well. Peace and security cannot be achieved by

winning a battle or a war. They can be achieved if they are contingent upon applying to everyone.”

Therefore, the international community must stand united in demanding a negotiated political track where two States — one Palestinian and one Israeli — exist side by side, peacefully and securely.

In conclusion, the atrocities that we are witnessing are a source of shame due to lack of respect to the basic principles of international humanitarian law. That is why we have proposed a humanitarian draft

resolution (A/ES-10/L.25) that aims at establishing a ceasefire, stopping the shedding of Palestinian blood and delivering urgent humanitarian assistance. We call on all Member States to join in sponsoring the draft resolution and to vote in favour of it.

The President: We have now heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this morning. We shall hear the remaining speakers tomorrow at 10 a.m. in this Hall.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.