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New York

President: Mr. Zhang Jun/Mr. Geng Shuang (China)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. França Danese
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Gabon	Ms. Bongo
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
Japan	Mrs. Shino
Malta	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique	Mr. Afonso
Russian Federation.	Mr. Nebenzia
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America.	Mr. Wood

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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

Expression of sympathy

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset of the meeting, I should like, at the request of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates and on behalf of the members of the Security Council, to ask that all those present stand and join in observing a minute of silence for all Israeli civilians and foreign nationals who lost their lives on 7 October in Israel and all Palestinian civilians who lost their lives in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as for the United Nations staff members, health workers and journalists who lost their lives in the Gaza Strip.

I ask everyone to rise to observe a minute of silence in memory of them all.

The members of the Security Council observed a moment of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Israel to participate in this meeting.

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

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization; and Mr. Marwan Jilani, Director General of the Palestine Red Crescent Society.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Ghebreyesus.

Mr. Ghebreyesus: I thank the Security Council for this opportunity to brief members on the health situation in Gaza.

Let me be clear from the outset that I fully understand the anger, grief and fear of the Israeli people following the horrific, barbaric and unjustifiable attacks by Hamas and other armed groups on Israeli civilians on 7 October. The killing of 1,400 people and injuries to more than 7,200 others is incomprehensible. For the survivors and families of the victims, the mental health consequences will endure for a long time to come. The World Health Organization (WHO) is gravely concerned for the health and well-being of Israeli hostages in Gaza, many of whom are older people, children and persons with urgent medical needs. Two weeks ago, I spoke with families of hostages, and I will meet them in Geneva next week. I feel their heartache and fear. I also understand the anger, grief and fear of the people of Gaza, who had already suffered through 16 years of blockade and are now enduring the destruction of their families, their homes, their communities and the life they knew.

The situation on the ground is impossible to describe: hospital corridors crammed with the injured, the sick and the dying, morgues overflowing, surgery without anaesthesia, tens of thousands of displaced people sheltering in hospitals and families crammed into overcrowded schools, desperate for food and water. More than 10,800 people have now been killed in Gaza, nearly 70 per cent of them women and children. On average, one child is killed every 10 minutes in Gaza. One and a half million people have been displaced and are looking for shelter anywhere they can find it, but nowhere and no one is safe. As more and more people move to a smaller and smaller space, overcrowding is increasing the risks of outbreaks of diarrheal and respiratory diseases and skin infections.

Of course, WHO is on the ground in Gaza alongside our partners to support health workers, who are physically and mentally exhausted and are doing their best in unimaginable conditions. In addition to caring for the 27,000 people who have been wounded — many of them with life-threatening injuries — they are trying to manage the regular health needs of more than 2 million people. More than 180 women give birth in Gaza every single day. There are 9,000 patients on cancer therapy and 350,000 patients with diabetes, heart disease or hypertension.

I visited Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza five years ago, in 2018. I toured the dialysis ward and a neonatal intensive care unit and spoke with health workers and patients. Even then, in 2018 in Gaza, conditions were extremely difficult for health workers. Now their work is impossible — and they are directly in the firing line.

Since 7 October, WHO has verified more than 250 attacks on health care in Gaza and the West Bank, in addition to 25 attacks on health care in Israel — on hospitals clinics, patients and ambulances. Last week, WHO documented five attacks on five hospitals in one day. In the past 48 hours alone, four hospitals, representing some 430 beds, have been put out of action. More than 100 of our United Nations colleagues have been killed — and counting. As we speak, there are reports of firing outside the Al Shifa and Rantisi Hospitals. Half of the Gaza Strip's 36 hospitals and two thirds of its primary health-care centres are not functioning at all. Those that are functioning are operating way beyond their capacities. The health system is on its knees and yet, somehow, it is continuing to deliver some life-saving care.

The best way to support those health workers and the people they serve is by giving them the tools they need to deliver that care, namely, medicines, medical equipment and fuel for hospital generators. Field hospitals and emergency medical teams can complement and support existing hospitals and health workers in Gaza, but they cannot replace them. Supporting Gaza's health workers is at the heart of WHO's operational response plan. WHO was part of the first convoy of aid to enter Gaza through the Rafah crossing on 21 October. Since then, we have delivered 63 metric tons of specialist medical equipment and supplies that health workers need to save lives, including to hospitals north of Wadi Gaza. But that does not even begin to address the scale of needs — it is too small. Before 7 October, an average of 500 trucks a day were crossing into Gaza with essential supplies. Since 21 October, just 650 trucks have entered instead of the expected 10,000.

A month ago, just two days after the violence started, I met with President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi of Egypt, who agreed to support WHO and our partners to deliver aid through the Rafah crossing. I thank Egypt for its support in getting aid into Gaza and for establishing a medical evacuation pathway to get the most critically sick and wounded patients out, including 12 children with cancer, who are being transferred for treatment in Egypt and Jordan. WHO continues to

call for unfettered access to deliver humanitarian aid to the civilians of Gaza, who are not responsible for this violence but are suffering in ways that we in this Chamber cannot imagine.

We continue to call on Hamas to release the hostages it took, many of whom need urgent medical attention. We continue to call on Israel to restore the supply of electricity, water and especially, fuel. We continue to call on both sides to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law. And we continue to call for a ceasefire to prevent further deaths of civilians and further damage to Gaza's hospitals and health facilities.

I understand what the children of Gaza must be going through because, as a child, I went through the same thing. The sound of gunfire and shells whistling through the air, the smell of smoke after a strike and tracer bullets in the night sky; the fear, the pain and the loss — those things have stayed with me throughout my life. I know the smell and the image of war. I know what war means. When my mother heard gunfire at night, she would make us sleep under the bed, adding extra mattresses on top of one bed, in the hope that we might be protected if a shell fell on our house — a mother's instinct to save her kids.

I also understand what the parents of Gaza are going through, because in 1998, when war returned to Ethiopia, my country, my children had to hide in a bunker to shelter from the bombardment. I have experienced war both as a child and as a parent. I know how the children are feeling, and I know how the parents are feeling too. The children and parents of Gaza and Israel want and need the same thing that my family wanted and needed — peace and security. By the way, I never imagined that I would be the Director-General of the World Health Organization, because my mother's prayer was to survive just one day — one day. Maybe I am lucky. That is what the Security Council was established to achieve — peace and security.

But this crisis underlines once again the need for reform of the Council. I felt nostalgic, by the way, when I entered the room because I used to come here when I was Minister for Foreign Affairs. It has long been my view that the Council no longer serves the purpose for which it was established. I reiterate that with all due respect. It represents the realpolitik of the Second World War, not the twenty-first century. As Minister for Foreign Affairs, I was part of a group working on reform of the Council. I am dismayed that no progress

has been made. To remain credible, relevant and a force for peace in our world, member States — especially the P5 — must take seriously the need to reform the Council.

I make one final call for today for a ceasefire and a path towards peace.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Ghebreyesus for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Jilani.

Mr. Jilani: I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to address this very important meeting of the Security Council.

The health sector in Gaza is under attack. Hospitals are being deliberately targeted in a desperate attempt to force the civilian population out of Gaza. The past 24 hours saw the targeting of at least four hospitals in Gaza: Al Shifa Hospital, with tens of thousands of people sheltering there; Al-Awda Hospital, where our ambulances were bombarded and the emergency paramedics miraculously escaped certain death yesterday; the Indonesian Hospital; and our Al-Quds Hospital.

I had to rewrite this statement a few times in the last few hours, as the situation around the hospitals is changing by the minute. Displaced people at the hospitals are getting shot at as we speak. During the most recent call with my colleagues at Al-Quds Hospital, two hours ago, they told me that 20 people have been injured by direct fire at the hospital and one person has been killed. They are asking what they can do and where they should go. Thousands of innocent lives are under imminent threat of being killed.

I am calling upon Council members, on behalf of the staff and volunteers of the emergency medical teams, the doctors and nurses who are besieged in Gaza hospitals, to do all they can to spare further deaths and suffering. There are 14,000 displaced civilians at Al-Quds Hospital, in addition to 400 sick and wounded, together with our medical and management teams. The main generator was shut off two days ago because of the lack of fuel. Right now, there is a very serious risk that we will lose all the patients in the intensive care units and those children in incubators.

I was prepared to inform the Council about the critical shortages of fuel, food and water. But, honestly, now our utmost concern is the direct threat to the lives of all the wounded and sick, together with tens of

thousands of civilians, including thousands of children. They are looking to the Council, imploring it to act to stop another possible massacre unfolding.

In addition to the imminent threat of being shot and killed, the 14,000 displaced civilians at the hospital are growing restless and desperate because of lack of water, food and electricity. We are witnessing the spread of diseases and increasing infestation of wounds with worms, including in children. A child was treated yesterday for an eye infection, and the doctor found worms in his eyes. The medical teams have left their families to help save the lives of the wounded and the sick, but many of them have received news of losing so many loved ones. Dr. Nabeel, a board member and now a volunteer at Al-Quds Hospital, lost 36 members of his family. The Chair of our Board has lost 20 members of his family. One of the founders of the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) lost 20 members in one day and another 13 the next day. The description of the situation at Al-Quds Hospital does not, and cannot, describe the absolute horrors, trauma and psychological scars of people sleeping every night under the terrorizing bombardment and not knowing whether they will be alive the following morning or not.

PRCS is taking the main responsibility of receiving humanitarian aid through the Rafah crossing and of distributing it to humanitarian organizations and to hospitals and shelters. What has come in so far represents less than what used to get into Gaza in two days. At the same time, not one drop of fuel has entered Gaza, which is essential for every aspect of life — hospital operations, pumping water, bakeries, ambulances and the trucks transporting humanitarian aid. If the prohibition on fuel continues, we will not be able to continue to receive and distribute the aid. Furthermore, if no aid gets to the north of the Gaza Strip, we will soon see infants dying because their mothers cannot feed them. Many people will starve and die of diseases.

We call on the Council and the international community at large to do the following: ensure an effective and immediate ceasefire is enforced; ensure fuel gets into Gaza immediately in order to prevent additional unnecessary deaths and suffering; increase humanitarian aid and ensure that unconditional humanitarian aid gets to the north of Gaza, where tens of thousands of people remain, with no safe place to go; ensure respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of medical missions and civilians in

all parts of Gaza; ensure hospitals continue to function with the required support of fuel, medicine, medical supplies; and allow medical teams to enter Gaza to relieve the teams who have been working tirelessly, 24/7, for the past 35 days.

Please listen to the cries of children soaked in blood, asking why this is happening, what they have done and why the world is so indifferent to their lives.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Jilani for his briefing.

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

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I thank China, the President of the Security Council, for convening this important meeting and for your leadership of the Council in these times of crisis. I also want to thank the briefers, who have shared disturbing reflections on the facts of the catastrophic situation faced by the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip — facts that should pain the human conscience.

To my brother Marwan Jilani, I want to convey through him our salutations to the heroes of the Palestine Red Crescent in carrying out their mission to save lives. As we speak here, hospitals have become the Israelis' primary target. Hospitals are being besieged, and their vicinity is being bombed. What we should say to them from the Security Council is to stop the massacre. Anyone? The World Health Organization? Someone can and must act now to stop the massacres.

I am an old man, old enough to have been born when the Nakba occurred, to have grown up in the tents and refugee camps of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East alongside tens of thousands of Palestinians, and to have listened to the stories about our life before the Nakba, stemming from the vivid and wounded memory of my parents. My generation dedicated its entire life to putting an end to the Nakba. On this seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nakba, instead of seeing it end, we see images that remind us of the worst of our times.

What will this generation in Gaza remember? They will remember the horrors, the massacres, the trucks carrying people, carrying lifeless bodies and shattered hopes. They will remember walking with a small bag in which to fit the remains of life. Children injured, orphaned and traumatized, walking distances that they should never have to explore — between death and

displacement, between loss and loss. There is more rage and outrage, more pain and suffering, beyond what the human mind can comprehend, beyond what any human heart should have to bear. There is so much silence within and the noise of bombardments without. Our entire life, we scream but cannot be heard. How can anyone scream louder than all this death that surrounds us? How can anyone scream louder than the noise of the bombardments?

I cannot bear these images of a wave of human beings with no tears, as their eyes have dried up, with broken hearts — small children carrying burdens that would break the shoulders of strong men, discovering the meaning of death before enjoying the taste of life. They are standing up, but everything else within them and around them has crumbled. The same suffering that traumatized my generation is now tormenting yet another Palestinian generation.

We often said at the time that if the world knew — if it had witnessed our pain, if it had seen an entire people being killed and uprooted — it would never have allowed that to happen. We were so wrong. It did not matter that the massacres in Gaza were being reported live; they were being justified by pundits and spin doctors with all kinds of excuses. The fog dissipated eventually, but only too late, and positions became clearer but not yet clear enough to rein in Israel, to tell it enough is enough.

To be fair, the killer never hid his intentions. He spoke of mighty vengeance and human animals, describing us, and declared that he would impose a terrifying siege on 2.3 million people, more than half of them children — more than 1.1 million children — the flagrant collective punishment of an entire people. He called for the release of 200 hostages, taking more than 2 million hostages in the process. He demanded condemnation of the killing of 1,000 Israeli civilians and killed 10,000 Palestinian civilians in the process. He proclaimed his right to self-defence while occupying, colonizing and denying every right to the Palestinian people, including our right to self-determination, our right to protection and our right to defend ourselves. He preached of the need to prevent the destruction of Israel while continuing his campaign to destroy Palestine. He rejected any intimation that Israel was not upholding the laws of war while committing war crimes and crimes against humanity on camera and while his representatives were unable to hide their genocidal intent. Bombs dropping

everywhere, everywhere — north, south, east and west. Bombs dropping on schools, universities, hospitals, United Nations shelters, cars, convoys, people walking and ambulances — bombs killing civilians, doctors, journalists, United Nations staff and humanitarian rescue teams.

Where should Palestinians go: to the sea, or out of the Gaza Strip? Israel feigns surprise. It asks, why are they staying, why are they dying and not listening? It is because our entire nation has experienced in its flesh the grand exodus. Even when facing imminent death, it hesitates before leaving. That is our national trauma.

So they bomb and bomb and bomb — civilians, children and civilian infrastructure. They deprive our people of the objects essential for their survival. But let no one dare accuse them of forced transfer. Forget about the memo by the Israeli Ministry of Intelligence that says that they want to displace us from Gaza. Forget about the statement of their Foreign Minister about the fact that Gaza would shrink after the war. Forget about the map that Netanyahu held in the General Assembly with Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights as part of Israel. Forget about Netanyahu's confession that they intended to retain security control over Gaza. Forget the chants of their soldiers. Forget the speeches of their leaders, .

They are telling the world that they just want the Palestinians to go south for their safety — never mind that some Palestinians have made it all the way to Rafah and are still being bombed. What is south of Rafah? I wonder. They want us out of our country, out of our land. Their strategic enemy is the independence of our State, the freedom of our people. The only options they have ever given us are to submit, leave or die; or, in international legal terms, apartheid, ethnic cleansing or genocide.

Gaza has shown that in shocking terms. And in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli occupation forces and settlers have killed 350 Palestinians since the beginning of the year — half of them in the last month — and have forcibly displaced hundreds more, seizing large areas of land.

The Security Council meets again today. I count our meetings in Palestinian death, devastation and destruction. We met first when hundreds of Palestinians had been killed. We meet yet again today, when 11,000 have been killed in Gaza, including 4,500 children. As we meet, if one listens well, one can hear in the Chamber

the shouts of our children under the rubble, abandoned by humankind. As we meet, only a few hundred trucks have entered Gaza in 30 days and 10 times more souls have left to the skies.

Israel is allowing enough trucks to pretend it is not imposing a siege, but not enough to save lives. Israel is implementing imaginary humanitarian pauses, whose only goal is to force people to flee — not to offer them some relief that their survival is guaranteed.

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

Mr. Erdan (Israel): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your consideration in permitting me to address the Council earlier, in the light of the approaching Sabbath. It is deeply appreciated.

The holy Jewish Sabbath is a day of peace and rest. It is the day on which God rested following the creation of the world. Yet, no Jew will ever forget the Sabbath of 7 October. It has been seared into the collective trauma of the Jewish people forever.

Exactly 85 years ago today, another traumatic atrocity was burned into the Jewish people's history. Between 9 and 10 November 1938, the Jewish communities of Germany and Austria suffered Kristallnacht, the Nazis November pogrom, which was the first hyperviolent exposure of the Nazi's murderous hatred of Jews. Nearly 100 Jews were murdered. Thousands of Jewish homes, hospitals, schools, houses of worship and businesses were ransacked and burned to the ground.

Israelis endured another such pogrom five weeks ago, yet here we are 34 days later and the Council still has not condemned Hamas's heinous planned massacre of Israeli civilians. Had the Council existed in 1938 in its current form, I doubt that the response would be much different.

Today's briefing focuses on the targeting of hospitals. Just two days ago, Barzilai hospital, in Ashkelon, suffered a direct, intentional hit from Hamas rockets. Hamas's intentional targeting of hospitals is a war crime. Deliberate attacks on medical facilities, the murder of medical teams, paramedics and ambulances sent to treat the wounded were rampant during the Hamas slaughter.

Yet those horrors have yet to be addressed by the Council. I urge the Council to invite me

to share a screening of the footage from Hamas's slaughter — footage that the terrorists themselves filmed. Once the Council sees the barbarity and savagery with its own eyes, it will understand the evil that Israel is defending itself against. Will the Council address those crimes today? Will it condemn Hamas for murdering Israeli medical personnel? Will it call out Hamas for torching Israeli ambulances? We have videos of Hamas Nazis shooting at ambulances so as to thwart any attempt to save innocents. Will the Council call out Hamas for indiscriminately firing rockets at Israeli hospitals? After all, this has been Hamas's modus operandi for years. Will that be the focus of today's meeting? What about Hamas's exploitation of hospitals, ambulances and medical clinics for terror in Gaza? Will that be raised in today's meeting?

Over the past week, Israel has exposed to the world that the Hamas Nazis main command headquarters is located within and under Al Shifa Hospital. We have provided footage of terrorists, exiting tunnels adjacent to and underneath hospitals. We have shown videos of Hamas/ISIS using ambulances as a means of transporting weapons and terrorists. We have shared intelligence, including phone calls between terrorists stating not only that they are located under and inside hospitals, but that they also control the fuel supply to medical centres, which they exploit, first and foremost, for their terror activity. We have shared footage of Hamas terrorists who openly admit that Al Shifa Hospital and other hospitals serve as bases and that ambulances are used as taxis for terrorists. Those terrorists make it clear that Hamas co-opts those vehicles and sensitive locations for their war machines, as they know that Israel will not attack them.

Over the past 16 years, Hamas has turned every inch of Gaza into a terror trap. Nothing is sacred to those jihadist Nazis. Every medical worker, doctor and patient in Gaza is a human shield for the Hamas terrorists. That is abominable. It is a war crime of epic proportions. Will this be the focus of today's meeting? How can we possibly hold a briefing on the medical situation in Gaza without making this the primary issue of this meeting?

For weeks, Israel has asked all civilians to temporarily evacuate northern Gaza. We have dropped leaflets; we have made phone calls; we have sent text messages. For days, there have been designated corridors for civilians to evacuate south. Israel is providing safe passage for Gazan civilians to leave an

active war zone, while Hamas is actively working to prevent civilians from leaving. In footage that surfaced today, Gazan civilians were waving white flags as they tried to leave Al-Nasr hospital. Yet they were forced to stay after Hamas opened fire on them.

Israel is at war with Hamas, and we have gone above and beyond to mitigate civilian casualties. For Israel, life is sacred. Yet for Hamas, death is sacred, particularly civilian deaths. Will that be the focus of today's meeting? Will the Council condemn Hamas for those crimes?

Over a week ago, Israel formed a task force to establish field hospitals in southern Gaza for all those in need. That team is in touch with countries around the world, and we are already seeing progress. There is no clearer proof that Israel is doing everything possible to provide solutions to mitigate civilian harm, while Hamas is committed to murdering both Israeli and Gazan civilians.

Israel is fighting a war that it did not start or want. On 6 October there was a ceasefire in place, yet Hamas violated that ceasefire with the brutal slaughter, rape and burning of 1,400 Israelis. Despite their unbelievable claims to the contrary, Hamas is fully responsible for the situation in Gaza. They are fully responsible for Gaza's civilian population. They are fully responsible for Gaza's resources, and they are fully responsible for exploiting hospitals and ambulances as weapons of terror.

While Hamas must be held fully accountable, there is another entity, sadly, that is complicit — the United Nations. For years, I have warned Council members about the briefings they receive — the numbers, statistics and events that are reported to the Council by United Nations officials, such as Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, Mr. Lazzarini of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and Mr. Griffiths of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and all the other libellous United Nations organizations, committees and also, sadly, the Secretary-General himself. They do not reflect the situation on the ground. Yes, diplomatic niceties require us to thank them for their work, but sadly, they are relaying falsehoods that are completely detached from reality. For years, the United Nations has refused to establish verification mechanisms that can provide us a truthful picture of reality. Who is it that supplies the United Nations with those so-called

facts? Is that information coming from unbiased and impartial third parties? The answer is no. Every piece of information regarding the situation on the ground that the Council receives comes from Hamas, not international United Nations employees in Gaza.

I will remind the Council that Hamas, a genocidal terror organization, controls every facet of Gaza. Every number provided by the so-called Ministry of Health is Hamas. Many UNRWA workers in Gaza are themselves members of Hamas. The time has come to bust the myth of United Nations-supplied facts. The Council is being spoon-fed lies by the very same terrorist organization that deliberately murdered and maimed thousands of innocent Israelis just 34 days ago. Hamas has ensured that every square metre of Gaza is under its complete reign of terror. Many ambulances drivers are Hamas members. Local contributors to international media are Hamas members. We saw this week that innocent photojournalists for Reuters and the New York Times not only documented Hamas's horrors but crossed into Israel to film them with the terrorists themselves. Hamas rules all of Gaza with an iron fist, and Hamas also rules all of the information coming out of the Strip.

Just because briefings are written in official United Nations documents, it does not change the fact that the content is based on information supplied by Hamas. Hamas knows that the Council ingests its poisonous falsehoods. That is part of its script. Its very own terror operatives give libellous information, which, sadly, cannot be verified by anyone other than Hamas, to United Nations bodies. The information is passed on to United Nations officials, and then the information is used to brief Council members. Is it not concerning to Council members that in Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus's briefing not once did he mention Hamas's exploitation of hospitals and ambulances for terror? Should that not raise a red flag?

We are also being briefed by the Director General of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. Yet there is no Israeli representative of Magen David Adom, the Israeli Red Cross, briefing the Council. Is that not mind-boggling? Does that not reek of bias? Do Israeli lives matter less? Are the hostages, including women, children, toddlers and the elderly, not worthy of the Council's attention? How about the trauma of tens of thousands of Israelis or the thousands of wounded Israelis still being treated in hospitals or the hundreds of thousands of Israelis who have been forced to leave their homes since the massacre? Why does Mr. Jilani not tell the Council about

the ambulances that Hamas abuses for transporting terrorists and weapons? Is that an inconvenient truth that he chooses to stay silent about?

When the parking lot of Al Ahli Hospital was hit by a Palestinian Islamic Jihad rocket, the World Health Organization (WHO) jumped on the opportunity to falsely condemn Israel. Yet even though it has been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that Palestinian terrorists were responsible, no effort has been made by the WHO to change the libel they immediately adopted. We all remember that within minutes of the Islamic Jihad rocket attack on Al Ahli Hospital the Hamas Ministry of Health immediately reported 500 fatalities. We now know that the number was a total lie, but United Nations bodies still rely on such fabrications. I beg Council members to stop believing Hamas's falsehoods.

Last week we were shocked to hear Dr. Michael Ryan, the Executive Director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, call on Gazans to remain in hospitals that serve as Hamas terror bases. By adopting Hamas's narrative of evil and telling patients to remain in an active war zone, the WHO prefers to endanger the lives of Palestinians rather than save them.

What is even more shocking is that Dr. Rik Peepkorn, the WHO representative for Gaza, has until today refused to be briefed by Israel. We have urged Dr. Peepkorn numerous times to speak with us about the undeniable subterranean city of terror underneath Al Shifa Hospital. Yet we have received no answer. Instead, Dr. Peepkorn and WHO prefer to parrot Hamas lies, while refusing to speak to any Israeli experts. WHO teams have made it clear that they prefer to reward Hamas's strategy of exploiting hospitals and, by doing so, the WHO is directly complicit in giving impunity to that despicable practice.

Israel is taking action to mitigate civilian casualties. We prefer to take proactive steps because, unlike Hamas and United Nations bodies, we cherish life and hold it sacred. That is why Israel is in advanced talks with the United Arab Emirates, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other European countries regarding the establishment of field hospitals and floating hospital ships. Israel facilitated the Jordanian airdrop of medical aid to hospitals in northern Gaza. Thousands of tons of medical equipment and supplies have already entered Gaza.

Israel constantly shows that it is willing to take any step to evacuate the wounded from the war zone of

northern Gaza to safer areas in the south. Sadly, Israel is doing far more for the well-being of Gazans than the WHO or any other United Nations body. Yet that is not the focus of this meeting. If any United Nations official truly cared for Gazans, they would be working hand in hand with us to advance solutions, not condemning Israel for the measures taken to provide safety.

I reiterate: Hamas is supplying all the information. Israeli experts are either ignored or baselessly mistrusted, and verified facts, including video, audio and intelligence-based information, are deliberately omitted from Council members' briefings. The words of genocidal terrorists are accepted at face value, while the irrefutable evidence of a law-abiding democracy is tossed aside. Tragically, United Nations mechanisms have become terror enablers. We must no longer accept that.

While Israel is at war with Hamas — and only with Hamas — it is also defending itself against murderers and numerous other terror threats: the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza, Hizbullah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Syria. Those are all tentacles of the same genocidal octopus — the Ayatollah regime in Iran. The Ayatollah has publicly praised the 7 October massacre, and Iran has armed, funded and trained all the terror groups attacking Israel. Nevertheless, the Foreign Minister of that murderous regime visited the United Nations only a week and a half ago and was given the red carpet treatment. He was loudly applauded in the General Assembly and even met with the Secretary-General, who shook his hand with a big smile. The United Nations has completely lost its moral compass. That cannot be tolerated.

Israel is fighting a war for its very future and existence. We are combating a genocidal Nazi-like terror organization. Hamas has publicly declared that it will carry out further atrocities if it is given the chance. The only way to ensure that those horrors are never repeated again is by eliminating Hamas's capabilities — that is the realization of our collective oath of "never again". Israel will continue targeting Hamas while working towards solutions for Gazan civilians. That, and not anything else, should be the focus of this meeting.

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

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for leading us in a moment of silence for the lives lost in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

By now we have all heard the acronym coined by health workers in Gaza: "WCNSF", which stands for "wounded child, no surviving family". I just want to let that sink in as we discuss today's topic.

I want to pay tribute to both Mr. Ghebreyesus and Mr. Jilani not only for making time to brief the Security Council, but also for the life-saving work they and their teams do on the ground in very difficult circumstances. Their clarion call to the Council today must be heeded.

Today I also want to pay tribute to the silent heroes in the medical community in Gaza who stayed behind to deliver life-saving assistance despite the horrific circumstances. Just moments ago, many of us received messages from medical and humanitarian organizations about the heavy fighting around Al Shifa Hospital. Medical staff tell us that they fear for their lives and the lives of their patients. They do not know if they will make it to morning.

It sometimes feels that, by dealing only with the numbers from the conflict, we are indeed denying the humanity of those suffering. While it is impossible for us to go through the thousands of stories in today's meeting, I want to put a couple of faces to those numbers — not of Hamas fighters, but normal people. Israel may be at war with Hamas, but those paying the price of the war are civilians in their thousands.

Let me start with Alaa Zaheer Ahmed, who is in her third year of medical school. She grew up in the Khan Yunis refugee camp. On 10 October, she was designing a poster for breast cancer awareness when the windows started shaking and everything turned black. An Israeli air strike levelled her home, pinning her legs under the wreckage and leaving barely enough oxygen to breathe. Hours later, Alaa's relatives and rescue workers pulled her from the rubble. They also recovered the lifeless bodies of her mother, her brother and her nephew. There are many stories like hers.

I feel the need to remind the Council that, like Alaa, every single one of the 2,650 people currently trapped under rubble are human beings, and that more than half of them are children. But they are not just children — they are Palestine's future, and they are also Israel's future neighbours. We should spare no effort to

protect them and save both peoples from the road of war that we are on.

Born in Al Shifa Hospital on 6 October is Talia, whose fragile heartbeat depends on a mechanical ventilator, straining generators and a dwindling fuel supply. With the strike on the hospital last night and reports of the desperate evacuation on foot, as we speak here today in the Council, I cannot even begin to imagine what has happened to Talia. But we must not turn away from these stories. Like Talia, there are 130 other premature babies who are reliant on incubators to breathe. They are also reliant on our work here in the Chamber, as well as in our region.

As we called for this meeting yesterday, little did we know that, by the evening, a terrifying barrage of targeted attacks would be launched on schools and hospitals. Here is what that actually means: babies, children and elderly persons who are seeking refuge and care in those facilities are also under attack. There are over 110,000 patients, including children, suffering from burns to their faces so severe that they are suffocating, with no access to antibiotics or burn cream. Women are giving birth in the most unsanitary conditions known to humankind, without medicines, and Caesarean sections are being performed without anaesthesia.

The perverse reality of the situation in Gaza is that wounds inflicted by the most technologically advanced weaponry of the twenty-first century are being treated in conditions that are reminiscent of medieval times. To help alleviate the suffering, the United Arab Emirates is establishing a field hospital in Gaza, working in solidarity with Gaza's medical personnel and in cooperation with Israel. But it is a plaster on a fracture. There can be no doubt that the attacks by Israel in pursuit of its security are disproportionate. They are cruel. And they are inhumane. And we condemn them. Also, they will not bring Israel security. So many lives are being lost without even achieving that aim.

We must also not forget that those held hostage in Gaza by Hamas, many of them children, are also suffering under the same bombardment and psychological trauma. They must be released immediately. We are witnessing the making of a lost generation of children and youth physically and mentally scarred by those experiences.

Indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian objects are prohibited by the laws of war. That simply cannot be part of any military strategy, defensive or otherwise. There is no State that would be condoned

for conducting a military operation under those terms. Israel must end its siege of Gaza and reinstate essential services and the supply of items indispensable to civilian survival, including fuel, electricity and water.

It is no longer enough to simply demand humanitarian access. While we must continue to call for compliance with the basic rules of international humanitarian law, as a matter of conscience — as many have said — we all know that, without accountability or enforcement, that will never happen. At the bare minimum, we need to activate all possible tools, including sustained and multi-day humanitarian pauses or truces, not least to end the suffering of children. That can also enable a humanitarian surge, the safe movement of civilian and aid workers and conditions for access to, and the safe release of hostages. That is fundamental for the necessary goal: a durable and sustained ceasefire.

It is unconscionable that it has been 33 days of the destruction of Gaza without any Council action or response. It is time to act and to respond to help save innocent lives and to ensure that the violence ends once and for all. The two-State solution must be the overarching goal. The international community must reiterate its unwavering support for that goal. It is the only solution that will take us out of the cycle of hatred, violence and dehumanization again and again.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Director-General Ghebreyesus and Director General Jilani for their briefings today and for their dedication over the past few weeks amid extraordinary challenges.

At the top, let me emphasize that we are closely monitoring the situation at the hospitals in Gaza. We are deeply concerned for the well-being of the civilians who are at those facilities and who rely on them for life-saving care and shelter from the violence. All civilian and humanitarian facilities, especially hospitals and medical facilities, as well as the people who work for them and are engaged exclusively in medical duties, must be respected and protected, consistent with international law.

We know that hospitals are in desperate need of fuel. The United States has been working tirelessly to put in place mechanisms to enable fuel to reach hospitals and to meet other urgent needs in the south. Those mechanisms need to be operationalized without delay, and much more work remains to be done to meet humanitarian needs throughout Gaza. But I also want

to make clear that we share Israel's concerns about Hamas's hoarding and siphoning of fuel in northern Gaza. That is unacceptable and we must all call it out.

We must also call out the fact that Hamas cynically and atrociously uses Palestinian civilians as human shields, putting its command posts, weapons and ammunition within or beneath the very hospitals about which we are speaking today and in residential buildings, schools and mosques. Hamas does not try to protect Palestinian civilians; it deliberately and callously endangers them.

At the same time, these cowardly tactics do not diminish Israel's responsibility to distinguish between civilians and terrorists in its fight against Hamas. How Israel responds to Hamas's attacks matters, and Israel's response must be consistent with international humanitarian law. Rules such as proportionality and precaution still apply. And the risk of harm to civilians at sites that Hamas is using for military purposes absolutely have to be considered when planning an operation.

Acknowledging one party's suffering does not negate or detract from another's. We must not look away from the pain and suffering of innocent Palestinians. More than 1.5 million Palestinians have been displaced in the weeks since 7 October. Innocent civilians have been killed, and people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Palestinian families are grieving, and we grieve with them.

Our capacity for empathy also requires that we mourn the Israeli civilian lives lost on 7 October and recognize the pain and suffering of families who wait to know the fate of more than 200 civilians — women, children and the elderly — still being held hostage by Hamas. Israelis are also grieving, and we too grieve with them. I want to repeat — acknowledging one party's suffering does not negate or detract from another's. That was the message Secretary Blinken delivered during his recent trip to the region — his second in the past three weeks.

At every stop, Secretary Blinken had candid and direct conversations about Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas's terrorist attacks. He underscored the need to protect civilians, consistent with international humanitarian law, and to surge additional humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. He emphasized United States support for humanitarian pauses to facilitate and expand aid delivery and reiterated the importance of ending

this current conflict in a way that ensures lasting peace and security in the region.

Although we may have different views and positions on certain necessary steps to achieve those objectives, I think it is clear we are all committed to working towards those ends. In particular, we all agree that much more also needs to be done to make sure that humanitarian assistance reaches those in need. President Biden and Secretary Blinken have worked tirelessly over the past month with Israel, Egypt, the United Nations and others to facilitate the flow of fuel, food, water, medicine and other humanitarian supplies into Gaza. Despite those efforts, the quantity of assistance entering Gaza is nowhere near enough to meet the dire and growing needs, and we are working to urgently scale up aid deliveries.

Israel has committed to implementing four-hour pauses in areas of northern Gaza each day, with an announcement to be made three hours beforehand. We have been told by the Israelis that there will be no military operations in those areas over the duration of the pause and that the process is starting today. We urge that the pauses be implemented without delay and emphasize that coordinating them with the United Nations would help ensure aid reaches those in need. Moreover, we continue to support calls for extended humanitarian pauses. We are hopeful that Israel's announcement will allow for the increased flow of humanitarian assistance into Gaza and will enable the safe passage of civilians seeking to flee the violence in northern Gaza.

The United States will continue to lead, but it will require a collective effort from all of us to meet the soaring needs in Gaza. It is time to step up and to support the efforts of the United Nations. The United Nations is playing an essential role in the humanitarian response effort, and that work has come at great cost. Nearly 100 members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have lost their lives. It is tragic, and thousands are putting their lives on the line every single day to help the people of Gaza. I want to underscore the United States support for UNRWA's work and convey our condolences to those who have lost loved ones who were trying to help others and our admiration for those who continue to carry out this vital work.

Unfortunately, we do not yet have a way forward to secure the release of hostages, but we are working very

hard on one. If that were to take place, just being able to move hostages around the battlefield in a way that is safe will take time. And so we believe a pause would also be appropriate in that context.

Even as we are consumed by this crisis, we must also work to chart a more peaceful future. President Biden has been very clear that we cannot go back to the way things were before 7 October, either in Gaza or in the West Bank. He has said that we need to get back to the urgent work of advancing concrete progress towards a viable Palestinian State that includes both Gaza and the West Bank.

The United States continues to believe the most viable path, indeed the only path, to peace is through the two-State solution. As Secretary Blinken made clear this week, the only way to ensure that this crisis never happens again is to begin setting the conditions for durable peace and security. That means there must be no forcible displacement of Palestinians from Gaza — not now and not after the war. Gaza cannot be used as a platform for terrorism or other violent attacks. There must be no reoccupation of Gaza after the conflict ends or attempt to blockade or besiege Gaza. There must be no reduction in the territory of Gaza. Finally, we must also ensure no terrorist threats can emanate from the West Bank.

Adhering to those principles and achieving the two-State outcome is the only guarantor of a secure and democratic Israel; the only guarantor of Palestinians realizing their legitimate aspirations to live in a State of their own, enjoying equal measures of security and prosperity. It is the only way to end this violence once and for all.

Once again, our capacity for empathy, our common humanity — that is what separates us from Hamas and other terrorists. We can and must acknowledge one another's suffering and keep working together to alleviate the human suffering created by this conflict. We can and must work towards a more peaceful and secure future for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Mr. França Danese (Brazil): I thank the United Arab Emirates and China for calling for this open briefing on the health emergency in Gaza. I also thank Mr. Tedros Ghebreyesus and Mr. Marwan Jilani for their briefings and commend them and their teams for their tireless work on the war-torn ground of Gaza.

Brazil remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, marked by a disturbing increase in civilian casualties, particularly among women and children. The loss of thousands of children's lives is appalling. Children must be protected from hostilities. In President Lula da Silva's words, innocents are called upon to pay the price for the madness of war. This must stop at once.

Brazil urges the Israeli authorities to exercise immediate military restraint and to respect the principles of distinction and proportionality in order to protect civilian lives and infrastructure. We also call on Hamas and all other groups to cease all indiscriminate attacks on Israeli territory.

Hospitals and United Nations facilities have been indiscriminately attacked, with an appalling number of civilian casualties, including of essential personnel such as aid workers, United Nations personnel and journalists. Brazil calls for the protection of all medical facilities, professionals, patients and the wounded, in accordance with international humanitarian law. We also call for the safe medical evacuation of those who are seriously injured or ill.

Despite the risks, the delivery by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East of essential emergency medical supplies from the World Health Organization to the Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City on 8 November is a step in the right direction. But we share the concerns of Mr. Ghebreyesus and Mr. Lazzarini that it is not nearly enough to meet the overwhelming needs in Gaza. Medical supplies in Al Shifa are critically low, and fuel shortages have become critical.

We hope that the long-awaited announcement of daily humanitarian pauses in northern Gaza will facilitate the delivery of aid to civilians. As highlighted by the United Nations, the hundreds of thousands who remain in the north are facing a dire humanitarian situation, as they struggle to find even minimal amounts of water and food to survive. We call for full, safe and sustained humanitarian access to distribute essential supplies on a much larger scale, more frequently and in greater quantities.

Besides a humanitarian ceasefire, all parties must also commit to a cessation of hostilities, which is essential for the long-term protection of all civilians. We remain deeply concerned about the fate of all hostages and call for their immediate release. Their safety,

well-being and humane treatment in accordance with international law must be guaranteed. The International Committee of the Red Cross must be granted access to all hostages without further delay. The crisis poses a significant threat to international peace and security and has the potential to escalate into a wider conflict.

One month into the crisis, it is clear that diplomatic efforts have failed to match the gravity of the situation. The international community must act swiftly to create the conditions for a lasting solution. Violence will not provide the answers. Yesterday, in Paris, at the international humanitarian conference for the civilian population in Gaza, Brazil stressed the importance of convening a conference that can promote a political solution to the decades-old conflict, with the participation of a large number of States, modelled on the 2007 Annapolis conference.

Ignoring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination has had an unacceptable toll in terms of human lives and human suffering on both Palestinians and Israelis. The recognition of a viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel within secure and mutually accepted and internationally recognized borders is the only possible solution. It is high time that we return to that path, with true political will and real diplomacy.

Ms. Bongo (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks the Director-General of the World Health Organization for his briefing and for all the information that he has provided to us. We listened closely to the briefing by Director General of the Palestine Red Crescent Society on the overwhelming situation facing the people of Gaza.

For 35 days, we have witnessed the terrifying escalation in violence, with children being the primary victims: first, on Israeli soil, with the barbaric Hamas attacks of 7 October; then in Gaza, where for more than a month no one has been safe anywhere — and this is true in the occupied West Bank as well. The implementation of General Assembly resolution ES-10/21, adopted on 27 October, is therefore urgently needed.

The Security Council's current impasse defies logic and all sense of reason. It is time to find a solution to end the chaos. It is imperative that the Security Council overcome political and geopolitical obstacles. My country appeals to everyone's sense of humanity. We sincerely hope that we can quickly reach a consensus so that the Security Council can live up to its mandate.

Gabon reiterates its firm condemnation of all forms of indiscriminate deadly violence and is deeply shocked by the many strikes against schools, hospitals, ambulances and refugee camps. Tuesday's attack on the convoy of the International Committee of the Red Cross while it was en route to deliver vital medical supplies to Gaza hospitals is unacceptable. Such flagrant violations of international law and international humanitarian law are unjustified, unacceptable and must cease. Similarly, depriving the population in any way of essential supplies, food, water, electricity, fuel and medicines cannot be allowed to continue. Unhindered, secure and sustainable access to the delivery and distribution of essential goods and services for the millions of people in need is essential. We take note of the step taken by the Israeli authorities yesterday to begin daily pauses in the northern Gaza Strip. We acknowledge the efforts of the United States, Qatar and Egypt in that regard.

Gabon would like to reaffirm that a cessation of hostilities is the only solution to the escalating humanitarian crisis. Only a cessation of hostilities can ensure the protection of the entire civilian population in Gaza, including the Israeli hostages held there, whose immediate release must be unconditional. It is only by silencing the weapons that rescue-and-recovery operations for children, including those trapped under the rubble, can be carried out. It is only by silencing the guns that humanitarian actors will be able to identify and provide temporary care for unaccompanied children, who have been separated from their parents or who have become orphans.

In that regard, we recall the crucial role played by countries with influence over the parties involved. We welcome the commendable initiatives already undertaken by those countries to mitigate the humanitarian impact of the conflict, such as the international humanitarian conference, held in Paris on 9 November, and the extraordinary summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, to be held on 12 November in Riyadh, in which Gabon will participate. We strongly encourage countries with influence on the parties to redouble their efforts to promote de-escalation and the search for a peaceful solution. Peace and stability in the Middle East are goals that we must all tirelessly pursue.

Finally, the root causes of the conflict, which have undermined relations between the Palestinian and Israeli people for years, cannot be considered in a vacuum vis-à-vis the current situation. I reiterate Gabon's commitment to the two-State solution, with

both States coexisting in peace, based on internationally recognized borders.

In conclusion, my country reaffirms its conviction that diplomacy, dialogue and negotiation are the essential channels for achieving a lasting solution to the conflict that would uphold the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and Israel's legitimate right to security. We reiterate our support for Secretary-General António Guterres and all his initiatives.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for convening this open meeting and the moment of silence that we were able to dedicate to all the victims. I would also like to thank the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Mr. Ghebreyesus, and Mr. Marwan Jilani, Director General of the Palestine Red Crescent Society, for their work under the most challenging of circumstances and their briefings, which convey the extreme gravity of the current situation.

Switzerland is deeply concerned about the impact of the conflict on civilians — women, men and children — and civilian infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. Civilians are in urgent need of protection and assistance. The health situation continues to deteriorate rapidly for the civilian population, including the 1.5 million displaced persons, who have been completely besieged for more than a month, deprived of water, electricity and services essential to their survival. International humanitarian law guarantees the protection of the civilian population and civilian objects. It must be respected at all times, by all — in particular the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution in the conduct of hostilities.

The medical profession, including medical transports, hospitals, clinics, the people being treated there and the medical personnel working there, enjoys specific protection under international law. It must never be targeted. A humanitarian convoy of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) carrying emergency aid supplies to the Al-Quds Hospital came under fire last Tuesday. That incident, among the others that we have heard about, is indicative of the environment in which humanitarian organizations, which are impartial and work under their universally recognized emblem, must be able to operate in Gaza. I pay tribute to the dozens of their members, including members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine

Refugees in the Near East and the Red Crescent, who lost their lives in carrying out their duty.

We also note with great concern the recurrent damage incurred by hospitals, such as the Al-Nasr Children's Hospital. The quantity of aid is insufficient. Owing to the lack of fuel, several hospitals and clinics have had to cease operations. It is imperative that water, food, medical supplies and fuel can enter into Gaza. Moreover, aid must also be allowed to reach the hundreds of thousands of civilians in northern Gaza.

The President of the ICRC stressed yesterday at the international humanitarian conference held in Paris,

“The immediate imperative is to save lives and preserve humanity. Rapid and sustained humanitarian access and supplies are desperately needed.”

We thank France for organizing that conference. Switzerland intends to provide additional emergency humanitarian aid through a contribution of CHF90 million across the region. Switzerland will also continue to work within the Security Council to put in place urgent measures, such as humanitarian pauses or truces, which are necessary for ensuring safe, rapid and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance.

Since 7 October, Switzerland has condemned unequivocally all of Hamas's acts of terror and indiscriminate attacks carried out against civilians in Israel. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of the people taken hostage and currently held in Gaza. Switzerland recognizes Israel's right to ensure its defence and security while also recalling that civilians must be protected and international humanitarian law must be respected. Respect for international humanitarian law must remain a priority for the Council.

In addition, Switzerland remains very concerned about the sharp increase in violence in the occupied West Bank. In the context of the increase in settler violence, Switzerland recalls Israel's obligations under international law, including its obligation to protect the civilian population. We call for the investigation of all violations of international law committed in Israel and throughout the occupied Palestinian territory so that the perpetrators can be brought to justice.

Finally, let us not lose sight of the fact that peace and stability can be built only on the foundation of a two-State solution with two democratic States, Israel

and Palestine, living side by side, in peace, within secure and recognized borders. That is what all of us must together devote ourselves to.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Mr. Marwan Jilani for their briefings.

The massive terrorist attacks by Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel on 7 October must be unanimously condemned. All the hostages must be released immediately, without conditions. Every life matters. There can be no double standards. Israel has both the right to defend itself and the obligation to comply with international humanitarian law in order to ensure the protection of civilians.

Palestinian civilians are dying every day in Gaza. Palestinian children are dying every day in Gaza. As we just heard, they are living in the most horrible health conditions imaginable, and there is a high risk for the spread of disease. France thanks WHO for the work of its teams on the ground. We also commend the Secretary-General for his efforts and thank the United Nations agencies and humanitarian actors for the work they are doing on the ground. We also extend our sincere condolences to the United Nations for the deaths of over 100 of its personnel from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

We need to act to address the catastrophic humanitarian situation. To that end, France will continue to call for an immediate, lasting and sustained humanitarian truce with a view to agreeing a ceasefire — we all need to work towards that. Unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip must be ensured as a matter of urgency. All crossing points must be opened. The number of convoys let in must be commensurate with the level of the needs. Civilian infrastructure and hospitals must be protected in compliance with international humanitarian law. Basic services must be restored immediately, especially to ensure access to water, sanitation and electricity.

At the international humanitarian conference in support of the civilian population of Gaza held in Paris yesterday, on the initiative of President Emmanuel Macron, contributions in aid reached more than €1 billion. France will contribute €100 million to help Palestinian civilians. We have also shipped 87 tons of humanitarian cargo to the region in recent days, and a

further 30 tons will be transported in the next few days as part of the European Union's airlift.

The violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers against the Palestinian population, which is spreading in the West Bank and forcing Palestinian communities to flee, is unacceptable, and France once again demands the Israeli authorities put a stop to it. We also have a duty to prevent the conflict from spreading throughout the region. We call for ensuring the safety of the peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, who continue to carry out their mandates. France is committed to taking every effort prevent the conflict from spreading throughout the region. We also condemn the firing of rockets towards Israel by the Houthis.

The world can no longer ignore the legitimate aspiration of the Palestinians and the Israelis to live in peace and security. We all know the conditions for achieving such a lasting peace — fully guaranteeing Israel's security and a establishing a State for the Palestinians. A political horizon must be restored. The only viable solution is a two-State solution. That must happen, and it must shift from being an aspiration into a reality.

France will continue to work constructively within the Security Council to ensure that it adopts a draft resolution as soon as possible. We owe it to the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I would like to thank Mr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, and Mr. Jilani, for sharing their detailed descriptions of the situation and their personal stories, with fear, pain and loss. I thank them and their teams for their dedication in this unimaginable situation.

The situation in Gaza grows more desperate by the day, and time is of the essence. We greatly admire that humanitarian workers continue to work in incredibly dangerous conditions, and we lament the deaths of more than 100 staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Regrettably, the Security Council has remained silent for more than a month since the conflict broke out with the horrifying acts of terror by Hamas in Israel on 7 October. The time for concrete action is now. To that end, Japan fully supports humanitarian pauses and humanitarian corridors to facilitate

urgently needed assistance, civilian movement and the release of hostages. Full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access should be granted without delay and in a continuous manner.

We welcome the tireless diplomacy of the international community, including at the international conference on humanitarian aid for Gaza held in Paris yesterday. Japan hopes that the pauses announced by the United States Government on 9 November will contribute to enhancing the delivery of life-saving humanitarian aid, the protection of civilians and the release of the hostages in Gaza. For its part, under its presidency of the Group of Seven (G7), Japan hosted the G7 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Tokyo this week, calling for urgent action to address the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The recently announced flash appeal requires \$1.2 billion to meet immediate humanitarian needs in Gaza and the West Bank. Japan has been playing its part. Our Foreign Minister recently announced that Japan is prepared to provide an additional humanitarian aid package of \$65 million and emergency relief supplies through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, my country's aid agency, in addition to the already-decided emergency grant aid worth \$10 million. We call on all Member States and humanitarian partners to join that effort to alleviate the suffering of the people in Gaza.

More than 200 hostages, including many children, are still held by Hamas and other militants in Gaza. Hostage-taking goes against the fundamental principles of international law, and we unequivocally condemn it. We demand the immediate and unconditional release of all the remaining hostages. Their loved ones are waiting with increasing despair.

The risk of a regional spillover is very real. The situations in Lebanon, Syria and Yemen are getting worrisome. Additionally, the increase in extremist settler violence committed against Palestinians is totally unacceptable, undermines security in the West Bank and threatens the prospects for a lasting peace. A single miscalculation on any of those fronts could lead to a disastrous regional conflict, and we must do all we can to stop that.

This conflict has to end, and the relevant parties need to return to negotiations towards finally achieving a two-State solution in which both Israel and a viable Palestinian State live side by side in peace and security.

In the short term, we should take all possible measures to bring about an early de-escalation of the conflict as a first step towards a durable peace.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, both for organizing this meeting and for the moment of silence earlier. I would also like to thank Mr. Ghebreyesus and Mr. Jilani, not just for their briefings but for the life-saving work that they and their teams are doing.

We are in no doubt — there is a humanitarian crisis in Gaza and, as Mr. Ghebreyesus set out, that humanitarian crisis is deteriorating day by day. Of course, we welcome the opening of the Rafah border crossing, and we thank partners for their work in allowing foreign nationals to leave. But it is essential and urgent that more aid flow in the other direction, into Gaza. Access, both through Rafah and other crossing points, needs to improve so that aid can reach the people who so desperately need it. For that to happen, we must see humanitarian pauses that allow enough time for aid to be delivered to those who need it and for hostages to be released. Fuel must be allowed to enter Gaza so that hospitals and water desalination plants can operate and for aid to be delivered. The pauses in northern Gaza are an important first step, but any pauses in hostilities should allow sufficient time and security both for civilians to move and for humanitarian aid to be delivered.

Since 7 October, the United Kingdom has been firm in its support for Israel's right to self-defence following the Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel. In that context, international humanitarian law is not a nice-to-have — international humanitarian law is what keeps humanitarian workers and medical staff safe to assist those in need, and it protects civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, wherever possible. We therefore urge all parties to the conflict to take all possible steps to minimize harm to civilians, health and humanitarian workers and protected sites, and we express our condolences for each life lost.

Lastly, we have been clear that Israel must do more to prevent escalation in the West Bank. We welcome statements, including the one made by Prime Minister Netanyahu condemning settler violence, but we must see tangible action to bring perpetrators to justice. We also condemn attacks against Israel emanating from armed groups in the region. The United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary was in Riyadh yesterday, where

he discussed preventing regional escalation with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and representatives of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and the Palestinian Authority. The Foreign Secretary also reaffirmed the United Kingdom's unwavering commitment to a two-State solution.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): Let me begin by thanking Mr. Tedros Ghebreyesus and Mr. Marwan Jilani for their insightful but sobering briefings to the Security Council on the medical systems and situation in Gaza.

As we have followed closely the unfolding events that have provoked this meeting, we continue to be distressed by the situation in the Middle East, especially in the Gaza Strip but also in the West Bank. The reported high number of children killed and the continued holding of many as hostages are deeply distressing. Besides the many deaths on both sides, 101 United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East staff members have also been killed since the start of the war, which, according to the United Nations, is on record as the highest number in any conflict. The high number of casualties in the ongoing conflict should compel urgent action on the part of the Council to seek to prevent further deaths of civilians and humanitarian workers.

Not unlike many other conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, the inability of the Council to reach a consensus on how to get the parties to end the hostilities has affected the ability to effectively undertake the delivery of humanitarian aid, protect civilians and ensure adherence to international law. We therefore hope that the Council can unite around a common approach to abate the hostilities and bring the warring parties to a peaceful resolution of the month-old war.

Ghana notes the intention to allow a daily four-hour humanitarian pause in the fighting in northern Gaza to be announced three hours before the pause begins each day. We believe more can be done and more should be done. We must also urgently create conditions for safe humanitarian corridors, for rescue and recovery operations and safe passage for the wounded, sick children, pregnant women and caregivers in conformity with international humanitarian law.

War, no matter the cause and circumstances, must be fought in compliance with international law. Civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, their personnel and medical systems, should be avoided as part of the conflict and not used as shields

by Hamas militants or as actual targets in attacks. Water and fuel must be supplied and not hindered. We reiterate our call on all countries that have a moderating influence over the parties to intensify efforts aimed at stopping the fighting and securing the release of all Israeli and foreign captives. We reiterate our call on the Hamas militia to heed the demand of the international community for the immediate and unconditional release of all captured civilians. Holding innocent civilian populations as captives is wrong and unacceptable regardless of the motives.

The economic cost of not acting to stop the war should not be lost on us either. We are concerned by an assessment released by the United Nations Development Programme and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which states that at least 45 per cent of all housing in the Gaza Strip has been damaged or destroyed by the bombardments. A month into the war against Hamas and Israel's near-total siege of Gaza, the gross domestic product in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has shrunk by 4 per cent, sending over 400,000 people into poverty — an economic impact not seen in the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine, or any previous Israel-Hamas conflict. The consequences of the economic devastation on top of the destruction of infrastructure, including medical systems, could be great unless we act now.

In conclusion, we must all be guided by the dire situation on the ground and the desire of the international community to end the ongoing war, which has resulted in close to 12,000 human casualties on both sides and brought immense suffering to the children — who constitute more than 40 per cent of the fatalities — women and aged, who are the most vulnerable in Gaza. Our conduct and deliberations must reflect the expectations of helping the parties to end the ongoing hostilities. We began this meeting with a minute's silence. That observance should galvanize us to silence the sound of guns, rockets and missiles that has dominated the lands of Israel and Palestine in the past months.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): Let me thank World Health Organization Director-General Ghebreyesus and Mr. Jilani for their briefings. We are grateful to them and to everyone working on the ground to deliver life-saving assistance to those in need.

The traumatizing developments of the past four weeks have shattered the lives of Israelis and Palestinians

and have brought the region to the brink of a major catastrophe, while the ongoing dramatic developments remain utterly troubling. Hamas continues to ignore the call of the international community and of the United Nations to unconditionally release hostages, whom it is holding illegally and without justification. It continues to hurl its rockets indiscriminately at Israel, and its leaders rejoice of their massacres and keep repeating that they will do it over and over again — “1 million times”, said one of them publicly. Albania stands firm with Israel in its legitimate right to self-defence against pure savagery — but in a proportionate manner and profoundly rooted in the law — and supports Israel’s and all other efforts aimed at securing the release of hostages.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza needs no description. Despite some efforts and improved access, deemed insufficient, the current situation is unsustainable. More than 800 hundred trucks have accessed Gaza through the Rafah crossing, but much more is needed, and much more should be done. Hospitals should be provided with critical supplies and must remain protected. Furthermore, concrete, improved and urgent actions are needed. Food, water, medical supplies and fuel must be delivered. They should not go to Hamas and their fighters, but they cannot be denied to civilians.

We have said it many times and want to repeat it again: every response to Hamas and their fighting capabilities should be carefully and properly targeted and made with distinction and precaution. Civilians are not responsible for Hamas’s actions; they do not have to pay for the actions of terrorists and extremists. Civilians and the infrastructure they rely on — including hospitals, shelters and schools — must be protected. They cannot be used for other purposes and cannot be places where Hamas can hide or from where it can operate.

While we understand that a terrorist organization should not be allowed to reorganize, regroup, ambush or continue to kill, as they have shown what they are able to do; while there is fierce fighting against barbarism, there is a need to keep and show the best of humanity. While there can be no equivalence whatsoever between the massacres of Hamas and the military actions of the Israeli army, we need to make sure that the protection of civilians and international humanitarian law do not remain mere empty words but are serious commitments

to be observed and respected — commitments that call for prompt and serious actions.

The staggering loss of innocent human lives among Palestinians and the unbearable number of children killed are profoundly disturbing. Far too many innocent people are dying for nothing, caught up in a war that is not theirs. That war against terror should not unduly punish those it means to save — those it needs to save. We welcome the four-hour daily pauses and the safe passage corridors as a concrete step in the right direction. They need to be fully coordinated with United Nations actors and their partners on the ground so that the protection of civilians and humanitarian help become truly effective. We hear the United Nations humanitarian workers and their partners on the ground arguing that that may not be enough. They must be heard.

We praise and welcome all efforts made, in particular by the United States, to prevent the spillover of the conflict in the region. Anyone seeking to use the current situation to advance their goals and bring more conflict, more misery and more victims and chaos to the wider region should think twice. The well-known troublemakers and supporters of terror in the region — those who applaud, support and finance Hamas’s terror and other cynical supporters of theirs — should be kept in check.

But there is a need for more. As soon as hostilities cease, Gaza, free of Hamas, should emerge with a renewed Administration and political organization. It should be rebuilt through a collective solidarity effort. It is therefore urgent to do the utmost to revive the political horizon with a serious offer and plan for the two-State solution as the only viable prospect for a future region free of terror. The children of Gaza should grow up to become not future fighters, but good citizens. They should be reared not with hate but with tolerance and respect for others. They should be taught citizenship education, not propaganda and bigotry.

This is an arduous and long road. It will require genuine and sustained efforts. However, it may never come to pass if parties do not agree to get together, with the strong help of the international community, and design a path to peace, one that provides the Israelis with what they need, namely, security and peace; and the Palestinians with what they want and deserve, namely, their own State and freedom. Failing that, real and lasting change will not happen in the Middle

East, and any appeasement will only postpone the next confrontation.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Director General of the Palestine Red Crescent Society for their timely reports this afternoon, reminding us of the bleak picture that we face in this conflict.

I wish to acknowledge and express appreciation for the heroic work of the health personnel who, at this very moment, are risking their lives to save others, in conditions unimaginable to those of us sitting here comfortably in New York, as the Director-General of WHO recalled in alluding to his personal experience. I also pay tribute to the health-care personnel who have already lost their lives in this conflict, and I extend my condolences to their families.

Every armed conflict has serious consequences for the health of the affected population, owing both to the direct effect of the weapons used and the deterioration of health conditions caused by the destruction of the environment and the interruption of basic services. The explosion of violence in the conflict zone since the terrorist attack by Hamas on 7 October is the most severe in decades and, consequently, its humanitarian consequences are also of great magnitude.

We emphatically condemn Hamas's use of civilians as human shields and the indiscriminate firing of rockets. We also reiterate our condemnation of the deaths of civilians in Gaza caused by bombings such as those that occurred in the vicinity of Al Shifa Hospital in recent days and in all health-care centres, as we were informed this afternoon. Our thoughts are with the families of the victims. Civil infrastructure, including health infrastructure, should never be a target. The International Committee of the Red Cross states that

“Medical units exclusively assigned to medical purposes must be respected and protected in all circumstances. Medical units may not be attacked, and access to them may not be limited. Parties to an armed conflict must take measures to protect medical units from attacks, such as ensuring that they are not situated in the vicinity of military objectives.”

Personnel engaging in medical tasks must also be respected and protected in all circumstances.

The provisions of international humanitarian law must be respected in their entirety by all parties. They are not voluntary, and failure to comply with them entails serious liabilities. That also includes the obligation to release the hostages immediately and unconditionally. Likewise, humanitarian aid, including medicines, energy, water, food and medical supplies, must reach those in need in the necessary quantity and in a timely manner. To that end, an immediate, lasting and respected humanitarian truce is unavoidable. It is impossible to supply hospitals or distribute aid while hostilities continue.

We value every effort to protect civilians and prevent greater suffering. Such initiatives as the international humanitarian conference for Gaza, held yesterday in Paris, are commendable. However, those efforts alone are not enough. We all have an individual and collective responsibility in that regard and must make a good-faith effort to live up to it. It is urgent that those who have veto power reach agreements that will allow the Council to act.

I conclude by reiterating a strong appeal to prevent the violence from spreading to other areas and further distancing the prospect of a peaceful, just and definitive solution to this conflict. We must exhaust our efforts to contribute to that goal.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We fully support the convening of this emergency meeting on the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip at the initiative of the United Arab Emirates delegation. We thank Mr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), and Mr. Marwan Jilani, Director General of the Palestine Red Crescent Society, for their briefings on the situation in the Palestinian enclave. We highly value the selfless efforts of the representatives of the WHO and all humanitarians on the ground, who are working under exceedingly dangerous circumstances.

The briefers today provided information about the disastrous scale of the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, which is deeply shocking. A real humanitarian catastrophe, a tragedy of global proportions, is unfolding in the Palestinian enclave. Israeli air strikes have completely destroyed or damaged nearly half of residential buildings and vital civilian infrastructure. Four Palestinian hospitals were bombed in the past 24 hours. Eighteen of 35 hospitals in the Gaza Strip have completely suspended operations, 35,000 buildings

have been destroyed and 165,000 more damaged. The list of destroyed or damaged buildings includes 221 schools, 42 facilities belonging to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 7 churches and 56 mosques. The UNRWA leadership report the victims of the bombing include 101 Agency personnel.

We are shocked and deeply outraged that the targets of the strikes are civilian objects — schools, hospitals, mosques and refugee camps. We emphasize that deliberate strikes against civilian objects are an egregious violation of international humanitarian law. Respect for international humanitarian law is an imperative. All wars have laws. Violence against civilians and strikes on residential buildings and civilian infrastructure are categorically unacceptable. According to reports, just this morning, the Al Quds and Al Shifa Hospitals, as well as the Khalid Bin Al-Walid and Al-Ikhlās Mosques, were hit. Those mosques are located in the southern Gaza Strip, which confirms that there are no safe zones for civilians in Gaza today.

The Gaza Strip has been subject to a brutal total blockade, where the civilian population are the primary victims. There is an acute shortage of medicine, food and fuel, and hospitals lack beds. A shortage of drinking water threatens to significantly exacerbate the sanitary and epidemiological situation.

Many States and organizations are sending assistance to the residents of the besieged enclave, including the Russian Federation, which is delivering humanitarian support to the population of Gaza. Today, on 10 November, the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Russia announced that it will send 25 tons of food and medicine — the fourth consignment — by plane to Egypt.

Yet, as we heard today from Mr. Ghebreyesus and Mr. Jilani, despite the passage of humanitarian convoys into the northern part of Gaza, this effort is clearly insufficient to meet the colossal needs of the Gaza Strip. Unless drastic steps are taken to de-escalate the conflict, its consequences will continue to reverberate for God knows how long.

In the shadow of the tragic events in Gaza is the volatile situation in the West Bank, which has been undeservedly consigned to oblivion. Meanwhile, since 7 October, all major cities in the West Bank have witnessed a sharp escalation of violence as a result of operations by Israeli security forces and violent actions

by settlers against Palestinian civilians. Regardless of what is happening in the Gaza Strip, the situation in the West Bank itself deserves the close scrutiny of the Council.

This past month, 148 Palestinians were killed in clashes with the Israel Defense Forces, compared to 155 in all of 2022, according to United Nations data. More than 2,200 people have been injured, and more than 2,000 additional Palestinians were detained. The army is meting out collective punishment, the most significant component of which is the complete blockade of residential areas through the close of all roads leading to them allegedly due to security concerns. Palestinian access to many major transportation arteries in the West Bank is currently blocked, causing significant damage to the local economy.

There is ongoing systematic demolition of Palestinian homes that do not have Israeli construction permits, which are virtually impossible for local Palestinians to obtain. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, since the beginning of the escalation of the conflict, humanitarian agencies have recorded numerous acts of violence by Israeli settlers on a daily basis. Moreover, as a result of settler threats, nearly 2,000 Palestinians were forced to flee their homes in October. The easiest and most frequent targets are relatively isolated Bedouin communities. Appeals to the Israeli police and army are predictably ineffective. On the contrary, security forces often provide direct support to settlers during the latter's illegal actions or, at the very least, do not intervene. We also note acts of violence against Israelis and human rights defenders, who are not afraid to call the developments in Gaza by their proper name.

We once again emphasize the inadmissibility and danger of escalating the conflict. We are convinced that an urgent ceasefire in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict zone is the first step in the right direction. Only that — and not short-term pauses — is the only realistic measure to help avoid additional casualties, to ensure the provision of the necessary humanitarian aid to those in need and assistance to the population of Gaza and to preclude further escalation of the armed confrontation and the involvement of more regional actors.

The risks of regional and global confrontation in a region with a huge number of historically unresolved problems, conflict spots and potential hazards are clear. But the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the key issue. If it

is not resolved, there can be no hope for lasting peace in the Middle East. In recent years, including during the monthly Council meetings on the Middle Eastern settlement, we have been saying that forgetting the entire international legal framework for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would lead to an escalation that the whole world would then have to try to resolve it.

The resolution to the Palestinian question should by no means be linked to attempts to expel Palestinians from their ancestral lands. We need a meaningful, comprehensive and fundamental solution to this protracted historical problem that is firmly rooted in the provisions of international law.

History convincingly shows that attempts to monopolize mediation functions results not in the resolution of conflicts, but their escalation. That is what we are witnessing right now. Washington's obstruction of peace initiatives for a ceasefire in Gaza, at this juncture, and its one-sided policy in recent years, geared towards the preservation of the status quo, as they call it, and its so-called "quiet diplomacy", in fact reflected an unwillingness to implement everything that the countries and peoples had agreed to. The lack of progress on the negotiation track inevitably led to radicalization and conflagration. I reiterate that this could fuel the spread of the conflict and other potential or dormant conflicts in the region. We have repeatedly stated that the build-up of foreign military presence in the area of armed conflict, in particular the United States presence in the eastern Mediterranean, and the provocative hawkish statements are also part of the overall escalation, which only increases the tensions.

We believe that without a resolution of the Palestinian problem on the well-known international legal basis, long-term stabilization in the Middle East region is unrealistic, and Israel's security will also not be possible. Today it is more important than ever to immediately stop the bloodshed and avoid unilateral actions, including the settler takeover of areas of the West Bank of the Jordan River, encroachment upon Jerusalem's holy sites and incitement to violence and terrorism. We stress in particular the importance of Palestinian unity in the current circumstances. We also fully support the increasingly urgent calls for collective action by influential international players.

We also emphasize the central role of States in the Middle East in resolving problems in the region. External forces should not be allowed to exploit the

Palestinian-Israeli confrontation to derail the recent positive trends to normalize the situation in the Middle East region. The engagement and unity of States in the Middle East and all stakeholders around the well-known Security Council-endorsed legal basis for a resolution, coupled with the political will of the Palestinians and Israelis to negotiate on a range of final status issues, are essential for restarting a comprehensive peace process in the Middle East.

Mr. Afonso (Mozambique): Mozambique wishes to thank China, President of the Security Council, for convening this important meeting.

We extend our profound gratitude to Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, for the valuable and moving testimony he provided us on the health and humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. His is a moral voice that we have to listen to. We also thank Mr. Marwan Jilani for his comprehensive briefing.

It is with broken hearts that we are following the daily reports of incessant attacks on civilians, children, women, men and aid workers and health workers, as well as on the destruction of hospitals, schools and other civilian infrastructure in Gaza. This is a horrifying situation that completely ignores the human cost of the crisis and that should be strongly condemned.

The depriving of food, medicines, water and electricity to a trapped civilian population as a result of military action compounds the gravity of the tragic humanitarian situation which worsens by the day. It is our belief that this monstrous calamity will further alienate the Palestinian people for generations to come and undermine efforts towards achieving reconciliation, peace and stability in the region. We therefore reiterate our call for full compliance with all international human rights law and international humanitarian law, which includes norms and rules for the protection of civilians and humanitarian assistance.

An immediate ceasefire will, in our view, halt and minimize civilian deaths and the destruction of infrastructure. It will also ensure that aid can be delivered to Gaza and ensure that millions of innocent civilians in need can benefit from humanitarian assistance.

As members of the United Nations, we embrace and fully abide by the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence against other States or non-State actors, envisaged by Article 51 of the Charter of the

United Nations. But that right must be exercised in accordance with the same Charter and “shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council”. Therefore, we are in agreement with those who claim that it is time for the Council to act. We therefore call for immediate and decisive steps to be taken to de-escalate the situation and to ensure sustained and unhindered access to and safe delivery of life-saving aid. It is our collective duty to ensure the protection of all civilians — both in Israel and Gaza — who are the innocent and unjustified targets of the conflict between the Israeli Defence Forces and Hamas.

We have unequivocally condemned the massacre of 7 October by Hamas.

In the liberation movement for our own freedom and independence, our people never resorted in their struggle to mass killing of innocent people, even those serving the oppressing machinery of colonialists. On the other hand, our people have had the unforgettable experience of being victims of mass killings, massacres and incidents of crimes against humanity: first, in our condition as a colony; then, as a victim of aggression by the illegal regime in Southern Rhodesia; and later, from the South African apartheid regime. However, we have always stood firmly on the grounds of our just cause. Our conscience therefore tells us there are always moral and legal dimensions to what States and non-State actors are bound to comply with to advance their legitimate causes.

It is in that context that we find it important that we keep open the doors for peace, security, self-determination and dignity for both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples. We must pursue our efforts and consistently engage with the parties towards a sustainable and lasting solution. The recognized and long-standing need for a two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security, must be at the centre of our efforts aimed at finding the path of peace and justice in the region.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I thank Mr. Ghebreyesus for his very moving statement, and Mr. Jilani for his briefing on the humanitarian and health crises in Gaza.

Malta expresses grave concern at the continued deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Tens of thousands of injured, sick and displaced civilians are sheltering in hospitals and schools, depending on their protected status under international

law for safety. A relentless siege and daily aerial bombardments in one of the most densely populated places on Earth means that there are no safe zones in Gaza. Yesterday’s strikes against hospitals, including Al Shifa Hospital, are deplorable. We emphasize once again that medical facilities, personnel and ambulances are protected by international humanitarian law and should not be targeted.

Just before this meeting started, Médecins Sans Frontières informed us of active fighting in and around Al Shifa Hospital. Inside, approximately 4,000 patients are in dire straits, not including those seeking shelter. The Director of Surgery has told us: “We do not want to be killed here.” As medical staff, they are staying for their patients and are desperately asking for our help. One of our roles in this Chamber is to ensure that medical staff can work without their very lives being endangered.

Meanwhile, the health system in the enclave has completely collapsed. The scarcity of medical supplies, fuel, water and food are depriving people of the essentials for their survival and preventing the treatment of severe wounds and illnesses. Critical patients are being operated on without anaesthesia and on floors due to a lack of hospital beds. Compounding that situation is severe damage to the water and sanitation infrastructure and the overall lack of nutrition available. That is leading to growing risks of severe disease for infants and children.

Malta welcomes the Israeli Government’s announcement yesterday of daily pauses to ensure the safe operation of humanitarian corridors. However, we must also stress that, to protect civilians in Gaza, longer sustained pauses are needed to allow for humanitarian actors to adequately access and address the rising needs of the civilian population. Such efforts must include urgent recovery operations for persons trapped under rubble. Malta therefore reiterates its call for a humanitarian ceasefire and stresses the importance of adequate humanitarian pauses in leading up to that.

We cannot speak of humanitarian imperatives without adequately referring to the ongoing hostage situation. Over 200 people, including elderly persons, children and even infants, are still being held against their will. Their families and friends suffer the agony of not knowing when, or if, they will be reunited with their loved ones. We reiterate our urgent demand for

Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad to safely release all hostages immediately and unconditionally.

Malta also reiterates its categorical condemnation of the unjustifiable terror attacks of 7 October by Hamas against Israel and its people and the indiscriminate rocket fire that has continued to take place since. We underline Israel's right to protect its citizens from such acts of terror. We also stress that all actions to that end must be in line with international humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction, proportionality and military necessity.

Malta also remains concerned by the threat of a regional spillover of the conflict. That is particularly worrisome in the West Bank, where violence and unrest have increased this past month. We call on all parties to avoid any actions or inflammatory rhetoric that could further enflame tensions during this heightened period. The forced displacement of Palestinians and related settler violence must also cease.

I cannot fail to mention the tireless work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) during the past month, which has come at the great cost of the lives of over 100 heroic workers. We fully support the Agency through these difficult times and underscore its dire need for funding. UNRWA has been and remains a stabilizing force in the region. It is one of the only beacons of hope for the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. It is crucial that we continue to support it.

In conclusion, Malta underscores its commitment to a lasting and sustainable peace in the Middle East, based on a two-State solution in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters. We stress the need to refrain from conflating the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people with the terror tactics of Hamas. It is only through the fulfilment of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, including to self-determination, that we can effectively relaunch a credible peace process.

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

I would like to join others in thanking Director-General Ghebreyesus and Director General Jilani for their briefings.

The current round in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been ongoing for 35 days now, and the situation

continues to deteriorate. When tens of thousands of people, including more than 4,000 children, have lost their lives; when more than 1.6 million people have been forced to flee their homes; when 2.3 million people continue to be cut off from water, electricity, fuel, food and medicine; and when hospitals, schools, refugee camps and United Nations facilities have been frequently targeted, it is not only a humanitarian crisis, but also a crisis of humanity, as described by Secretary-General Guterres.

This morning, in my capacity as President of the Council, I met with the representatives of Palestine and other Arab countries, as well as representatives of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. From our conversation, I was deeply moved by the pain they hold deep in their hearts. I was struck by their aspirations for the resumption of peace and by their expectations for the Council to take effective action.

In the face of everything that is happening, the world must speak out with one voice. Enough is enough. In the light of recent events, the Security Council must reject the obstruction and interference of certain members and take immediate, responsible and meaningful action to uphold justice and maintain peace.

A ceasefire and a halt to the fighting must be put in place without delay. A ceasefire is by no means a diplomatic statement — it is the only hope for the people of Gaza to survive. We call on all stakeholders, especially the major Power with unique influence on the parties, to set aside all geopolitical considerations and double standards and to focus all efforts on the goal of a ceasefire and an end to the fighting. We urge Israel to curb the intensifying settler violence in the West Bank to avoid a concurring hotspot and the spread of the conflict.

The protection of civilians cannot be delayed. We condemn all violence and attacks against civilians. We express our grave concern about, and strong opposition to, the clear violations of international humanitarian law in Gaza. We urge an end to the collective punishment of civilians. We demand that the physical safety and humanitarian needs of detainees be guaranteed and call for diplomatic efforts to facilitate their release as soon as possible.

There is no time to waste in saving lives. More than 1,300 children and their families are trapped in the rubble, and their fate remains unknown. We support the Council in taking urgent action in that regard, to

facilitate a sustained truce of multiple days and an immediate opening of a green corridor for specialized agencies and equipment to enter Gaza to carry out search-and-rescue operations and to do our utmost to save children. The Council should also respond to the joint appeal made by Director-General Ghebreyesus and Commissioner-General Lazzarini to promote the establishment of a medical evacuation mechanism so that pregnant women and all those who are seriously injured or ill in Gaza can be transferred and treated in a timely manner.

The resumption of the supply of deliveries is urgent. We call on Israel to immediately lift the blockade and completely remove restrictions on livelihood supplies, in particular fuel delivery to humanitarian and medical institutions and livelihood facilities. Over the past two weeks, just over 500 trucks have entered Gaza through the Rafah crossing, which is a drop in the bucket for the people of Gaza, who are struggling and on the brink of death. All crossings into Gaza should be utilized, and the Kerem Shalom crossing should be opened as soon as possible.

These days, we also hear frequent discussions about the “day after” for Gaza. Regarding that point, it must be pointed out that no arrangement for Gaza can be imposed on the Palestinian people. No solution to the current situation can deviate from the two-State solution. The future of Palestine must — and can — be decided only by the Palestinian people themselves. China is ready to continue to work with the international community and make unrelenting efforts to bring a swift end to the fighting, alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, achieve peaceful coexistence among Palestinians and Israelis and realize long-term peace and security in the Middle East.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

Mr. Ghebreyesus has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Ghebreyesus: As I said earlier, nowhere and no one is safe in Gaza. Imagine that you are trapped in that situation — just imagine. That is why we are asking for a ceasefire. We are asking for unfettered humanitarian access. At the same time, of course, we are also asking the Security Council to do everything it can to ensure the release of the hostages.

The second thing that I would like to mention, because many members raised the issue, is the two-State solution. I visited Israel in 2014 when I was Foreign Minister of Ethiopia. One thing that I underlined then was that the situation in Gaza is unsustainable. It is dangerous and Israel should provide a solution. That is the two-State solution. Of course, many say that the two-State solution is good for Palestine, but I strongly believe that it is also a very good and important solution for Israel.

During that visit in 2014, I said to my Israeli counterparts at the time, “Please do it for your own sake”: the two-State solution, a lasting solution. I am very glad that, while addressing this acute situation, the Security Council is also underlining the long-term solution.

So, with that, I again thank the Council so much for inviting me. I am glad to be back in the Chamber, where I have been many times before. The last thing, which I said earlier, is please make Security Council reform central and a real commitment, to be honest.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Ghebreyesus for his further statement. I also thank him for being here today and for his briefing.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.