



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

9746th meeting

Thursday, 10 October 2024, 3 p.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Baeriswyl	(Switzerland)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
	China	Mr. Fu Cong
	Ecuador	Mr. De La Gasca
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
	Japan	Mr. Yamazaki
	Malta	Mrs. Frazier
	Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
	Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to point out that the Security Council is a place of respect among members of the Organization and vis-à-vis its representatives, and I request that, in their observations, all speakers abide by the relevant rules with regard to tone, language and content. I also underscore that, as a general rule, the Council encourages all participants to keep their statements to under five minutes.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Indonesia, Israel, Lebanon, Mauritania, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite His Excellency Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: In the eight days since the Secretary-General last briefed (see S/PV.9738) Council members on Lebanon and the Middle East, the situation in Lebanon has become even more alarming. The exchanges of fire between Hizbullah and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), which commenced on 8 October last year when Hizbullah fired on Israeli targets, in stated support for Gaza, have intensified dramatically. Hizbullah has stepped up its attacks on Israel, firing rockets, missiles and drones further south, including towards Haifa and Tel Aviv. Israel responded with attacks, now across Lebanon, including on the capital,

Beirut, striking hundreds of Hizbullah targets — many in densely populated areas — and causing widespread destruction, displacement and suffering.

Since the commencement of Israeli ground operations into Lebanon on 1 October, Hizbullah and the Israel Defense Forces have been engaged in intensified clashes in southern Lebanon. The ongoing exchanges of fire have created a humanitarian emergency. The number of dead and wounded has spiralled: more than 300 people have been killed in Lebanon in just the past week. Since 8 October last year, the number of dead is now more than 2,000, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health. Hundreds of those killed were civilians, including more than 100 children.

Lebanese Armed Forces personnel have been killed, with three fatalities in the past week. Israeli soldiers have also been killed, including at least 12 on Lebanese territory since 1 October. More than 600,000 people have been displaced in Lebanon — a quarter of a million of them since last Wednesday. The vast majority are women and children. A quarter of Lebanese territory has been placed under so-called evacuation orders issued by the Israel Defense Forces, affecting more than 100 villages and neighbourhoods, with the IDF giving people as little as two hours' notice to vacate their homes, often in the middle of the night. Approximately 250,000 people, including Lebanese and Syrians, have fled into Syria. Tens of thousands more have departed through the Beirut airport. Lebanon's health sector is under immense pressure. Many hospitals and centres closed, following air strikes that hit health-care facilities and personnel.

The flash appeal launched last week requests \$425 million to assist 1 million people over the next three months. I urge Member States to support the request. I thank those Council members that have already given or pledged aid.

In northern Israel, the civilian population is also enduring repeated attacks from Hizbullah and other non-State armed groups in Lebanon and the region. More than 50 people have been killed, and more than 60,000 have been displaced in Israel and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights since last October, disrupting lives and livelihoods. The devastating conflict in Lebanon, coupled with intensified strikes in Syria and the raging violence in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, points to a region dangerously teetering on the brink of an all-out war.

Our collective inability to stop the violence and stem the bloodshed is damning. Hizbullah and other non-State armed groups must stop firing rockets and missiles into Israel. We urge Israel to stop its bombardment of Lebanon and to withdraw its ground forces. The parties should seize the diplomatic options on the table before them, not the weapons by their side. The United Nations welcomes the continued efforts of Member States in that regard. As the Secretary-General has warned, there is still time, but it is quickly running out. We must give diplomacy a chance, now. The United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, is engaging with all actors to stress the need for immediate de-escalation and a diplomatic solution. The parties must commit to a return to a cessation of hostilities and the full implementation of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). The Lebanese State must have control over all weapons within its territory. We have seen what happens when it does not.

The political impasse in Lebanon is approaching two years. At this time of crisis, I urge Lebanon's political leaders to take resolute steps towards addressing the vacuum. The State sovereignty and territorial integrity of both Lebanon and Israel must be respected. Obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, must be upheld. In that regard, a distinction must be made between civilians and fighters and between civilian infrastructure and military objectives. Civilians and civilian infrastructure must not be targeted. Indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks must be avoided. Humanitarian personnel, medical workers and journalists must not be targeted either. United Nations personnel, including the brave peacekeepers along the Blue Line and members of the United Nations family working under such dangerous conditions across Lebanon, must be protected. We must invest every effort to reverse the cycle of violence and bring Lebanon and Israel, and the region, back from the brink of catastrophe.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix: As members just heard from Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, the situation in Lebanon and the region is indeed increasingly alarming. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) ground operations in Lebanon, which commenced on 1 October following a month-long sequence of exchanges of fire across the

Blue Line, are ongoing, as intense air bombardment continues across the country. Much of southern Lebanon — the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) — is now uninhabited and increasingly uninhabitable. Israel's stated aim is the return of inhabitants to their northern communities after one year of fear and displacement. Hizbullah continues to fire across the Blue Line and is now threatening major population centres in Israel, including Haifa and Tiberias, with increasingly high-calibre weapons. That is a clear demonstration of the presence of unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons south of the Litani River, in grave violation of resolution 1701 (2006).

Since 23 September, with the launch of Operation Northern Arrows by the Israel Defense Forces, UNIFIL, as of 8 October, has detected 5,451 trajectories from south to north of the Blue Line and 610 air attacks by the Israel Defense Forces. In that same period, UNIFIL has detected 1,385 trajectories from north to south. Notably, each trajectory may represent multiple projectiles, and UNIFIL cannot detect some projectiles, such as those fired by portable anti-tank launchers or light weapons. Since 1 October, there have been fierce clashes on the ground, with at least 12 Israeli soldiers and scores of Hizbullah combatants reportedly having been killed. UNIFIL has observed Israeli incursions with infantry, Merkava tanks and engineering vehicles at Maroun Al-Ras, Labouneh and Yarun in Sector West and near Kfar Kila, Meiss Ej Jabal and Odaisseh in Sector East. However, UNIFIL has not been able to observe all such activities, as I will explain later.

That situation has put our peacekeepers at serious risk. Clashes in the Labouneh/Naqoura area since 8 October have involved tank and small arms fire, air strikes, Iron Dome interceptions and multiple explosions. Two peacekeepers were wounded when, earlier today, a United Nations post, observation post 14, at UNIFIL's headquarters in Naqoura was hit by tank fire. Close by, also early this morning, IDF soldiers fired on United Nations position 1-31 from an opening in the fence made by the IDF the previous day during adjacent ground works. Several vehicles and a communications system were damaged. Just yesterday, Israeli forces fired at cameras at the same United Nations position, and small arms fire hit another United Nations position also near Labouneh, damaging lighting and a radio relay station. Until a year ago, the latter position served as the venue for UNIFIL's tripartite meetings.

The UNIFIL Force Commander and Head of Mission has strongly protested about those actions to the IDF.

Shortly before commencing their ground operations, the Israel Defense Forces had urged that UNIFIL peacekeepers vacate United Nations positions within five kilometres of the Blue Line, stating that it was for their safety and security. Our peacekeepers have remained in position, in line with the mandate that the Security Council provided, while continuously reassessing the Force's posture against prevailing risks. As a mitigation measure, UNIFIL had already strengthened the force protection of its positions near the Blue Line. In addition, with little possible movement and thus operational activity in the prevailing security conditions, UNIFIL decided to reduce the footprint at the most affected United Nations positions by 25 per cent. By 6 October, it had temporarily relocated 300 peacekeepers to larger bases within the area of operations, with the movement of another 200 planned, depending on the prevailing security situation. The safety and security of peacekeepers is now increasingly in jeopardy. The actions I just outlined go against the protections afforded to United Nations premises and personnel under international law.

There is the further issue of military installations in the vicinity of United Nations positions. Previously, I have highlighted that Hizbullah activities in the vicinity of United Nations positions had the potential to draw return fire. Now we face a similar situation, with the Israel Defense Forces installing positions directly adjacent to United Nations positions, a development that we strongly protest.

On 2 October, IDF Merkava tanks were positioned next to a United Nations position in the vicinity of Maroun Al-Ras in Sector West, namely United Nations position 6-52, and an assembly area constructed immediately adjacent. On 3 October, UNIFIL observed an IDF tank fire over that position, and on 7 October, two IDF controlled explosive demolitions nearby resulted in damage to the United Nations position perimeter bastions. By 8 October, the IDF had vacated their position, while the movement of IDF personnel and vehicles has continued to be observed on the adjacent road. In addition, on 7 October, firing by IDF tanks that had been observed crossing the Blue Line near Alma Al-Shaab in Sector West damaged the external wall and bunker of United Nations position 1-31. The same day, minor damage was reportedly caused to a building and a United Nations vehicle at UNIFIL headquarters, Green

Hill Camp. Also, that same day, with an IDF incursion in the vicinity of Meiss Ej Jabal in Sector East, a United Nations vehicle inside a United Nations position was hit by indirect fire.

It should be recalled that the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of our peacekeepers lies with the actors on the ground. We have strongly protested the most recent developments to the Israeli authorities and underlined the responsibility of the IDF to respect the protected status of UNIFIL and its personnel, including the inviolability of United Nations premises, take all necessary measures to ensure their safety and security, including to avoid positioning their troops in proximity to UNIFIL peacekeepers and premises, and finally that this presence compromises the impartiality of UNIFIL and puts its personnel and premises at risk of being affected by any potential exchange of fire. Needless to say, those obligations apply to all actors on the ground.

UNIFIL operational activities have virtually come to a halt since 23 September. Peacekeepers have been confined to their bases, with significant periods of time in shelter. That severe impediment to the mission's freedom of movement within the area of operations has limited the mission's monitoring and reporting ability. The security environment has also presented challenges for the resupply of fuel, food and water for United Nations positions. The deconfliction of UNIFIL logistics movements remains paramount; the mission is monitoring the security and sustainability of each of its positions, especially those on the Blue Line, adjusting accordingly.

The security situation has had an impact on our civilian personnel as well, with almost all international civilian personnel relocated to Beirut or out of the country. The mission has made shelter available to those national staff who are not able to relocate from the area of operations. The UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander, as designated official for the Sector South Litani, is coordinating closely with the Special Coordinator for Lebanon, who is the designated official north of the Litani River, to ensure the safety and security of all United Nations personnel in Lebanon.

The Lebanese Armed Forces have also come under fire, with three Lebanese soldiers killed since 30 September. One UNIFIL contractor was killed on 2 September.

As noted by Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, the heavy exchanges of fire have, most tragically, had the greatest impact on civilians on both sides, with many casualties and hundreds of thousands displaced. UNIFIL continues to support the Lebanese authorities in protecting civilians, facilitating humanitarian missions by the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Lebanese Red Cross and offering shelter to civilians at United Nations positions when possible. UNIFIL's liaison and coordination team has continued its close engagements with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces, seeking to de-conflict, facilitate humanitarian missions and avoid miscalculations. The UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander, in concert with the Special Coordinator, is actively engaging with the parties to urge an immediate de-escalation and a return to a cessation of hostilities.

I echo the recent remarks of the Secretary-General and of the Special Coordinator: there is no military solution to this crisis. We urge the parties to return immediately to a cessation of hostilities and to take real action towards the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). We stand ready to support all efforts towards a diplomatic solution. UNIFIL is mandated to support the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), but we must insist that it is up to the parties themselves to implement the provisions of that resolution. No one will implement them in lieu of the parties.

To those Member States that are contributing troops to UNIFIL, we extend our most sincere gratitude. The continued, united commitment of the troop-contributing countries and the continued, united support of the Council are more important than ever. I express solidarity with and pride in the men and women of UNIFIL now truly on the front lines, in endeavouring to stabilize the Blue Line and areas beyond it. I join the Secretary-General in commending the Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNIFIL, General Aroldo Lázaro Sáenz, for his leadership in these critical times.

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

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): France called for this meeting. I thank you, Madam President, for convening it, and I thank Ms. DiCarlo and Mr. Lacroix for their briefings.

The situation in Lebanon is extremely serious. It has not improved since our most recent meeting (see S/PV.9738). On the contrary, it is deteriorating with every passing day. Hizbullah is continuing its attacks on Israel. Meanwhile, Israeli military operations in Lebanon continue, including through land incursions, in violation of Lebanese sovereignty. The civilian population continues to pay the price. More than 1 million people have been displaced. France is supporting the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in its efforts to assist them. We recall the need to respect international humanitarian law.

All actors in the region must exercise restraint. The time for de-escalation is now. France condemned the attacks perpetrated by Iran against Israel on 1 October. To put an end to this war, which is imperilling regional stability and exacerbating the political and humanitarian crisis in Lebanon, the way forward is clear.

First and foremost, there must be an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Lebanon. That is the call that France and the United States launched two weeks ago and that several of our partners have joined. It still stands. Many voices in Lebanon have echoed that call. We must then build upon a cessation of hostilities to achieve a political settlement. The framework is clear: the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), which has been recognized by both Lebanon and Israel as the framework for achieving lasting stability along the Blue Line and offering security guarantees for both countries. Displaced persons must be able to return to their homes, in Israel as in Lebanon. Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be restored.

In order to respond to that urgent need, while making progress towards a diplomatic solution, France will organize a ministerial conference in Paris on 24 October. The conference will bring together Lebanon's partner States, the United Nations, the European Union, international and regional organizations and civil society. It will pursue three objectives.

On the political front, the aim is to relaunch efforts to find a diplomatic solution based on resolution 1701 (2006). On the humanitarian front, the aim will be to mobilize the international community to meet the protection and emergency needs of the population. Finally, in order to guarantee Lebanon's sovereignty, we want to encourage greater support for Lebanese institutions, in particular the Lebanese Armed Forces.

Lastly, France expresses its deep concern following the firing on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in Naqoura, in southern Lebanon. We condemn all attacks on UNIFIL's security. Explanations for those shootings must be given. The protection of peacekeepers is an obligation incumbent upon all parties. France calls on all parties to comply with that obligation and to allow UNIFIL to continue to fulfil its mandate, including by fully respecting its freedom of movement.

We reiterate our full support for UNIFIL and for its decision to maintain its positions near the Blue Line. We commend all its personnel for their continued commitment and professionalism under difficult conditions. In that context, the Force's mandate is more vital than ever to achieve de-escalation.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for their briefings and their tireless efforts for peace and security.

Lebanon is tragically experiencing means and methods of warfare similar to those employed in Gaza. Hospitals are being forced to close, millions are displaced, schools are destroyed and countless lives are lost. Even more dangerous is the existence of numerous other fronts in the region, each harbouring the potential for a broader regional war or an even greater one still, should those conflicts simultaneously combust in a vicious cycle.

At this critical juncture, I would like to make the following points.

First, adherence to obligations under international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians is not negotiable. Particularly alarming are the deadly attacks by Israel on medical personnel and units in Lebanon and the recent cross-border strikes by Hizbullah, appearing to target civilian areas in northern Israel. The targeting of medical resources and civilians are all flagrant violations of international humanitarian law. International humanitarian law obliges parties to an armed conflict to ensure that civilians receive satisfactory humanitarian conditions. In reality, the bare minimum of humanitarian conditions is being ignored in Gaza and now in Lebanon. Civilians must not be treated as mere pawns in the conflict.

Secondly, the safety and security of the peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) cannot be compromised under any circumstances. UNIFIL plays a vital stabilizing role across the Blue Line, and in the current volatile environment, ensuring the safety of the brave peacekeepers is more crucial than ever. In that regard, we are gravely concerned about the incident this morning, in which two peacekeepers were injured after sustaining direct tank fire aimed by the Israel Defense Forces at an observation tower at UNIFIL's headquarters in Naqoura. It also reminds us of the haunting incident in Qana in 1996. We call for proactive and preventive measures to put an end to all future incursions near United Nations positions and any attacks on United Nations premises and personnel.

Thirdly, we call for serious and meaningful engagement by all actors to find diplomatic solutions. While the actions and rhetoric of the various actors on the ground are belligerent, one common element emerges from their statements: the security of their own people. However, as history in the Levant has repeatedly shown, no such security of any people can be achieved, whether in the short or long term, through military means alone. We acknowledge the difficulties of pursuing diplomacy in the current environment, but dialogue, however elusive, is the only pathway to sustainable peace and the return of displaced families. In that regard, we deplore any attempt by regional Powers to exploit the current abyss for their parochial interests, and we strongly support all efforts to reinvigorate diplomacy with a view to reaching a ceasefire.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for their briefings.

The situation in Lebanon is worsening by the day. Civilian casualties are mounting, and more than a quarter of the Lebanese population has been displaced. The humanitarian implications of the conflict are devastating and compounding an existing crisis in Lebanon, particularly for vulnerable groups, who are unable to move or face considerable challenges in doing so. Israel must do everything possible to minimize civilian casualties. And Syrian refugees in Lebanon, already displaced from their homes, now face the choice of staying and facing the conflict or facing persecution from Al-Assad's regime if they return. For a year, Hizbullah has been launching missiles at northern Israel, forcing more than 60,000 Israelis to flee their

homes. It must assume its responsibility for ending the cycle of violence, rather than recklessly endangering the lives of Israelis and Lebanese alike. All parties must do everything possible to protect civilians and fully comply with international humanitarian law.

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting the people of Lebanon, and we have announced an additional aid package of \$19.5 million to meet their immediate humanitarian needs. We are gravely concerned to hear that two United Nations peacekeepers have been injured by Israeli troops, and we wish them a speedy recovery. We reiterate that attacks on United Nations peacekeepers are unacceptable. All parties must take all necessary measures to protect United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) personnel and premises and allow UNIFIL to fulfil its mandate.

We must not lose sight of the destabilizing role of Iran across the Middle East through its support to militias, including Hizbullah, Hamas and the Houthis. Iran must immediately halt its attacks on Israel and its support for its militias to prevent an already tragic humanitarian situation from deteriorating further.

A political solution consistent with resolution 1701 (2006) is the only way to restore the sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability of Lebanon. That requires an immediate ceasefire between Lebanon, Hizbullah and Israel now and immediate negotiations to re-establish security and stability for the people living on either side of the Israel-Lebanon border. My Foreign Secretary has repeatedly and consistently called for an immediate ceasefire, and I repeat that call today. Diplomacy, not violence, is the way to achieve peace, stability and security for Israel and Lebanon. Diplomacy, not violence, will bring wider regional stability. The risks of continued escalation and spillover into the wider region cannot be overstated. The United Kingdom will continue to strive tirelessly for a diplomatic solution to end the cycle of violence.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for their briefings on the deeply troubling and worsening situation in Lebanon and welcome the participation of the representatives of Lebanon, Israel and other Member States in today's meeting.

The situation in Lebanon continues to worsen with each passing day, even as the wider Middle East becomes more volatile. We have noted that Israel

continues to expand its military operations in Lebanon, with new divisions joining the ground invasion, while it describes what is taking place as a limited operation or localized and targeted ground raids.

Guyana is concerned about the relentless bombardment across Lebanese territory — from its southern coastline to the heart of its capital — which has resulted in the killing of more than 2,000 people and injury to more than 10,000, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health. The Lebanese authorities have also reported that more than 185,000 internally displaced people have been registered in shelters and that, from 23 September to 9 October, more than 400,000 Syrian and Lebanese citizens fled to Syria. Meanwhile, air strikes launched by Hizbullah are also responsible for the death, injury and displacement of Israeli citizens. Even more worrisome is the fact that the Prime Minister of Israel is now warning the Lebanese people that Lebanon could become the next Gaza and urging them to “save Lebanon before it falls into the abyss of a long war that will lead to destruction and suffering like we see in Gaza”. The Council must spare no effort to avert a repeat of a Gaza-like scenario in Lebanon.

Further adding to that concern is the report emerging today of a plan by the Israel Land Authority to seize the land of the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Jerusalem. What this new disruption can mean for the millions of displaced Palestinians that depend on UNRWA for vital services, such as food, healthcare and education, is unbearable to even contemplate. The relentless intensification of attacks against that United Nations Agency and its staff must stop. UNRWA is the backbone of the humanitarian operations in Gaza and often the primary source of aid in the region. Compromising its operations means putting the survival of millions of people at risk. As Guyana said yesterday (see S/PV.9744), the United Nations and all peace-loving countries must not allow Israel to shutter UNRWA and, with it, lifesaving support for millions of Palestinians. Let us act now to safeguard the purposes and principles of the United Nations — principles that we all vowed to hold sacred.

Guyana reiterates its call to all parties to the conflict to immediately cease hostilities and to uphold their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and in particular the sacred obligation to ensure the protection of civilians. We must use every tool at our disposal to ensure full

compliance with international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians, to ensure that the parties comply fully with resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004) and to find a diplomatic solution that ends the escalation of violence. A strategy of de-escalation through escalation will not only fail but also would almost guarantee a continuation of the very cycle of violence that we are seeing today.

Guyana once again appeals to all parties to guarantee the safety and security of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) personnel. They have operated over the last year under extremely difficult circumstances and are now being placed at risk of injury or even death.

We must register our grave concern about recent developments close to the United Nations positions. The reports this morning of two United Nations peacekeepers being injured after an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Merkava tank fired its weapon towards an observation tower at UNIFIL's headquarters in Naqoura, directly hitting it, is deeply troubling. That recent attack also comes on the heels of earlier firing from IDF Merkava tanks, which damaged the external wall of the United Nations position, a United Nations bunker and United Nations vehicles. That cannot be allowed to continue.

UNIFIL's ability to safely execute its mandate, as authorized by the Council, is critical. We, the members of the Council, must continue to collectively insist upon the parties upholding their obligations with regard to peacekeeper safety and security, as well as international humanitarian law.

As dismal as the situation appears, we cannot allow a sense of helplessness to lead us to hopelessness. Diplomacy provides us with the tools to halt the march towards a regional war and to illuminate a path for the restoration of peace for the people of Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and across the Middle East.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, for the information provided.

My delegation notes with concern the deterioration of the security situation in and around the Blue Line sector — a direct result of the repeated violation of resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004). Ecuador

reiterates its unwavering support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and pays tribute to the peacekeepers who are making their best efforts to prevent further escalation.

The attack on the UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura, which resulted in two of its personnel being wounded, is concerning. Ensuring the safety and security of the men and women of UNIFIL working in what is today the most challenging environment for peacekeepers is an obligation of the parties, as is respecting the inviolability of United Nations premises.

We join the calls of Special Coordinator Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and Lieutenant General Aroldo Lázaro Sáenz, who urge the parties to implement a definitive and urgent cessation of hostilities, as well as to resume the path of political dialogue within the framework of resolution 1701 (2006).

The Lebanese and Israeli civilian population on both sides of the Blue Line are suffering the impact of the hostilities, which have resulted in the death and forced displacement of thousands of people. The protection of civilians must be the priority, in accordance with international humanitarian law. Likewise, United Nations personnel and humanitarian workers and partners must be protected, pursuant to resolution 2730 (2024).

The international community must renew its funding commitments to Lebanon so as to ensure the continuity of humanitarian assistance operations. The lives of 1 million people — including children, women, refugees and people with disabilities — in extreme situations of vulnerability depend on the sustainability of such operations.

Ecuador recognizes the inherent right to self-defence of the States Members of the United Nations in response to an armed attack, under the terms enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. The parties involved in this conflict are obliged to fully respect the resolutions of the Security Council and, consequently, to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon.

We must redouble efforts to reach a diplomatic solution to the situation along the Blue Line and in the Middle East. Today more than ever, the Lebanese Government must regain effective control over the flow and distribution of arms, in line with the provisions of resolution 1559 (2004).

The diagnosis is clear: in order to de-escalate the conflict and prevent the cancer of violence from continuing to spread in the region, the parties must exercise maximum restraint. As Secretary-General Guterres said a few days ago, another war, which would be catastrophic for the peoples of the region, must be avoided at all costs. Humankind's instinct for peace and a negotiated resolution of the conflict must prevail in order to prevent this crisis from deepening, with immeasurable consequences.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): I thank Switzerland's presidency for convening this briefing requested by France.

We extend our appreciation to Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, for their insights on this very worrisome situation.

Today's briefing, much like yesterday's on the situation in Gaza (see S/PV.9744), paint a grim picture of the situation in Lebanon, one that also demands our immediate and concerted meaningful action. It is a matter of great concern to note that, since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), limited progress has been made in its implementation. As a result, the situation in Lebanon is continuously deteriorating.

Mozambique views with alarming concern the continued exchange of fire across the Blue Line between Hizbullah and Israel, which has intensified in recent days. We are witnessing an escalating spiral of violence worsened by attacks by the Israel Defense Forces deep in Lebanon, jeopardizing the safety of civilians on both sides, including United Nations personnel.

The recent escalation between Hizbullah — and other Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias — and Israel has resulted in near-daily cross-border exchanges of fire. One million people were forced to evacuate due to the massive Israeli bombings that are transforming Lebanon into a new Gaza, further heightening regional tensions.

As a matter of reference, we would also like to mention that just three days ago, speaking on the one-year anniversary of the Hamas-led attack on Israel, the Hizbullah Deputy Secretary General pledged to continue operations, warning of further Israeli displacement and noting that there is no window for any discussion before a ceasefire.

This marks an escalation of the conflict in the region, at a time when the Israeli military claims to have targeted 190 Hizbullah sites in attacks across Lebanon, including renewed attacks in southern Beirut, as well as in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa region. As heavy fighting continues within UNIFIL's area of operations, with continued and intense exchanges of fire reported, we urge the Security Council member States to urgently condemn these attacks and call the parties for an immediate ceasefire.

The large-scale activity by Israeli aircraft over southern Lebanon, a few days ago, as well as Israel's tasking, for the first time, of a reserve division with undertaking limited, localized, targeted operations in south-western Lebanon, cannot be tolerated, as it further aggravates the conflict.

All reports indicate how deeply concerning the situation on the ground has become. All parties must cease all military operations on both sides of the Blue Line, including south-western Beirut, as well as in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa region.

We believe that the current events in Lebanon are deeply intertwined with the ongoing deadly war in Gaza, which has killed thousands of Palestinians to date and shows no sign of abating, triggering scenarios of immeasurable escalation.

Mozambique reiterates the need for de-escalation in order to prevent further instability and retaliatory actions. We call on the parties to protect civilians, including humanitarian workers, in line with the broader international humanitarian law obligations. We also urge all parties involved to strictly adhere to international law and Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1701 (2006). There is an urgent need for diplomatic efforts to prevent further escalation and address the humanitarian crisis. The international community therefore must act swiftly to provide humanitarian aid and work towards a peaceful resolution.

In conclusion, Mozambique reiterates its firm commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and stands ready to support all efforts towards a peaceful resolution in the Middle East, including the long-standing Israel-Palestine conflict. That stance aligns with Mozambique's commitment to peace and stability, as demonstrated by its own peace processes, throughout its history.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank France for having requested this emergency meeting. My thanks also go to Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for their briefings.

Recent weeks have witnessed a sharp rise in tensions between Lebanon and Israel. A few hours ago, the Israel Defense Forces attacked the positions of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and an observation tower, causing injuries to UNIFIL personnel. China expresses its grave concerns and strong condemnation.

UNIFIL carries out its peacekeeping tasks pursuant to its mandate under resolution 1701 (2006). Any deliberate attacks on peacekeepers constitute a serious violation of international humanitarian law and resolution 1701 (2006). Such acts must stop immediately. We demand that such incidents be investigated and those responsible held to account. Measures must be taken to prevent any recurrence. We reiterate that all parties to the conflict must effectively guarantee the safety and security of all United Nations personnel and assets. UNIFIL is no exception.

The gravity of the current situation is clear, as is the right approach to de-escalate tensions. I would like to emphasize the following three points.

First, since October last year, the series of destabilizing events that have taken place in the Middle East have resulted in more than 100,000 civilian casualties and left millions of people displaced. The clean-up work will take a decade or so. What is more, the trauma brought on by conflicts will be a lingering nightmare for generations to come. The Middle East cannot afford a full-scale war. The conflict cannot continue to expand. All parties must focus on maintaining regional peace and stability; deal with the current situation in a calm, rational and responsible manner; and make sincere efforts towards breaking the cycle of violence.

Secondly, achieving a ceasefire must be an overarching priority. We note that all parties in Lebanon have already made a unanimous call for an immediate ceasefire. The League of Arab States has also issued an explicit appeal. It is clear who holds the key to ending this crisis. We urge Israel to set aside its obsession with the use of force, make the right political decision, stop violating Lebanon's sovereignty and territory integrity

and end its adventurous behaviour which could drag the region into a new catastrophe.

Thirdly, the Council must not lose any time in taking action. The vast majority of Council members have long since reached a broad consensus on de-escalating the conflict, achieving a ceasefire, stopping the violence and seeking a diplomatic solution. We urge a certain country to stop its passive procrastination, protection and connivance. It must act responsibly and play a constructive role in order to prevent further destabilization of the situation.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for their briefings.

The United States has been clear: a diplomatic solution between Israel and Lebanon along the Blue Line is the only path to restore lasting calm and allow residents in both Lebanon and Israel to return safely to their homes.

Even as Israel has a right to protect its citizens from Hizbullah, which has fired thousands of missiles and rockets into Israel over the past year alone, it needs to minimize harm to civilians, particularly in the densely populated areas of Beirut.

We are deeply concerned about reports of hundreds of Lebanese civilians killed in recent days, including children, medical workers and an American citizen. And we reiterate our call on all parties to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and to abide by their obligations under international law.

For years and in the face of so many tragedies, the Lebanese people have generously supported refugees from other neighbouring States mired in conflict. Many of those who welcomed refugees, and indeed many of those refugees themselves, have had to leave their homes in search of safety in the north and even other countries. And so, it is critical that the international community return that generosity.

Late last week, the United States announced \$157 million in humanitarian assistance to support the needs of internally displaced persons and refugees inside Lebanon. And we encourage others to do their part as well to support the United Nations flash appeal and the people of Lebanon who find themselves in need.

The United States also lauds the more than 10,000 peacekeepers, from more than 50 countries, operating as part of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), who are serving in dangerous circumstances to advance the cause of peace. On that note, we are deeply concerned about the reported injuries incurred by United Nations peacekeepers and are wishing them a speedy recovery. As we work to gather additional information, we have also been clear to all parties, including Israel, that we expect them to respect the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel and premises and avoid incidents that expose them to risk or harm, as well as to liaise with United Nations authorities to ensure UNIFIL can operate freely and in accordance with its mandate.

Let us remember how we got here. For far too long, Hizbullah threatened the security of both Israel and Lebanon. With financial and material support from Iran, Hizbullah built up its forces in plain sight, in blatant disregard of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006) and in direct threat to Lebanese sovereignty and political independence. And then, on 8 October 2023, Hizbullah opened a northern front against Israel in solidarity with Hamas.

Not one of our Governments would be idle in the face of rockets raining down on our citizens. Not one of our Governments would allow terrorists to displace tens of thousands of people indefinitely. Both innocent Israelis and Lebanese have been forced to flee in pursuit of safety, leaving behind all that they have known.

Again, we believe diplomacy is the only way to see those people return to their homes. And for the diplomatic resolution to be durable, the parties must fully implement resolution 1701 (2006). That requires Hizbullah to withdraw from the border area and the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL to be deployed to the south. And it requires enforcing the arms embargo and taking steps to help ensure that Iran does not resupply what remains of its terrorist proxy. It also requires that Lebanon's political leaders set aside their differences and assemble a Government that responds to the needs of the Lebanese people, including their desire for independence from foreign interference. In other words, the solution to this crisis is a not a weaker Lebanon. It is a strong and truly sovereign Lebanon, protected by a legitimate security force, embodied in the Lebanese Armed Forces.

And so, the international community must focus its efforts accordingly: helping strengthen Lebanese State institutions, so that they can exercise effective control over Lebanon's territory. Key to that is condemning Iran for undermining Lebanon's sovereignty. And key to that is condemning Hizbullah for attacking Israel and once again putting its narrow interests ahead of the interests of the people of Lebanon, who did not start this war but will bear the brunt of any extended conflict. As discussed last week (see S/PV.9738), we must be prepared to impose severe costs on Iran for flouting the Council's resolutions and for supporting Hizbullah, which threatens peace and security.

For its part, the United States will continue to work with its partners in the region and around the world to advance a diplomatic solution — one that provides real security to Israel and Lebanon and allows civilians on both sides of the Blue Line to return to their homes.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): We extend our gratitude to Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for their briefings.

The alarming deterioration of the situation in Lebanon, as highlighted in both briefings, underlines a dangerous escalation that places the lives of civilians and United Nations peacekeepers in grave jeopardy. We have previously warned that the military action of the Israeli occupying Power will not be confined to Gaza and the West Bank. Today we reiterate our warning: the Israeli aggression will not stop at Lebanon. The persistence of the invasion and the violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, without any serious reaction from the Security Council, only embolden them to commit further violations of international law and lead to further instability in the entire region. As long as Israel continues to enjoy impunity from the Council, it will perpetuate the cycle of violence, employing the same egregious tactics of terror, mass destruction and the targeting of innocent civilian lives. Those outrageous tactics, which we have already witnessed in Gaza, are now tragically being applied in Lebanon. A few hours ago, Israeli strikes hit residential buildings in central Beirut, killing 18 innocent civilians and injuring 92. When will the Council assume its responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security? When will it impose sanctions on the Israeli authorities for the atrocities and violations that they are committing?

Yes, the scope of the violations is staggering. In Lebanon, the Israeli army disregards all legal restraints, treating the country's sky, sea and lands as fair game for its aggression. The figures speak volumes. More than 1 million people have been displaced within Lebanon, with hundreds of thousands more forced into neighbouring Syria. Thousands have been killed or injured, and Lebanon's infrastructure lies in ruins. That is the conduct of an Israeli aggressor that views its security as dependent on the insecurity of others and its strength as the deliberate weakening of its neighbours. Algeria reiterates its solidarity with and support for Lebanon in the face of this barbaric aggression.

Algeria highly values and commends the pivotal role of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in safeguarding regional stability, in particular in the face of the relentless aggression. The courage of our United Nations peacekeepers, their professionalism and their steadfast presence, even in the wake of threats from the Israeli forces following the ground invasion, are commendable. We are deeply concerned about the establishment, by the Israeli forces, of a staging area adjacent to the UNIFIL position, in the town of Maroun Al-Ras, and we condemn them for deliberately firing on three positions used by UNIFIL, injuring two of our peacekeepers. We remind the Israeli authorities of their obligation to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and property and to respect the inviolability of United Nations premises at all times.

Algeria reaffirms that the only path to ensuring stability in Lebanon and peace in the broader region is the full and immediate implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). That includes the deployment of the Lebanese Army over the entirety of Lebanese territory, within its internationally recognized borders. It means the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese lands.

The first step towards reaching comprehensive calm in the region is an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon. The true and enduring threat to the Middle East is and will continue to be the Israeli occupation of Arab lands, in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. Failure to address that root cause and focusing merely on the symptoms will only ensure that the tragedy will repeat itself. The occupation must end now, before we are once again faced with an irreversible catastrophe.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for their briefings.

During the past year, exchanges of fire across the Blue Line have become a daily event. That is not consistent with the contents of resolution 1701 (2006), which, in paragraph 1, calls

“for a full cessation of hostilities based upon, in particular, the immediate cessation by Hizbollah of all attacks and the immediate cessation by Israel of all offensive military operations”.

The Council has met many times over the past weeks, calling for de-escalation. Yet instead the attacks and hostilities have intensified. In reaction to Hizbullah's persistent offensive, large-scale Israeli air strikes in Lebanon, including Beirut, and Israel Defense Forces ground operations into Lebanon started. We continue to see more attacks and more casualties every day. That cycle of violence must stop now. We must avoid any further escalation that could potentially expand into a full-fledged war in the Middle East. We urge all parties to exercise the utmost restraint in order to avoid further conflict, which could have global ramifications.

Japan is seriously concerned about the severe humanitarian situation in Lebanon. More than 2,000 people have been killed, and thousands of others have been injured over the past year. Many civilians, including women and children, are among them. Hospitals and health care workers are under attack. All parties must recall their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and immediately take every measure to prevent civilian casualties. Moreover, more than 1 million people in Lebanon have been forced to flee their homes, seeking shelter and food, both within and outside the country.

Japan has contributed a total of more than \$290 million in humanitarian aid to Lebanon since 2012, and we are considering providing additional assistance, in accordance with people's needs in the current dire situation.

Even at this difficult time, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remains in Lebanon and continues to carry out its mandate. We are extremely alarmed by the report this morning that two UNIFIL peacekeepers were injured after an Israel Defense Forces tank fired in the direction of an observation tower at UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura.

We fully respect UNIFIL's work and request that all measures be taken to ensure the safety and security of its peacekeepers.

The world is on the brink of a global crisis. Further escalation in the Middle East would bring about devastating consequences worldwide, including an energy crisis. We must make every effort to avoid that. We therefore again call for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon and in Gaza. We urge all regional players to act responsibly and with restraint in order to stop the dangerous cycle of attacks and retaliation. A diplomatic solution is the only way forward.

Mr. Sowa (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting at the request of France. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for their important briefings.

The resounding and resolute call by our leaders in the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session and the Council's repeated calls for a ceasefire, recalling the need for Hizbullah and Israel to exercise maximum restraint, have fallen on deaf ears. It is concerning to note that the conflict has entered a new phase of large-scale bombing activity by Israeli security forces over southern Lebanon and supported ground operations in south-western Lebanon. We also note with the recent statements by Hizbullah, vowing to continue the fight against Israel until a ceasefire in Gaza is agreed and stating that Hizbullah is prepared for a long battle.

As we meet, heavy fighting continues across Lebanon, with intense exchanges reported across the country, including along the entire north-western area of the Blue Line, now designated as a closed military zone — the fourth such zone established to date — and in the capital city of Beirut.

Those attacks in both Lebanon and Israel have resulted in a dramatic increase in deaths and displacement, with devastating consequences for the entire region. Lebanese health officials report a cumulative toll of approximately 2,083 deaths and 9,869 injured since 8 October 2023, with 1,500 in the past two weeks alone. It is also reported that attacks by Hizbullah and others south of the Blue Line have resulted in at least 49 Israeli deaths over the past year. Those who have died include women, children, paramedics and firefighters.

Sierra Leone expresses grave concern for the safety of civilians and cautions parties to the conflict that the deliberate targeting of civilians and essential civilian infrastructure is a clear violation of international humanitarian law. We therefore urge the parties to the conflict to desist from the indiscriminate bombing of communities and to protect civilians. We reiterate our call for both parties to the conflict to exercise maximum restraint and further stress the urgent need for immediate de-escalation and a ceasefire.

The humanitarian crisis is rapidly deteriorating to acute crisis levels. According to the World Health Organization and UNICEF, 96 health facilities, including four hospitals, have been closed in southern Lebanon. We take note of reports that, in Bint Jbeil on Saturday, Israeli forces engaged Hizbullah targets that were adjacent to a hospital, and subsequent Israeli military actions allegedly prevented rescue teams from evacuating patients and medical personnel. We also note claims by Israeli authorities that Hizbullah fighters are using hospitals to launch attacks, in defiance of the laws of armed conflict. We condemn all actions of using protected civilian infrastructure for military purposes and urge all parties to respect the principles of distinction, proportionality and necessity, as enshrined in international humanitarian law. Sierra Leone urges all parties to comply with the obligations not to target protected persons and properties, including health centres, hospitals and medical teams.

Israel's extensive evacuation orders in the south of the country and in Beirut's southern suburbs have reportedly caused the residents of at least 130 towns and villages across southern Lebanon to flee. The Lebanese authorities estimate that more than 1 million people have been displaced. As of 2 October, the International Organization for Migration had identified 541,527 internally displaced persons, of whom 173,800 are believed to reside in more than 900 collective shelters. As of Saturday, 289,245 Syrians and 93,033 Lebanese had crossed into Syria, and, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, approximately 5,695 Lebanese have entered Iraq to date. More than 60,000 people remain displaced from northern Israel.

The Lebanese authorities have announced a further delay to the start of the public school year, which is now scheduled to begin on 4 November. To date, approximately 40 per cent of the country's 1.25 million students have been displaced.

Sierra Leone expresses deep concern about the fate of migrants, particularly migrant workers, and calls on all actors to treat protected persons and those displaced by the fighting with dignity and without discrimination. The relevant United Nations agencies are urged to assist with addressing the plight of migrants caught up in the fighting.

Sierra Leone commends Member States that have responded to the call to provide humanitarian assistance, including the United Arab Emirates for providing an additional 205 tons of medical equipment and humanitarian supplies, Egypt for providing 22 tons of humanitarian aid and Jordan for providing food aid to Lebanon in the past few days. We also welcome the announcement by the United States of an additional \$157 million and by Sweden of an additional SKr 83.5 million in humanitarian assistance to Lebanon. The humanitarian support efforts by those and many other countries and organizations should be matched by a corresponding determination to end this conflict and the suffering of those caught up in it.

Sierra Leone commends the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for coordinating support activities for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), primarily for the movement of personnel, equipment and vehicles, and a humanitarian mission coordinated for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and World Vision Lebanon, transporting food and essential relief supplies from Beirut to displaced persons in Tyre.

As a troop-contributing country, we acknowledge that our peacekeepers in UNIFIL are serving in the most challenging environment today. It is reported that heavy fighting continues within UNIFIL's area of operations, causing damage to several United Nations positions, and that as a result, two United Nations peacekeepers have been injured. Also of concern are continued Israeli military activities close to United Nations peacekeepers near Marun al-Ras and strikes in proximity to LAF personnel. We condemn acts in which peacekeepers are used as human shields and all acts that endanger the lives of peacekeepers. We urge all parties to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and to respect the inviolability of United Nations premises.

Sierra Leone joins the Secretary-General in expressing gratitude and admiration to our peacekeepers.

We reiterate our support for UNIFIL's continuing to carry out its mandate to the extent possible.

Sierra Leone further calls on the parties to use diplomatic channels, including the United Nations good offices, to avoid further escalation and the risk of a war that will include actors outside of the region. The Council must now stand united in calling for the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004). All sides must agree to a ceasefire as a precursor to the resettlement of displaced residents in the south of Lebanon and the north of Israel.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone continues to call for the parties to consider the global implications of their actions and to recommit to a cessation of hostilities. We urge the Security Council to act decisively in order to halt the violence, enforce a ceasefire, secure the release of hostages and prisoners, facilitate access to humanitarian aid, ensure accountability and work towards a just and lasting solution that respects the rights of all persons. Let us end the occupation of Palestine and, as called for by the International Court of Justice, implement the two-State solution and choose a future of peace, stability and dignity for Palestinians, Israelis and the entire region.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I too want to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for their briefings.

It has been a year of escalating exchanges of fire across the Blue Line. Again, civilians — the majority of them women and children — are paying the highest price. The spiral of retaliation and intensification has escalated into a military confrontation, with a devastating impact on the whole of Lebanon and the threat of it spreading across the wider region.

Slovenia repeats its call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and an urgent regional ceasefire. We call on Hizbullah to immediately cease its attacks on Israel. We call on Israel to revoke its military operation in Lebanon. The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon must be fully respected by all. We are on the brink of an all-out regional war. As a first step, it is more crucial than ever that countries with influence over the actors and the countries in the region exert that influence to ensure restraint. As a second step, that influence must be used to secure de-escalation and a commitment to peace and stability,

including through the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

Slovenia underlines the need to ensure and respect the safety and security of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). UNIFIL's activities have been significantly affected by the military confrontation in Lebanon. UNIFIL's presence on the ground remains a stabilizing factor. We remind all the parties of their obligation to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers and fully respect the inviolability of United Nations premises. We condemn all attacks on United Nations peacekeepers, including the firing at UNIFIL headquarters and other positions by Israel today. We wish the injured peacekeepers a speedy recovery. We take the opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the peacekeepers and the troop-contributing countries.

Slovenia calls on all parties to respect international law, particularly international humanitarian and human rights law. We strongly condemn the high number of civilian victims, including the deaths of humanitarian and healthcare workers. We are dismayed by the scale of displacement, the extensive damage to civilian infrastructure and the alarming rise in humanitarian needs across the country. We stand by the people of Lebanon, as they face another humanitarian challenge on top of economic, social and political instability.

More than a year has now passed since the start of the war in Gaza, which showed us all how violence, if not stopped, breeds further violence to the point of unprecedented catastrophe. Through bombing, destruction and displacement, Lebanon is becoming the next Gaza. We are profoundly alarmed by the parallels that we are seeing on the ground, including the statements by Israeli leaders. The Council should not proceed as it did in relation to Gaza. We have to act. Political, not military, solutions are required. The only path out of this spiral is the path of diplomacy. That path is never paved with missiles, rockets, ground raids or civilian suffering. It is paved with the courage of leaders who are willing to take difficult but decisive decisions for the benefit of their nations.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for their briefings.

This week marks one year since near-daily exchanges of fire commenced across the Blue Line, in which far too many lives have been lost, uprooted and

devastated. Civilians on both sides of the Blue Line are left longing for security and stability.

Malta is deeply concerned by the escalation of violence across the Middle East, including the continuous launching of rockets at Israel by Hizbullah and other armed groups and the Israeli military operation beyond the Blue Line in southern Lebanon. We are also alarmed by Israeli bombardments, which are resulting in a high number of civilian casualties. This having a dramatic impact on Lebanon and its people.

Israeli military operations in Lebanon have resulted in the displacement of more than one million Lebanese, while 60,000 Israelis are still unable to return home in northern Israel. An estimated 400,000 children are currently in need of humanitarian aid in Lebanon. Cases of forced evacuations, sometimes carried out with only a few hours' notice, are far too numerous. More than 2,000 people have been killed over the past two weeks, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health. Israeli attacks on medical facilities, ambulances and residential areas are wreaking havoc on the health system. Since 17 September, 16 attacks on healthcare facilities have been recorded, resulting in 65 deaths and 40 injuries among healthcare staff. An immediate regional ceasefire is the only way to release the hostages in Gaza, de-escalate the extremely dangerous situation in Lebanon and ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those in need. We must end the unbearable suffering of all civilians.

When it comes to Lebanon, as the Secretary-General said last week (see S/PV.9738), one must question what remains of the framework the Council established with resolution 1701 (2006). The path out of the crisis is clear, but the opportunity to act is rapidly narrowing. The use of weapons by non-State armed groups, including by the military wing of Hizbullah, violates resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected by all actors. The Lebanese State must have exclusive control of weapons throughout Lebanon. Strikes across the Blue Line cause the loss of civilian lives, including those of women and children, in addition to undermining security and exacerbating tensions.

Peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remain in position, and the United Nations flag continues to fly despite Israel's request for UNIFIL to relocate. Recent action shows little regard for the protections afforded to United

Nations premises and personnel under international law. That includes this morning's tank attack on a UNIFIL observation tower by the Israel Defense Forces, injuring two peacekeepers. Malta considers any attempt to compromise the safety of United Nations peacekeepers to be unacceptable. Malta, as a troop-contributing country, stands in solidarity with all troop-contributing countries. The importance of UNIFIL's work in facilitating liaison between the parties, mitigating the risk of miscalculation and preventing further escalation, is more crucial than ever.

In conclusion, no military solution will bring a future to the people of Israel, Palestine and Lebanon. Only a political solution with the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) will bring peace, security and prosperity. Civilians on both sides of the Blue Line are tired and scared. Further violence and destruction will neither solve the underlying issues nor make anyone safer in the long run. A negotiated solution is the only pathway to restore the security and civility that civilians on both sides so desperately want and deserve. The time to act is now.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We note France's initiative to request today's meeting following the intensification of hostilities in the Republic of Lebanon, a friend of the Russian Federation. We thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for their briefings regarding alarming developments in the border area between Lebanon and Israel.

Before our very eyes, an unprecedented escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip is stretching far beyond the limits of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, destabilizing more and more countries in the Middle East. Today, after Gaza, Beirut has also found itself at the epicentre of the crisis that has engulfed the entire region. And numerous heart-wrenching images of the bombing of Beirut have spread all over the world. We are also seeing more and more evidence that Israel harbours arrogant contempt for the opinion of the international community, the United Nations and the Security Council and that it is choosing escalation over diplomacy. The unprecedented cyberattack, which affected thousands of innocent people, was followed by mass strikes by the Israeli Air Force on south and central Lebanon. On 1 October, despite calls for a ceasefire by some members of the international community and protests by others, the Israel Defense Forces launched its so-called "limited land operation". At the same time,

Hizbullah is returning fire on Israeli territory, attacking military facilities deep within Israel, south of Haifa and near Tel Aviv.

Hundreds of reconnaissance and strike uncrewed aerial vehicle systems are operating in the skies over southern Lebanon day and night. Every hour, Israeli Air Force aircraft are carrying out mass missile and bomb strikes, targeting places where Hizbullah has supposedly deployed weapons, fighters and commanders, as well as military and even civilian infrastructure of the Shia movement, including medical and media centres. The cynicism of those attacks is disheartening. Some of them are striking densely populated neighbourhoods in Beirut and other Lebanese cities. It would appear that West Jerusalem is not only flagrantly flouting the principles of international humanitarian law, but is also treating civilian casualties as collateral damage, akin to the Russian proverb that "one cannot chop wood without making wood chips fly".

In the 27 September bombing that killed the Hizbullah Secretary-General, Hassan Nasrallah, six high-rise residential buildings were reduced to a pile of rubble, along with all the civilians who were there at the time. The warnings addressed to the Lebanese about the need to leave a particular area or facility are perfunctory and cannot be executed. As a result, the number of civilian casualties is rising by the day and is many times greater than the losses among the ranks of the Shia movement.

We see no justification for further civilian casualties, which already number in the thousands. We stand in solidarity with the leadership and the people of the Land of the Cedars, which is once again being subjected to Israel's military aggression. Although the land invasion of Lebanon has, thus far, being limited to a number of neighbourhoods, more than 1 million residents of southern Lebanon have already been forced to flee their homes and to become internally displaced persons. More than 400,000 people managed to cross the border into neighbouring Syria before the Israeli Air Force executed a targeted strike, destroying the road near the Masnaa border crossing, thereby blocking transport links between Beirut and Damascus.

As far as we can tell, Israel has also conducted targeted strikes against United Nations peacekeepers. We all understand that this is a war crime and deserves the most decisive reaction from all of us.

Israeli military raids into Lebanese territory are resulting in fierce clashes with Hizbullah fighters, with both parties suffering critical losses and pulling back to their initial positions. In general, the forces are unequal. Israel has shown its willingness to annihilate its enemy at any cost, without any regard for civilian losses. In other words, the same scenario that we have seen in Gaza is now unfolding in Lebanon.

Against that backdrop, the Security Council is silently watching how the Israeli war machine is systematically pushing the entire region into chaos. And that is the fault of the United States of America, which has paralysed the Security Council, even though, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations, the Council is mandated to maintain international peace and security and has the necessary tools to stop the violence.

Discussions about the fate of the remaining Israeli hostages still held by Hamas have suddenly ceased, as have discussions about the implementation of United States-touted resolution 2735 (2024), which endorsed the so-called "Biden plan". Our American colleagues have also become less active in raising these issues in the Security Council, but they nonetheless continue to block any attempts by the members of the Security Council to adopt a decision that could help to achieve a ceasefire in the region.

Israel is now going all-in, despite the bitter experience of the 2006 campaign. And its American accomplices are compelled to do the same, to be guided by the principle of all-or-nothing, even as the country's actions are circumscribed by the fast-approaching elections. What is happening is clear; the only question remaining is what Security Council members are to do in these circumstances. We cannot speak for our colleagues, but we remain convinced that the Council should prioritize an urgent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. That will be followed by the de-escalation of the political and military situation in Lebanon and in the Middle East, as a whole. We unswervingly maintain that sustainable and lasting peace in the Middle East can be secured only after the resolution of this cornerstone problem — the Palestinian issue — and the subsequent launch of a comprehensive political settlement process within the well-known international legal framework.

We demand a full and comprehensive implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), which lays out Israel's obligations to cease all offensive military

operations, withdraw its armed forces from southern Lebanon and end the occupation of Lebanese territory. It also sets out Hizbullah's obligations to withdraw its divisions north of the Litani River. We fully support the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and underscore the need to ensure the security of its peacekeepers, who are being subjected to unpredictable risks due to Israel's presence on the Blue Line.

In furtherance of those goals, Russia stands ready to harness the entire and significant arsenal of measures and means at the Council's disposal. We know what we will do, but unfortunately, we are not so sure about certain colleagues on the Security Council, some of whom are trying to avoid putting their American allies in an uncomfortable position, which is overriding all other considerations. The most they are prepared to do is to deliver fine but empty speeches here in the Chamber.

On our part, we will continue to deploy extensive diplomatic efforts in order to de-escalate the situation and to avert a catastrophic scenario for the entire Middle East. On 3 October, the Russian Federation sent a humanitarian consignment to Beirut. We see that many of our colleagues are doing the same. Nevertheless, humanitarian efforts are clearly insufficient given that Israel and the United States are pouring fuel on the flames of the most destructive escalation in the Middle East and flagrantly flouting international law and the Charter of the United Nations. And yet some are holding the Council hostage, having already cast a veto five times to defend Israeli interests, while at the same time cynically ascribing the Council's ineffectiveness to the need for Council reform. The effectiveness of the Council is in our collective hands. It is within our power to be effective right now. We stand ready to work with everyone who truly values the United Nations Charter and international law and for whom they are more than empty words.

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

I would like to echo my colleagues in thanking France for having requested this emergency meeting, and Under-Secretary-Generals DiCarlo and Lacroix for their briefings.

Switzerland is extremely concerned about the intensification of the conflict between Israel and Hizbullah. Over the past two weeks, more than 1,500 people have been killed in Lebanon, including many

civilians and more than 120 children. The Lebanese health system is on the brink of collapse, a large part of the country is under evacuation orders from Israel and more than 1 million people have already been displaced, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health.

At the same time, Hizbullah continues to fire rockets into Israel, including as far away as Tel Aviv. Those rockets have caused death, injury and damage. In addition, they continue to prevent the return of displaced persons to northern Israel.

Switzerland condemns Hizbullah's attacks against Israel and its population as well as all other violations of international law for which the group is responsible. Switzerland also condemns all violations of international law by Israel in Lebanon, in particular the air strikes that have caused numerous civilian casualties. All hostilities must cease immediately. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and Israel must be respected. The inflammatory rhetoric and threats to continue hostilities are irresponsible and must also come to an end.

As we understand, there is no military solution to this conflict. This war will fan the flames of hatred on both sides and make a peaceful solution all the more difficult in the future. Switzerland calls for an immediate ceasefire. We support all efforts to reach a diplomatic solution. All parties must recommit themselves to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), which is recognized by all and paves the way to resolving the underlying causes of the conflict.

International humanitarian law must be respected by all parties in all circumstances. Attacks on civilians are prohibited. The parties must at all times distinguish between civilians and combatants and take all possible precautions to spare civilians, including humanitarian personnel. We recall that medical facilities and medical personnel also benefit from specific protection. It is unacceptable that many civilians, including relief workers and medical staff, have been killed. We reiterate that attacks on civilians and essential civilian infrastructure constitute war crimes, which the competent States have an obligation to investigate and prosecute.

We strongly condemn the firing by the Israel Defense Forces on positions of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which caused injuries today. Light must be shed on those incidents and on those responsible. We expect the Israel Defense

Forces and Hizbullah to guarantee the safety of the troops. As a contributor of troops through the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, Switzerland fully supports UNIFIL in the implementation of its mandate and the decision to maintain all positions. In addition, we welcome the efforts that UNIFIL and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon continue to make to de-conflict, reduce tensions and ensure liaison between the parties.

Likewise, we commend the humanitarian aid being provided by United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations and volunteers. Yesterday the Swiss Government signalled its intention to allocate an additional CHF7 million in humanitarian aid to meet the needs of the population.

We urge all parties in the region to exercise restraint, to strictly respect international law and to work urgently towards de-escalation. Any other behaviour could lead to a regional conflagration. The Council must speak with one voice to obtain a ceasefire in Lebanon and support the parties in returning to the diplomatic track. Let us do all we can to ensure that civilians do not continue to pay the price for the failure to find political solutions and that they can, at last, live in peace and security.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor again. I will be very brief, but I need to respond to the comments from our Russian colleague.

Russia, as I have said many times, is in no position to criticize any country given the atrocities it is committing on a daily basis in Ukraine. It is Russia that is in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations. In fact, it has driven a stake through the heart of the Charter. It is therefore important for all of us to remember that. Russia would like us to forget it; we will not.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We have heard it many times before; I have a strong feeling of déjà vu. That is the only thing that the

United States representative has to say in response to fair criticism about the United States role in the Middle East crisis.

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

Mr. Hachem (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank France for requesting this meeting and the Swiss presidency of the Security Council for convening it. We also thank Ms. DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and Mr. Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, for their valuable briefings.

We are back in the Council following last week's meeting (see S/PV.9738), as heavy bombardment is ongoing against villages, towns and cities of Lebanon. Attempts at an Israeli ground invasion have expanded and the Israeli forces have violated the internationally recognized Lebanese borders and the Blue Line and have penetrated into many border villages, in blatant and direct violation of the Charter of the United Nations and resolution 1701 (2006). That is a clear act of aggression against the sovereignty of an independent State and a founding Member of the United Nations. Therefore, the Council must condemn this invasion and immediately adopt a resolution to end it and to let Israeli forces withdraw to the internationally recognized borders, which were reaffirmed by the 1949 General Armistice Agreement.

Diplomatic efforts have to date failed to achieve a ceasefire, despite all the clear Lebanese messages supporting that call. The Israeli killing, destruction and displacement machine continues to kill Lebanese civilians and to displace one quarter of the Lebanese population, as a result of the destructive bombardment, the ground invasion and the deliberate killing. The gravity of the humanitarian tragedy resulting from Israel's absolute violation of international humanitarian law is indescribable. The number of victims has reached 2,141, most of whom fell in the past two weeks, in addition to 22 martyrs and 117 injured in the most recent massacre, which happened today in one of the most densely populated areas of Beirut.

Israel has not spared civilian infrastructure in its aggression. The Israeli bombardment decommissioned several hospitals and has cut off the Masnaa border crossing, which is the main crossing between Lebanon and Syria and is used by thousands of displaced Lebanese and Syrians fleeing the horrors of aggression.

Israel has bombed the main water supply line of the Litani River, which is used to irrigate large agricultural areas, and targeted the vicinity of the Baalbek Roman archaeological site, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We wonder what the military benefit is in targeting a vital border crossing, a main water station and a cultural-historical archaeological site? We also wonder what the goal is of targeting journalists, relief workers and medical personnel? Is that the precise, surgical military operation that they have been talking about?

We thank all the sisterly and friendly countries that have been supporting Lebanon in facing this humanitarian crisis. We extend to them all our thanks and appreciation. However, we are still far from providing for all the needs to relieve the families that have been displaced because of the systematic bombardment of residential areas. The Lebanon emergency appeal is funded only at 12 per cent, even though the total does not exceed \$426,000,000. Therefore, we call on the international community to provide urgent and sufficient support to assist us in meeting the needs. Lebanon has offered a great deal as part of the efforts of the international community to address the displacement crisis over the past 13 years. It therefore deserves to be supported today in these difficult times. We thank France for convening an international conference in support of Lebanon on 24 October, and we call on all countries to effectively participate in the conference.

Bombardment, war and invasion will not provide security, safety and stability. Diplomatic solutions, the implementation of international resolutions and a commitment to international law and international humanitarian law are the only means to end this war and aggression. Resolution 1701 (2006) remains the ideal solution. Lebanon is fully committed to it and reiterates its commitment to the United States-French initiative announced on 25 September and supported by sisterly Arab and friendly countries. That initiative calls for an immediate ceasefire for 21 days, during which outstanding border issues will be addressed. We were informed that Israel had agreed on that initiative, before reneging on it and escalating its aggression.

We reiterate our thanks to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which operates in the south. We pay tribute to its efforts, sacrifices and everything it is doing for the sake of peace in the region.

We commend the UNIFIL stance in the face of the growing pressure on it by Israel. We value its decisive and courageous decisions not to surrender to the Israeli blackmail and pressure and not to withdraw from its positions. We reiterate our thanks to the 49 troop-contributing countries participating in UNIFIL. We thank them for their strong commitment to maintaining international peace and security.

We also condemn the Israeli attacks on UNIFIL positions and the violation of its premises, as well as the fact that the safety and security of its facilities and members are being jeopardized. The most recent attack involves Israel firing on UNIFIL headquarters and positions today, injuring two peacekeepers, after an Israeli Merkava tank fired on the control tower of UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura. That serious act of aggression proves that Israel ignores and does not care about calls by the United Nations and the Secretary-General. It also proves that Israel does not recognize the fears of the troop-contributing countries in peacekeeping operations and the concerns of the entire international community. Therefore, there is a need to protect the lives of the peacekeepers and to ensure their safety and that of their facilities. We condemn today's aggression against UNIFIL, which is yet another episode to be added to Israel's long record of targeting it.

Once again, I reiterate that the people and the Government of Lebanon are against the war and support an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon. Lebanon is ready for a diplomatic solution and for facilitating the mission of the two mediators of the United States and France. The Israeli side is wrong to attempt to undermine resolution 1701 (2006) by creating a new military reality on the ground to secure unjust outcomes. The displaced persons cannot return to their homes without an agreement. Therefore, the solution must be just and equitable for all parties in order to be durable and lasting. Imposed, unfair solutions will be partial and temporary and will be reversed at the first opportunity. Let us work together and spare no effort for the sake of establishing peace and security in the Middle East.

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

Mr. Danon (Israel): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for their briefings.

This conflict began with a decision made by Hassan Nasrallah. It was Nasrallah who chose to tie his fate and that of Hizbullah with Hamas. He linked the war with the one that Hamas had waged against Israel, knowing full well that it would bring suffering upon Lebanon and Israel. And the Council was warned. On 20 September, I stood before members and urged them to act before it was too late. I told them:

“When the time comes, do not look to us for blame in protecting our people. Now is the time for others to speak up and act, before we have to.”
(S/PV.9730, p. 19)

The Council's silence has forced our hand. Now, as we face the consequences of Nasrallah's decision, we must also look forward.

Just as I said yesterday when we discussed the future of Gaza without the Hamas-run regime (see S/PV.9744), today we must discuss the future of Lebanon, a Lebanon freed from Hizbullah's grip. The Lebanese people have suffered too long under the tyranny of that terrorist organization. We all know the ending of this conflict: Hizbullah will be pushed back north of the Litani River. But who will enforce that situation? How can we ensure it will not be ignored all over again? Who will oversee its maintenance? The answer lies in the hands of the Lebanese army and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). They must step up. Not only must they fulfil their current duties and resolution 1701 (2006), but we must reform those obligations. The mechanisms in place must be enhanced and altered so that we do not find ourselves back here in the same situation in another few years.

The time has come for the Council to finally act on resolution 1701 (2006). We have called for its full implementation for years, while warning of Hizbullah's violations. Yet our calls have gone unheeded, with some on the Council choosing to place the blame on Israel's shoulders. But it is not just Israel that requires the Council's action. The Lebanese people, held hostage by that terror organization, needed it too. Hizbullah had established a terrorist State within a failed State. Just two days ago, a Security Council report acknowledged that, despite nearly two decades since the adoption of resolution 1559 (2004), Hizbullah remains the most heavily armed militia in Lebanon. Their advanced weapons have robbed Lebanon of authority over its own territory. The Lebanese army, along with UNIFIL, must

step up to their responsibilities and regain control. The failure to do so has led to the devastation we see now.

The situation along the Blue Line remains volatile, and Israel is in close contact with UNIFIL regarding their safety. We have recommended that UNIFIL forces temporarily relocate five kilometres north to avoid danger as fighting intensifies. While UNIFIL has chosen to stay, Israel strongly urges them to reconsider this precautionary move to protect their personnel.

Let me be clear: Israel has no desire to be in southern Lebanon. Our goal is to protect our people, not to occupy Lebanese territory. But to prevent this from happening again, the Council must ensure that the right mechanisms are in place for the Lebanese army and UNIFIL to meet their obligations.

I wish to address the Lebanese representative, Mr. Hachem. I listened to his words and condemnations very carefully. But the truth is that he should be sitting next to me, not next to the Iranian representative — because whether he can admit it or not, Israel, Lebanon and the free world are on the same side against the Islamic regime of Iran. Does he not wish to see his nation once again establish its own sovereignty? Does he not wish to chart his own course, rather than pay the price for Hizbullah's war? Does he not wish to see his people prosper, rather than suffer at the hands of Iranian proxy? All of us should declare, shoulder to shoulder, that Iran must keep its blood-stained hands off Lebanon.

Again, I listened very carefully when he spoke, today and in the past, that Lebanon is for the Lebanese people and that his people and Government reject war and want resolution 1701 (2006) to be implemented. I could not agree more. And I would like to address the Lebanese people.

(spoke in Arabic)

The land of Lebanon is solely for the Lebanese and not for the Iranians.

(spoke in English)

To the people of Lebanon, I say this: Lebanon belongs to the Lebanese, not to the Iranians. Today the Lebanese people and their Government have the perfect opportunity to throw off the yoke of Hizbullah's terrorism. They must free their people from Hizbullah's tyranny, reclaim their sovereignty and banish Iran's destructive influence from their borders.

Beneath the Earth, hidden from the world's view, we discovered a Hizbullah tunnel that intruded into Israeli territory. That was not an isolated act. Alongside the tunnel, we found detailed maps of our northern kibbutzim, weapons and anti-tank missiles and explosive devices. They had been preparing for years for a terror campaign very similar to the horrors of 7 October 2023, but we stopped them. I urge Council members to imagine what the Security Council would be discussing today if we had not. Entire communities would have been erased, with children torn from their homes. That was Hizbullah's plan. It is a plan we will continue to dismantle.

Israel will continue its operations. We will degrade Hizbullah's capabilities, remove its ability to launch attacks against our people and diminish the terror network that stretches across the south of Lebanon. Our soldiers are now in the field along the border in Lebanon, exposing and dismantling Hizbullah's infrastructure.

Hizbullah brought that upon itself. And while Israel will do what it must to protect its people, the Council must do what it was created to do: ensure international peace and security. Resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004) must be enforced. We are fulfilling our obligations to ensure that, and the Council must support us in our efforts. We have more than 70,000 internal refugees because of Hizbullah's rockets. Seventy thousand children who should be safe in their homes, playing in their backyards and learning in classrooms are now displaced within their own country. And yet despite the horrors, the Security Council stood silent as we pleaded for action.

Council members must look to the future and the reality we all strive for — a future without Hizbullah terrorizing Israel and Lebanon, a sovereign Lebanon and a future of calm. If that is the future Council members truly seek, there is only one path forward: implementing resolutions 1701 (2004) and 1559 (2004). Council members must demand that the Lebanese army and UNIFIL finally fulfil their obligations and take up the task they are mandated to carry out. They must support Israel in its necessary operations to push Hizbullah back to the Litani River. Let this be the day when Council members do not remain silent. Let this be the day when they stand with Israel and the Lebanese people against the forces of terror. Let this be the day they choose action over silence.

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

Mr. Irvani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this critical emergency meeting. We also thank the briefers for their briefings.

We extend our deepest sympathy and unwavering solidarity to the people and Government of Lebanon who are enduring relentless acts of aggression and war crimes committed by the most notorious terrorist regime in the world. The Islamic Republic of Iran stands firmly with Lebanon, fully committed to supporting its people, Government and resistance.

We strongly condemn the continued complicity of the United States and certain Western States in enabling Israel's systematic war crimes and genocidal war against the people of Palestine and Lebanon through the provision of advanced weaponry.

After over a year of Israel's genocidal war in Gaza, in which more than 200,000 people have been killed, injured or left buried under the rubble, that terrorist regime has now waged a genocidal war against Lebanon, echoing its brutal campaign against the Palestinian people in Gaza.

The deliberate targeting of civilians and the destruction of civilian infrastructure is far more than a violation of international law; it is a flagrant war crime, a crime against humanity and genocide. It has destroyed vital infrastructure, slaughtered innocent civilians and driven Lebanon further into an escalating humanitarian catastrophe. The people of Lebanon are victims of a systematic campaign of terror and violence premeditated by Israel to cripple the nation, erode its sovereignty and inflict lasting suffering on its people.

Israel is now a serious threat to international peace and security. Its ongoing aggressive acts of terror and atrocities now threaten to plunge the entire region into an all-out war.

The Security Council, entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, cannot afford to turn a blind eye to those atrocities. The Council has a moral and legal obligation to intervene. It should not allow Israeli war crimes to go unchecked under the guise of self-defence or security, a justification repeatedly pushed by the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom in this

Chamber. The unchecked impunity with which Israel continues to violate international law is a stain on our collective conscience.

With unwavering backing from the United States in its so-called ironclad support, officials of the Israeli regime are emboldened. Their heinous crimes are not only excused but also actively rewarded, and their atrocities are shamelessly normalized before the world. They are counting on the United States' support in their further sinister campaign of terror and destruction.

Despite the Lebanese Government, including Hizbullah, agreeing to a joint 21-day temporary ceasefire proposal, Israel brazenly rejected it by launching a large-scale aggression against Lebanon, cruelly targeting innocent civilians. To sabotage any chance of a ceasefire, the regime assassinated Seyed Hassan Nasrallah, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, a prominent figure in the Islamic world and a critical factor for peace and stability in Lebanon. He was the best remaining hope for advancing the ceasefire process. That cowardly assassination serves as a grim reminder of Israel's earlier abhorrent act of terror: the assassination of Mr. Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of Hamas, in Tehran. That assassination shattered any hope of a ceasefire for Gaza. Those heinous acts expose Israel's true intentions, showing that the regime has no interest in peace or a ceasefire. Its real objective is only to provoke a full-scale war across the region.

Lebanon stands on the brink of a humanitarian collapse, and the international community must not allow the catastrophe to worsen. It is imperative that humanitarian aid flow unimpeded into Lebanon. The international community must provide immediate financial and logistical support to ensure that essential supplies reach the affected populations.

The very credibility of the Council is at stake. We demand immediate action. We call for an immediate ceasefire. The ceasefire is not a request but a necessity. Furthermore, we urge the Council to hold Israel accountable for committing such genocidal war and atrocities against the people of Lebanon and Palestine. The Council must send an unequivocal message: the ongoing Israeli occupation and aggression must end. Israel must fully implement resolution 1701 (2006).

A just resolution to the crisis requires the recognition of Lebanon's sovereignty and independence, the end of Israel's illegal occupation and aggression and respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

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

Mr. Lambrinidis: The Middle East is on the verge of a complete conflagration, and the people in the region are more insecure than ever, caught up in an unending cycle of violence, hatred and revenge. More than one year after the brutal terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel, we reiterate our call for the full implementation of all Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2735 (2024), which would lead to an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all hostages, a significant and sustained increase in the flow of humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza and an enduring ceasefire and an end to the crisis, with Israel's security interests and safety for Palestinian civilians assured.

We deplore all loss of civilian life and note with the utmost concern the unacceptable number of civilian casualties, especially among children, as well as the catastrophic levels of hunger and the imminent risk of famine caused by the insufficient entry of aid into Gaza. In exercising its right to defend itself, Israel must fully comply with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, in all circumstances.

No military solution will bring about a lasting peaceful future to the people of Israel and Palestine, only a political one will, based on the two-State solution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable State of Palestine living side-by-side in peace, security and mutual recognition. Just two weeks ago in New York, the European Union (EU), Saudi Arabia and Norway, as co-Chairs, launched the Global Alliance on the Two-State Solution, which rallied a significant number of United Nations Members.

The conflict has now extended to Lebanon, with a dangerous cycle of attacks and retaliation that is only fuelling the mindset of war in the region. The EU urges all parties to exercise the utmost restraint. The territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon must be respected by all parties. Hizbullah's unprovoked firing of rockets and other projectiles into Israeli territory has to stop now. We also strongly condemn the launch of missiles from Iran against Israel. At the same time, we are deeply alarmed by Israeli strikes in densely populated areas of Lebanon, which have caused a high number of civilian casualties, including among

women and children and humanitarian personnel, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure.

More than 1 million Lebanese are now displaced. More than 200,000 are trying to seek refuge in war-torn Syria. And 60,000 Israelis are unable to return home in northern Israel. We especially deplore the heavy price paid by civilians. Humanitarian assistance must continue to reach those in need unimpededly and at scale; its safe delivery must be possible at any time. We call for de-escalation, and on both parties to immediately implement a ceasefire across the Blue Line and to work towards the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), in order to ensure the safe return of displaced populations on both sides. We reiterate our strong support for the efforts of France and the United States to achieve a negotiated ceasefire.

We condemn the attacks on the peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) on 10 October and all attacks on United Nations peacekeepers, which is a grave violation of international humanitarian law and of resolution 1701 (2006). We reaffirm our full support for UNIFIL, in which we have a strong EU presence. In the current situation of emergency, UNIFIL assumes a fundamental stabilization role in south Lebanon. We urge all parties to respect UNIFIL's presence and to fully uphold their obligations to guarantee the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel at all times.

The European Union strongly supports the State institutions of Lebanon, including the Lebanese Armed Forces, which are a key element for the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The EU stands ready to help Lebanon to get out of its political impasse. A few days ago, the EU adopted assistance measures under the European Peace Facility worth €15 million to support the Lebanese Armed Forces, which brings the total support to €21 million. We also announced a further €40 million in humanitarian aid to help those most in need in Lebanon, bringing our humanitarian assistance to the country to €104 million this year alone. Lastly, we have also launched a humanitarian bridge from Cyprus to support people affected by the ongoing situation in Lebanon. EU member States also rank bilaterally among the largest humanitarian donors worldwide.

Essential steps for stabilization now include the deployment of the Lebanese Army in the south, ensuring that UNIFIL can fulfil its mandate and organizing an

urgent humanitarian conference. In that regard, we welcome the announcement by France of a conference in support of Lebanon.

In conclusion, the European Union will continue to work tirelessly to pave the way for diplomacy and to de-escalate an extremely dangerous situation for the region.

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

Mr. Aldahhak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I begin my statement where my colleague the representative of Palestine ended his statement before the Security Council yesterday (see S/PV.9744), namely, that the Israeli occupation authorities do not listen to the Council. They continue to flout the United Nations and international law and commit more acts of aggression and brutal crimes. They continue to shed the blood of innocent civilians. The barbaric Israeli conduct, the expansion of its occupation to include Lebanon and the intensification of attacks against Syrian territory and other States in the region are the result of the occupation authorities' certainty that there are those in the Council who prevent it from carrying out its mandate and taking any effective steps to stop the aggression and put an end to the Israeli crimes.

The inaction and procrastination of the Council in dealing with the situation in Gaza might be repeated in the case of Lebanon. That should be completely avoided and not be allowed to happen again. It is unacceptable and even shameful that some in the Council who have been championing human rights see nothing wrong with the violations by Israeli occupation entity of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law. They even go so far as to distort facts to make the criminal a victim and the brutal aggression an act of legitimate self-defence. They do not shy from providing all forms of support to empower the occupation entity to continue with its aggression and brutal crimes, threatening peace and security in the region and beyond.

At a time when the vast majority of Member States have condemned the war of genocide and crimes committed by the Israeli occupation authorities in Gaza, the war criminals in the occupying entity are publicly threatening to make Lebanon another Gaza. The Council is therefore required today not to just count the days of the aggression or the number of casualties; it is required to take immediate and serious action to

end the brutal Israeli attack on Lebanon, which has targeted thousands of innocent civilians, journalists and humanitarian and medical personnel and sown death and destruction in entire areas, including flattening buildings and residential neighbourhoods. It has displaced hundreds of thousands of residents from their homeland in Lebanon and into my country, Syria.

The deliberate targeting by Israel of civilians; blowing up communications devices; its assassination crimes; its intensified use of heavy weapons and bombs with massive destructive power in cities and neighbourhoods that are densely populated with civilians; and what accompanies those brutal acts of calls by officials of the occupying authorities for continued mass killings and the use of prohibited weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, clearly reflect the aggressive nature of the occupation and its criminal practices, which have destabilized the security and stability of the region for decades and prevented its people from living in an environment of well-being and prosperity.

Simultaneous with the escalation of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, the Israeli occupation authorities have intensified their attacks on Syrian territory, to the point that they have become an almost daily occurrence. In the past few days, those attacks targeted a number of residential buildings in the capital, Damascus, resulting in the martyrdom of 15 civilians, most of them women and children, and injuring dozens more, let alone the terrorizing of peaceful civilians and the material losses and significant damage to private and public property.

The Israeli attacks have also targeted the international route linking Damascus and Beirut, which is used daily by thousands of people coming from brotherly Lebanon to escape the Israeli killing machine, inflicting further suffering on them and exacerbating the humanitarian suffering owing to the displacement. Israel has also attacked commercial facilities and a hub for the collection of food and medical aid for those arriving from Lebanon in the industrial city of Hassia.

While stressing its right to defend its territorial integrity with all the means guaranteed by international law, my country, Syria, calls upon the Security Council to take immediate action to stop such Israeli attacks and to ensure accountability and non-recurrence.

My country, Syria, reiterates its strong solidarity with brotherly Lebanon, which is facing an emergency

humanitarian tragedy due to the Israeli aggression. Despite the challenges it faces and the inhumane unilateral coercive measures, the Syrian Government has taken all the measures necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to all those coming to Syria, including Lebanese, Syrians and third-country nationals, whose numbers now exceeded 350,000, including almost 100,000 Lebanese and thousands of Arabs and foreigners.

The Higher Relief Committee has taken all the necessary decisions and provided all the facilities for the entry and assistance of those people, including establishing humanitarian response centres at the border crossings, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and Syrian civil society organizations. We have equipped shelters to host those people, in addition to Syrians opening up their homes to host their brothers. To date, we have also provided health care and medical services to more than 20,000 persons. We are also providing food baskets, non-food humanitarian aid, transport and communications, legal consultation, official documents, customs exemptions and other basic services, all free of charge. Syria looks forward to the response by the Member States of the United Nations to the relevant appeals launched by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other United Nations agencies.

Syria stresses the need for the Council to take decisive and immediate measures and to adopt a clear resolution that cannot be misinterpreted or procrastinated on, as we have seen in the past. That resolution must compel the Israeli occupation authorities to cease their aggression against Palestine, Lebanon and Syrian territories and to curb the efforts of the occupation entity to invade Lebanese territories, as that represents a flagrant violation to Lebanon's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity and a grave threat to its security and stability.

My country also stresses the need to hold Israel accountable and ensure it does not enjoy impunity. We call for implementing the Council resolutions relevant to the Arab-Israeli conflict, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981). In doing so, the Council would be discharging its primary responsibility given to it by Member States to maintain international peace and security.

In conclusion, the attempts by the occupation entity to break the will of the peoples of the region, push them to abandon their inherent rights, stop resisting the occupation and restore their occupied territories will not succeed. This is what history and historical facts taught us. The owners of the land will eventually prevail, regardless of the length of occupation and regardless of its crimes and tyranny.

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

Mr. Prabowo (Indonesia): It is indeed a gloomy day for multilateralism when the very symbol of international peace — the Blue Helmets — are under direct attack. Israel has committed yet another breach of the Charter of the United Nations, another snub to international law and international humanitarian law, through its direct attacks against United Nations peacekeepers. The indiscriminate attacks by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which wounded two of our peacekeepers, clearly demonstrates how Israel positions itself above international law, above impunity and above our shared values of peace. We strongly condemn that violation. The lack of any apparent moral compass by Israel is indeed appalling.

Against that backdrop, Indonesia wishes to highlight three points.

First, Israel's actions against UNIFIL represent a blatant attempt to spread terror on the ground to intimidate both the peacekeeping mission and the international community. That is unacceptable. Let me be clear: those who stand by the cause of peace will never be afraid of bullies and perpetrators of genocide. We remind the Israeli forces and all actors of their obligations to ensure the full protection of UNIFIL personnel and United Nations property.

Secondly, Israel's ongoing defiance of international law demands immediate action. The attacks came amid a broader pattern of violations by Israel of resolution 1701 (2006). That includes repeated incursions into Lebanese territory, violating Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. As clearly recorded in the Secretary-General's report (S/2024/548) on the implementation of the resolution, from February to June alone, 1,551 air violations were launched by the IDF. The persistence of those violations of international law, without any meaningful consequences, is a matter of serious concern, undermining the credibility of

the international legal order and undermining the credibility of the Council itself.

Thirdly, as UNIFIL's largest troop contributor, Indonesia underlines our firm and full support for UNIFIL and United Nations peacekeeping. Indonesia pays tribute to all United Nations peacekeepers serving on the ground. We honour their bravery and dedication to the cause of peace. Despite the outrageous attacks, Indonesia remains firmly committed to working with the United Nations, the UNIFIL Force Commander and the international community to ensure the success of the UNIFIL mission. De-escalation efforts and the prospects for lasting peace in the region hinge on UNIFIL's ability to fully implement its mandate. The Council must act decisively to ensure that UNIFIL can continue its vital work in southern Lebanon and uphold the highest standards of conduct, while ensuring the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers.

The Indonesian Constitution mandates all Indonesians to contribute to a world order based on freedom, lasting peace and social justice. That is why Indonesia is a firm supporter of United Nations peacekeeping and proudly stands as the fifth-largest troop- and police-contributing country. Their mandates derive from the Security Council. Let me therefore ask of the Council the following: our peacekeepers have delivered on their mandates; please make sure that the Council also delivers on its mandate.

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

Mr. Mohamed Laghdaf (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the delegation of France for requesting this meeting. I would also like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, for their briefings with regard to the latest developments on the ground in the context of the aggression against the sisterly Lebanese Republic.

I make this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Since 1 October, Israel has been carrying out a wide-scale ground invasion against the Lebanese Republic, in grave breach of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Charter of the United

Nations and resolution 1701 (2006). That aggression has worsened the humanitarian crisis, particularly following the violent attacks against villages in southern Lebanon, the Bekaa region and the southern suburb of the capital, Beirut.

The aggressive Israeli army has carried out 10,000 raids, leading to several massacres and 1,200 civilian victims in few days, including hundreds of women and children, in addition to 10,000 people wounded and more than 2 million civilians displaced, including 400,000 children. The Israeli acts of aggression, just like what happened in the Gaza Strip, did not exclude medical and humanitarian workers or United Nations staff and journalists. Hospitals and places of worship have also been attacked using the heaviest kinds of weapons, in clear and repeated violation of the principles of international law.

The Arab Group reiterates its lasting solidarity with sisterly Lebanon in the face of that ongoing and unjustified aggression. We call on the Security Council and the entire international community to assume their responsibilities concerning the continued aggression and to put an end to this arrogance and recklessness vis-à-vis the principles of international peace and security. There must be an immediate end to the acts of aggression and attacks against defenceless civilians in Lebanon, which violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of this beloved country, through the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). We also urge all States to respond to the urgent call by the United Nations to assist those who have been displaced. In that regard, we commend the role played by the United Nations on the ground through relief bodies and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We condemn the attack that took place against UNIFIL today.

In conclusion, we call for avoiding a humanitarian and political disaster of unpredicted consequences by stopping that aggression, in parallel with immediately stopping the war in Gaza and preventing it from spreading.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.