



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

9479th meeting

Wednesday, 15 November 2023, 3 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Zhang Jun (China)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. Moretti
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon	Ms. Koumby Missambo
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
Japan	Mr. Ishikane
Malta	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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



The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the 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.

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2023/876, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Malta.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Before the members of the Security Council move to vote on the draft resolution submitted by Malta (S/2023/876), we would like to propose an oral amendment to the operative part of the draft resolution. We propose that we add a new paragraph, 3 *bis*, as follows:

(spoke in English)

“Further calls for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities”.

I would request the Conference Officers to circulate the text of the oral amendment to the members of the Council.

(spoke in Russian)

This text is well known to the members of the Security Council. The wording we are proposing repeats verbatim paragraph 1 of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 October by an overwhelming majority during its resumed tenth emergency special session, entitled “Protection of civilians and upholding

legal and humanitarian obligations” (General Assembly resolution ES-10/21).

Our proposal includes nothing unexpected for members. From the very beginning of the crisis, we have said that, given the growing number of civilian casualties taking place before our eyes, the main aim is to achieve a ceasefire and an end to the violence. That has been called for repeatedly by the Group of Arab States, including in the communiqué adopted at the conclusion of the recently held summit of the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. If this element is not included in the text, one could get the impression that the Security Council is happy to make do exclusively with Israel's terms on humanitarian pauses at its own discretion. From our discussions with the overwhelming majority of colleagues, we know very well that that is not the case.

Unfortunately, the United States has all along consistently blocked any, even the weakest, reference to this goal, even hinting that the Council should return to discussions on the matter. I would pose a question to our American colleagues. Throughout our work on Malta's draft resolution, they struck out anything that could in any way indicate a need for the cessation of hostilities. Does that mean that they are in favour of the war in the Middle East continuing indefinitely? We do not believe that the Security Council should act at the behest of the United States.

Our amendment calling for a humanitarian truce consistently adheres to the stated aims of the authors of the text to preserve its purely humanitarian character. That is the lowest common denominator below which the Council simply cannot allow itself to go, in particular against the backdrop of the monstrous humanitarian situation in Gaza and incoming information about the Israeli armed forces storming Al Shifa Hospital. Strikes were also launched today against schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Our duty is to save the lives of civilians facing a mortal threat. I hope that all members will share that position.

I would also like to recall that the majority of the members of the Security Council — namely, the delegations of Russia, China, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates — already voted previously in the General Assembly in support of the wording we are proposing today. We urge Council members to support it now.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): Members of the Council have before them a proposed amendment, submitted by the Russian Federation, to the text of the draft resolution contained in document S/2023/876, submitted by Malta.

Rule 36 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure states the following:

“when an amendment adds to or deletes from the text of a motion or draft resolution, that amendment shall be voted on first.”

Accordingly, I intend to put the proposed oral amendment to the vote first.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Brazil, China, Mozambique, Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates

Against:

United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The President: (*spoke in Chinese*): The proposed oral amendment received 5 votes in favour, 1 against and 9 abstentions. The proposed oral amendment has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution contained in document S/2023/876, submitted by Malta.

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

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): The humanitarian crisis that continues to unfold in Gaza ever since the horrific terror attacks of 7 October is deeply troubling. On that day, children were killed and taken hostage. Since then, more than 4,600 children are reported to have been killed in Gaza and around 1,500 are considered missing. Many are likely trapped underneath the rubble. The lives of newborn babies and premature babies at Al Shifa Hospital are in grave and imminent danger. Countless civilians are now suffering the scourge of hostilities and all the devastating consequences that armed conflict brings with it. Over 1 million people are displaced; more than half of them are children.

Last week, the Secretary-General stated “Gaza is becoming a graveyard for children.” That stark warning must not go unheeded. On this occasion we also play tribute to all United Nations staff on the ground for their heroic efforts and remember those who have paid the ultimate price.

Draft resolution S/2023/876, which we have in front of us today, seeks to offer hope in this dark hour. It aims to ensure some respite from the current nightmare in Gaza and to give hope to the families of all victims. It focuses on the plight of children trapped in the war enclave and of those being held hostage.

Over the past week, we have held extensive consultations with Council members, interested parties, countries of the region and humanitarian organizations. We did that in an effort to achieve a balanced and operational text that can address one part of the current crisis — the immediate needs of the affected children. We thank them all for engaging with us in an open and constructive manner. Our guiding light throughout the process was to make sure that the text remained focused and humanitarian in scope.

The draft resolution provides for the establishment of urgent and extended humanitarian pauses and corridors throughout the Gaza Strip for a sufficient number of days. Such measures would enable full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access. It would facilitate the continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential goods and services important to the well-being of civilians, especially children. It would enable urgent rescue-and-recovery efforts, including for missing children in damaged and destroyed buildings, and the medical evacuation of sick or injured children and their caregivers. The text also underlines and reiterates the special vulnerable status of children. It calls for the safe and unconditional release of hostages, especially children, that are being held by Hamas and other groups. That, too, is a clear humanitarian imperative that cannot be ignored.

We stress that international humanitarian law provides general protection for children as persons taking no part in hostilities. They enjoy special protection as persons who are particularly vulnerable, and we recall that the taking of hostages is prohibited under international law. Our votes today translate into real human lives — the lives of thousands of children, civilians and heroic humanitarian workers.

Today the Security Council has the opportunity to reaffirm its responsibility and commitment to safeguarding civilian lives. We need to do this as a matter of urgency. Malta remains steadfastly committed to the protection of civilians, in particular children. They are suffering disproportionately in this conflict. We cannot close a blind eye to their suffering. In that spirit, I urge all Council members to support the draft resolution by voting in favour of it.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): The war on Gaza has raged for 40 days. While we have held several meetings, heard devastating briefings and seen heart-wrenching reporting, the Council has been unable to produce anything that would alleviate the suffering of the civilians in Gaza.

Outside this building and in our region, in particular, the Council appears indifferent to the carnage and dismissive of the suffering. We thank Malta and its team for their extraordinary efforts. Thanks to those efforts and with our full support, as the Arab member on the Council, today we have an opportunity to begin changing that perception.

Draft resolution S/2023/876 is born from the idea that we must come together now to act under one fundamental common aim. The protection of children has been the North Star that has guided the Council's approach on this draft and brings us together today to vote on the text before us. As Ambassador Vanessa Frazier has just said, the key elements of this draft resolution and what they mean in practice for the people of Gaza must not be underestimated — for the children and other Palestinians sheltering from the hostilities, for the Israeli children and others still held hostage and for United Nations humanitarian and medical workers who are risking their lives to help alleviate the enormous humanitarian suffering on the ground.

This text is also what humanitarian actors have consistently called for as the bare minimum for them to be able to do their life-saving work. The draft resolution means, in real time, enough time and space for search-and-rescue operations to save those children who are buried under the rubble, including the 1,500 who have been reported missing there. It means that fuel, food, water, medicine and other essential goods can be delivered at scale. It means that sick and injured children can be evacuated. These extended pauses will also help reach those held hostage, particularly children, whose unconditional release this draft resolution calls for.

In addition, the text is unequivocal in its demand that all parties to the conflict comply with their obligations under international law. Through this text, the Council also rejects the forced displacement of Palestinians, which is essential — two thirds of the population in Gaza are Palestinian refugees who have already suffered from the consequences of forced displacement in their past. Once again, in the past 40 days, nearly 80 per cent of those living in Gaza have been uprooted again.

Finally, with the call in this draft resolution for the Secretary-General to bring options to the Council for the monitoring and reporting mechanisms in this text, we can aid the intention of this draft resolution to create the space needed for humanitarian actors to do their work. This draft resolution is a first, important and overdue step by the Council.

It is for those reasons that we will vote in favour of the draft resolution, which also has the support of the Group of Arab States. However, the United Arab Emirates remains resolute that we must work towards a lasting humanitarian ceasefire. We must not lose sight of that urgent goal.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2023/876.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The draft resolution received 12 votes in favour, none against and 3 abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2712 (2023).

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

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): Over the past month, the world has watched with understandable frustration and increasing concern

as the Security Council has been unable to speak out on a pressing matter of international peace and security. And it was not for lack of trying. We got very close last month when the United States put forward a strong and balanced draft resolution that would have been adopted if not for vetoes by Russia and China (see S/PV.9453). And honestly, I think that many had given up hope that we would ever speak on this conflict. But that is exactly what we just did. We got it done because most of us worked constructively and in good faith to adopt resolution 2712 (2023), and I want to thank Malta and other members of the Council for leading the initiative.

At the top, I want to say that I am horrified that a few members of the Council still cannot bring themselves to condemn the barbaric terrorist attack that Hamas carried out against Israel on 7 October. What are they afraid of? What is stopping them from unequivocally condemning the action of a terrorist organization that is determined to kill Jews and that gunned down civilians, burned families alive and executed children, a group that killed and took hostages, including children, from more than a dozen countries, including the United States? There is no excuse for failing to condemn those acts of terror. Let us be crystal clear. Hamas set this conflict in motion because Hamas cares only about the death and destruction of the Israeli people. They do not care one whit about the safety and protection of the Palestinian people. If they did, they would not use civilian infrastructure, residential buildings, schools, mosques and hospitals to store weapons and operate command-and-control nodes. They would not use innocent, vulnerable people as human shields. Ultimately, the United States could not vote yes on a text that did not condemn Hamas or reaffirm the right of all Member States to protect their citizens from terrorist attacks.

The Council has repeatedly made it clear that we stand against all acts of terror. This horrific attack must be no exception. And the United States will continue to urge the Council to condemn Hamas's actions. Although the United States is deeply disappointed by what is not in this text, we support many of the important provisions that the Council has adopted. For starters, while the text does not include a condemnation of Hamas, it is the first time that we have ever adopted a resolution that even mentions the word "Hamas". In addition, we fully support the resolution's call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups. That is a humanitarian imperative. We are working tirelessly to facilitate the safe return of

all hostages, including nine missing Americans and one permanent United States resident.

We have also advocated for humanitarian pauses to allow full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to civilians in Gaza. While we have made some progress in ramping up the flow of humanitarian assistance to Gaza, much more is urgently needed. The current levels are woefully insufficient. We continue to work tirelessly to increase deliveries of aid and we are hopeful that humanitarian pauses will help the United Nations and humanitarian partners deliver aid and enable safe passage for civilians fleeing violence.

We have been clear about our expectation that the parties to the conflict will comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law. And for Israel that is an added responsibility, as Hamas has deeply embedded itself within the civilian population in Gaza. But we have been clear at the highest levels that Hamas's actions do not lessen Israel's responsibility to protect innocent people in Gaza. At the end of the day, it all comes down to one clear urgent goal — saving innocent lives. The toll that this conflict has taken on civilians is tragic. The loss of every single innocent life is devastating, and we grieve for all who have been killed — Israelis and Palestinians, men, women, children and elderly people, people of all nationalities and faiths and more than 100 United Nations staff and the families and loved ones of workers of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East caught in the crossfire.

Over the past few weeks, I have spoken with humanitarian leaders who have teams in the region, and I have heard time and time again that while humanitarian workers are exhausted and often in grave danger, they are determined to fulfil their life-saving mission. And I am in awe of their bravery. Humanitarians are putting themselves in harm's way to save lives, but they should not have to, because they should be protected. All civilians should be protected. That means that Hamas must stop using people, including hospital staff and patients, as human shields. Those are acts of unthinkable cruelty and cowardice. It also means that as Israel exercises its right and indeed its responsibility to protect its people from acts of terror, it must do so in a way that is consistent with the laws of war. And I want to be clear that the United States does not want to see firefighters in any hospitals when innocent, helpless, sick people are trying to get the medical care that they

so desperately need. Patients and the people who care for them must be protected, full stop.

Ultimately, while this resolution is a step forward, its adoption alone will not save lives. And that is why from the very start, President Biden and Secretary Blinken have worked exhaustively with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies, alongside our regional partners, to respond to this crisis. To save lives, we all need to support the heroic efforts of the United Nations and other humanitarian workers in Gaza, and we all need to work with partners in the region to secure the release of all hostages and prevent this conflict from spreading. As we do so, we believe we must also start to look to the future and lay the groundwork for a sustained peace. This must put the Palestinian people's voices and aspirations at the centre of post-crisis governance in Gaza. It must include Palestinian-led governance and Gaza unified with the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority. It must include a sustained mechanism for reconstruction in Gaza, and it must ensure that there is no use of Gaza as a platform for terrorism or violent attacks. It must also include a pathway to a two-State solution.

I know it is hard to see that brighter future in this moment of darkness, but we must — we have to. It breaks my heart that we will never be able to bring back the children who have lost their lives or erase the trauma Israeli and Palestinian children living under this conflict are experiencing. As we speak, Palestinian children are fleeing the fighting in Gaza, crying out for help. As we speak, Israeli children, including a three-year-old American, are being held hostage by Hamas. Israeli children have been displaced from their homes, which are also under rocket attack. For this generation of children, and for the next generation, we have a responsibility to strive for a brighter future. We must ensure Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in States of their own, with equal measures of security, freedom, opportunity and dignity.

Ms. Koumby Missambo (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Gabon just voted in favour of the resolution submitted by Malta (resolution 2712 (2023)) to demonstrate its support for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples and its commitment to peace. I am delighted that the Council has been able to reach a consensus, thereby prioritizing the best interests of those two peoples.

With this vote, my country reaffirms its support for any initiative that makes it possible to save human lives — in particular the lives of children — in accordance

with international humanitarian law. International humanitarian law affords children general protection as persons taking no part in hostilities and special protection as particularly vulnerable persons, while recalling that hostage-taking is prohibited under international law. By voting in favour, Gabon seeks to help to improve the fate of children on the basis of the relevant elements contained in the resolution that has just been adopted. Those elements are: a demand for all parties to protect civilians — in particular children, who are paying a heavy price in this conflict — pursuant to human international law, including international humanitarian law; a call for urgent and extended humanitarian pauses and corridors throughout the Gaza Strip; a call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups, especially children; a call on all parties to refrain from depriving the civilian population in the Gaza Strip of basic services and the humanitarian assistance that is indispensable to their survival, including children; the importance of coordination, humanitarian notification and de-escalation mechanisms in protecting civilians and facilitating the movement of humanitarian convoys and patients, in particular sick and injured children and their caregivers.

We are aware that the text that was submitted does not take into account all of the legitimate concerns in such circumstances, but it undoubtedly represents major progress that could make a difference on the ground. However, far from resting on our laurels following the adoption of this resolution, we must certainly show greater engagement so as to respond to the humanitarian suffering in a just manner commensurate with our mandate. We must demonstrate greater engagement in order to silence the guns and establish responsibility.

Once again, Gabon calls upon all parties to show restraint and to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law. We will never stop repeating that the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is political. Diplomacy, negotiation and dialogue are the only weapons available to the international community to ensure that the legitimate concerns of each of the parties — namely, self-determination and the right to security — are respected and to ensure the peace and security of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): It is impossible to comprehend the pain and the loss that Palestinian civilians are enduring. Too many civilians, including, most tragically, children, are losing their lives. So it is right that the Security Council calls for a

humanitarian pause for a period of days, long enough to get life-saving aid to those who need it and establish a safer environment for humanitarians. That will save lives. We need a collective effort to get aid in as fast as possible, by as many routes as possible.

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom has been very clear about the need for life-saving aid to reach civilians in Gaza, including food, water, medical supplies and fuel as a priority. For our part, the United Kingdom has doubled our aid to help civilians in Gaza. Three British Royal Air Force flights have delivered life-saving humanitarian aid and enabling equipment to support the Egyptian Red Crescent Society in delivering international aid through the Rafah checkpoint. We are urging — and I urge here today — that the priority be improved land access, including at Kerem Shalom, so aid can get in at scale. All parties must give civilians the protection that is their right under international law, including international humanitarian law. That includes respecting the sanctity and protection of hospitals. It is also right that this resolution calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli hostages. It is unconscionable that Hamas continues to hold men, women and children, causing terrible fear and suffering for their families.

This resolution is absolutely necessary. Though the United Kingdom regrets that the first resolution passed by the Council on this matter could not clearly condemn the Hamas terrorist attacks of 7 October, the barbarity of those attacks should be clear to us all. That is why we have abstained today. But let me be absolutely clear — it was vital and overdue for the Council to speak on this crisis, and we strongly support the resolution's purpose to get aid in and hostages out. I therefore commend Malta's astounding work in submitting a resolution that could be adopted.

We will continue to work with Council members to resolve this crisis and to create a new political horizon so that we can deliver on the promise of peace for Israelis and Palestinians and make a two-State solution a reality.

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): France thanks Malta for preparing resolution 2712 (2023). We welcome the fact that the Council has been able to speak with one voice for the first time since the barbaric terrorist attacks on Israel by Hamas and other terrorist groups on 7 October. France voted in favour of the resolution, which calls for urgent and extended humanitarian pauses and for the immediate and

unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other terrorist groups.

France voted in favour of the resolution because the humanitarian situation in Gaza is already catastrophic. France is fully prepared to respond to the urgency of the situation, and in particular has already initiated an international humanitarian conference for the civilian population of Gaza, held in Paris on 9 November under the auspices of President Macron and our Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs. The resolution we adopted today mentions several basic needs — food, water, fuel and medicine — which must be delivered to the civilian population of Gaza. France reiterates its request for opening unimpeded, sustained humanitarian access to enable humanitarian aid to reach Gazans in sufficient quantities. More needs to be done. We also must mobilize adequate resources. France has already deployed more than 100 tons of humanitarian cargo and increased its humanitarian support to €100 million.

However, France deeply regrets that several key messages are missing from this resolution. From now on, as agreed, the Council must therefore continue its efforts to formulate a more comprehensive expression of its views. It must unequivocally condemn Hamas's terror attacks. It must emphasize Israel's right to defend itself and its population and its duty to do so in strict and absolute compliance with international humanitarian law. It must call for the establishment of an immediate and lasting truce leading to a ceasefire and for the prevention of a regional conflagration. Finally, it must insist on a decisive relaunch of negotiations aimed at achieving a two-State solution based on the agreed parameters, which is the only settlement that will allow both Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace and security. The Council cannot and must not remain silent on those issues. It must be demanding, and seen to be so, and capable of rising to the challenges of the crisis that began on 7 October with the Hamas attacks. France will continue to engage resolutely in negotiations on the issue with all Council members.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We voted in favour of resolution 2712 (2023), as it includes urgent and very relevant provisions regarding an increasingly critical situation that is of great concern to the international community and all Council members. Among other aspects, it reaffirms that the parties must adhere to all of their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It also puts a

particular emphasis on the situation of children, one of the groups most affected by the violence.

The text demands the establishment of humanitarian pauses and corridors in order to enable full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, both for the provision of goods and for rescue efforts. It also calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups and for ensuring immediate humanitarian access to them. Lastly, it requests the Secretary-General to make an oral report on the implementation of the resolution and to identify options to effectively monitor it. In sum, the resolution focuses on the urgent humanitarian needs resulting from the grave conflict in Gaza that erupted following Hamas's terrorist acts of 7 October. It is a necessary first step by the Council, which must continue to address other aspects of the conflict.

We consider that the overall draft prepared by the 10 elected members of the Security Council remains a valuable point of departure. Our work must continue. Ecuador abstained in the voting on the oral amendment proposed this afternoon because we believe that the text that we just adopted, following a negotiation process in which all Council members participated, should be preserved as is. Lastly, we thank and congratulate those who spearheaded the process, particularly Malta, and we also acknowledge the members that have shown flexibility in order to avoid a veto, which would have been detrimental to the Council's future consideration of the question.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): The Council remained silent for nearly six weeks as the conflict worsened to an unprecedented degree. Today we were at last able to act. Japan was pleased to vote in favour of resolution 2712 (2023), and we are grateful to Malta for taking the initiative to help finally craft a balanced draft that could be adopted.

The resolution emphasizes the need to protect civilians, especially children, who should never be targeted and who have been disproportionately affected both by the conflict and by the rapidly worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza. It is important that the resolution calls for urgent and extended humanitarian pauses and corridors throughout the Gaza Strip, and for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups. In the context, Japan highly appreciates the ongoing diplomatic efforts made by key actors, including the United States.

That is just the beginning. The Council must continue to be actively engaged on this file in order to protect civilians, especially the most vulnerable, including women, persons with disabilities and children, as well as to prevent the conflict from spreading and ultimately bring durable peace and stability to the region, which can be achieved only through a two-State solution. We also need to keep in mind various aspects, including issues relating to women and peace and security. Japan will work tirelessly to achieve those ends.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland welcomes the Council's adoption of resolution 2712 (2023). That first step comes belatedly, however, as we deplore the victims of Hamas's terrorist acts and the deaths of thousands of civilians in Israel and throughout the occupied Palestinian territory since 7 October, including a huge number of children. I would like to thank the Maltese delegation for all its efforts to reach a consensus within the Council.

Switzerland recognizes Israel's right to ensure its defence and security. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages. Their captivity in Gaza for more than a month and in appalling conditions is unjustifiable, as were the acts of terror and Hamas's indiscriminate attacks on Israeli civilians since 7 October. Switzerland condemns those terrorist acts in the strongest possible terms.

We will continue to engage to advance the Council's work on the draft resolution proposed by the 10 elected members, which addresses the situation as a whole and to which a great deal of effort has been devoted in the past few weeks.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): Mozambique appreciates the efforts made by Malta that led to the adoption of the resolution 2712 (2023) and, hopefully, a step towards the end of the death and destruction, in both Gaza and Israel. Mozambique is convinced that this resolution is an important step towards mitigating the suffering of civilians in Gaza. However, we are mindful that the resolution does not address the fundamentals of the humanitarian crisis prevailing in the Gaza Strip. In supporting the resolution, Mozambique wants to associate itself with the collective efforts aimed at ensuring the protection of civilians, especially children, in full compliance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law. An immediate, durable and sustained cessation of hostilities and a return to constructive dialogue remain the best immediate alternative to the situation in Gaza.

Mozambique reiterates its national position that Israel and Palestine can resolve their differences only through peace and dialogue. It is our strong conviction that the brotherly peoples of Israel and Palestine deserve to and can live side by side in security and peaceful coexistence, in strict respect for the decisions and resolutions of the Security Council.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): We thank Malta for its efforts and continued engagement with all the Security Council members to arrive at this point.

No one needs reminding that dealing with issues of peace and security, ensuring the protection of civilians and supporting peace efforts are the *raison d'être* of the Security Council. And when civilians are harmed anywhere in the world, the Council cannot stay idle. Its inability over the past six weeks to find common ground on this issue, speak with one voice in condemning the abhorrent terrorist acts and deliver — while the humanitarian situation in Gaza has gone from bad to worse — has been particularly distressing.

The world has been watching, waiting and hoping. Needless to say, therefore, we welcome today's adoption of the resolution (resolution 2712 (2023)) and its primary focus on international humanitarian law. We voted in favour of the resolution because the text, imperfect as it is, responds to critical objectives coherent with our principled position on the issue. It calls for the immediate release of the hostages — who should be released immediately and unconditionally. It provides for extended humanitarian pauses to ensure the protection of civilians, in particular children, in accordance with international humanitarian law; for the immediate and unhindered flow of the humanitarian aid to all those in need; and for the protection of United Nations and humanitarian personnel, who — let us not forget — have paid a heavy undue price. It is a strong message of hope and solidarity with those suffering. We nonetheless regret that the text fails to issue a clear, strong and straightforward condemnation of Hamas and its terrorist acts.

We need to face the truth. The death toll among Palestinian civilians, including children and women, is unbearable and unjustified. That death toll spiral must stop, since civilians are paying for nothing. Civilians do not deserve to suffer. They do not deserve to die. They need to be protected always. But let us not forget or lose sight of the fact that Hamas is directly responsible for the situation. They are responsible for the choices they deliberately made to invest in tunnels, weapons

and terror instead of working for the good of the people they pretend to represent. They have and continue to use civilians as human shields, which has always been a preferred method of warfare by terrorist organizations. But despite that, for the sake of children and other innocent civilians and their safety, in the name of life and the future, and bound by the unwavering commitment to respect international law and the protection of civilians, we voted in favour of the resolution because human life should be placed above everything else. We sincerely hope that this moment will mark a turning point to start projecting convincingly a Gaza without Hamas and without terror, war and violence, but with people — normal people — who can project their future in freedom and dignity.

Mr. Moretti (Brazil): The adoption of a Security Council resolution on the horrific humanitarian and hostage crisis unfolding in Gaza and Israel (resolution 2712 (2023)) is certainly to be welcomed. It was long overdue. A response by this body commensurate with the gravity of the situation was urgent since day one — that is, more than five weeks ago. It was urgent not only to prevent further violence against civilians and the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure, but also to restore some of the Council's credibility. It has been a long, painful process, as we all know. I thank the delegation of Malta and others, especially for their flexibility, for helping us to conclude what we hope is only a first step in the Council's deliberations on this matter.

Before the adoption of the text today, more comprehensive and timely resolutions had been attempted, including one submitted by Brazil (S/2023/773). Successive vetoes, the spectre of pocket vetoes, or the lack of a real negotiating process prevented them. As the Council repeatedly failed, the General Assembly acted on 27 October. Its resolution (resolution ES-10/21) called for the protection of civilians, respect for international humanitarian law in Gaza and an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities. Such measures have been and continue to be supported by many Member States, including Brazil. We echo the Secretary-General's call for a humanitarian ceasefire. Unfortunately, the resolution we have just adopted falls short of those bold but necessary steps. We do hope that if truly and urgently implemented, today's decision will at least mitigate the dreadful situation we have before us.

More than 11,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip. The number of dead children is shamefully appalling. A total of 1.5 million Palestinians have been forcibly displaced in a mere month. Hospitals and schools have been destroyed, damaged or rendered useless. Al Shifa Hospital was raided today, putting hundreds of sick and wounded in extreme danger. Hundreds of thousands in Gaza lack or do not have adequate provision of water, electricity, medical supplies or shelter. Hundreds of foreigners continue to be prevented from leaving the region. The number of humanitarian workers killed has risen to more than 100, the highest in any conflict in the history of the United Nations. More than 200 hostages of several nationalities have not been released, and humanitarian access to them continues to be denied.

All those violations of international humanitarian law must stop now. All civilians, Palestinians and Israelis alike, have been paying the price of decades of systematic denial of the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. The establishment of a viable Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel, within secure, mutually accepted and internationally recognized borders, is the only possible solution. A lasting peace must be the ultimate goal for all. Brazil hopes that the Council will truly and functionally remain seized of this matter. Our voice will be strong and fearless in insisting on that.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation abstained in the voting on the resolution submitted by Malta (resolution 2712 (2023)). We could not fail to respond to the calls, including from countries in the region, for the Security Council to adopt at least some kind of humanitarian product. That is the only reason why we chose to disregard the many shortcomings of the text, chief among which is its lack of a call for an immediate ceasefire. That was and remains the top imperative. Any humanitarian action requires an immediate cessation of hostilities. Under shelling, it is impossible to clear rubble, evacuate people or bring in much-needed fuel — without which Gaza's hospitals will soon run out of electricity. Moreover, in the very near future — that is, on 16 November, according to the estimate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) — the residents of the enclave will find themselves without any ability to communicate, with no Internet and completely isolated from the outside world. We will have no idea what is going on there. The Gaza Strip will be plunged

into complete darkness and chaos, and coordination between emergency services will be disrupted. At this very moment, while delegations in the Security Council are honing their eloquence, the Israeli army is storming the Al Shifa Hospital and bombing UNRWA schools. We are hearing worrisome reports of medical personnel being shot and warehouses storing medical equipment and medicines destroyed.

I want to emphasize once again that humanitarian pauses are not and cannot be a replacement for a ceasefire or even a truce. This is only a brief pause, after which the hostilities will be resumed with renewed vigour. In other words, the people who will be successfully evacuated will again find themselves being bombed, the destruction of civilian infrastructure will continue and there will be ever more victims. We would like to draw the Council's attention to the fact that just today, the Permanent Mission of the Observer State of Palestine circulated a letter to the Security Council demanding an immediate ceasefire.

From the very beginning of the current escalation in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict zone, the United States delegation has sabotaged any attempt to develop a balanced and unpoliticized document aimed at adopting realistic and urgent measures to de-escalate the situation. Our American colleagues in the Council justified the collective punishment and destruction of Palestinians — especially the civilian population — by using the pretexts of combating terrorism and of Israel's right to self-defence, effectively paralysing the work of the main United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. Washington has consistently rejected draft resolutions demanding a humanitarian ceasefire. My American colleague has just expressed outrage that the Council has been unable to condemn the Hamas attack on 7 October and criticized those who prevented such a condemnation. I would simply like to remind her of the sequence of events, because it was the United States on 18 October that vetoed the draft resolution submitted by Brazil (S/2023/773), which did condemn that act. While Russia and the United Kingdom abstained in the voting at the time, the rest voted in favour. The United States therefore has only itself to blame in that regard.

We regret that under pressure from Washington, the language of the resolution has been watered down. The Council has not even demanded that the parties introduce humanitarian pauses, it has merely called for them, which is a mockery of the Council's prerogatives.

It is simply a disgrace that with a uniquely powerful set of tools at its disposal, including Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council was barely able to squeeze out a call as weak as this. As the saying goes, the mountain laboured and brought forth a mouse. For many weeks now, all the United Nations humanitarian agencies, and the Secretary-General himself, have been calling unanimously for a humanitarian ceasefire. That is why we proposed a corresponding amendment to today's resolution and were deeply disappointed that it was not adopted. There are some here who are not worried about whether the Council's response is effective. The main thing for them is to demonstrate that the Council took some sort of humanitarian action.

We have very serious concerns that the provisions of the resolution will not be implemented on the ground. Who will agree to the humanitarian pauses? Who will monitor and verify them, and what will be the consequences of non-compliance? The resolution we have adopted will therefore not help to deal with the humanitarian crisis in which the Gaza Strip and its population find themselves. We hope that at our next meeting on the Middle East peace process the Secretary-General will report on the implementation of the resolution and present the Council with options for establishing a mechanism for the international monitoring of the process as soon as possible. It is essential that the Council decide on the next steps, such as the observers to be sent to the conflict zone and the United Nations contingents to be involved. We will be carefully monitoring the situation and will not allow the issue to be swept under the rug.

Our top priority remains the adoption of a strong, fully fledged Council product that sends an unequivocal appeal for an immediate ceasefire. We hope that work in that regard will begin as soon as possible.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): The United Arab Emirates welcomes the Council's adoption of resolution 2712 (2023) today — its first on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 2016. It is crucial that the Council has come together around the urgent need to protect civilians, especially children. We recognize that the vote and its outcome were possible only after difficult negotiations and compromises made on all sides. As the Arab member of the Council, we want to again recognize Malta's leadership, but also the commitment by each and every Council member to the product. Over the past week, I have seen all of us work together across our

geographical divides in a way that made this moment possible, for which I thank my colleagues. I believe lives will be saved because of our work.

However, I want to emphasize that today's resolution is only the beginning of our response to the war and to the crisis. Too much time has passed, too many people have been killed and too much destruction has been wrought. It is worth noting here that in places where Hamas is not operating, Palestinians are nonetheless losing their lives on land internationally recognized as part of their future State. During this period — the past 40 days — it has gone largely underreported that almost 200 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank as a result of settler violence and raids. That must stop, and Israel must hold those who are committing those attacks fully accountable.

For the United Arab Emirates, the resolution will enable our humanitarian efforts on the ground — for example our undertaking to receive 1,000 Palestinian children and their families for medical treatment in the United Arab Emirates. That work has already begun, and we hope to receive the first group within the coming week. It will also be vital to our establishment of an emergency field hospital in the Gaza Strip. We urge all Member States, as well as the United Nations and humanitarian organizations, to utilize the resolution in their efforts to scale up assistance, and to come back to the Council if they need additional support. It is vital to ensure that the Council now lives up to its responsibilities, including for seeing that the resolution is implemented in full.

International law, especially the rules of war, binds all the parties to this conflict. There can be no equivocation on that point. Israel must cease its attacks on civilians and civilian objects. It must uphold the special protections afforded by international law to hospitals and schools, and it must ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access. In that context, we reiterate our condemnation of Israel's raid on Al Shifa Hospital in the past 24 hours and other attacks on hospitals. We stress that it is precisely that type of military action that today's resolution rejects. Hospitals are sacrosanct spaces that must be protected. We have all seen countless unbearable messages of despair from medical workers in those hospitals who have stayed and are pleading for their patients to be protected.

If the parties violate the resolution, we expect and will work to ensure that the Security Council will step in to support its implementation. But looking

ahead and beyond working for a more permanent ceasefire, the Security Council — collectively and individually — must prioritize resolving the conflict.

Over the past decade, there have been increasingly vocal warnings and signs that the two-State solution is on its deathbed. What emerges from the ruins of Gaza may be our last chance to save it. However, it will need all of us to continue working together, like we have done here today, to resurrect it. The fate of peace and security in our region is a shared responsibility and not the burden of a few.

For Israel, for the Palestinians, the brutal logic that the occupation has forced on its victims and its perpetrators over the long history of the conflict has really brought us to this desperate point of crisis. The fact is Israel does have an absolute right to security and peace, free from the attacks that we saw on 7 October, but so does a future Palestine. Israel's security — genuine and lasting — will remain elusive if it is built on the continued denial of the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination. Any policy that seeks to obscure that fact is doomed to failure.

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

Forty days after the outbreak of the new round of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Security Council adopted its first resolution (resolution 2712 (2023)), focusing on humanitarian concerns and highlighting the protection of children. Malta, the United Arab Emirates and other members have done a great deal of work in that regard, which China appreciates.

China has always supported all efforts aimed at promoting a ceasefire and an end to the fighting and restoring peace. We welcome any initiative conducive to the protection of civilians and the easing of the humanitarian crisis. Proceeding from that position, we supported resolution ES-10/21, submitted by the Group of Arab States, to the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly. We supported the draft resolutions submitted in the Security Council not long ago by Russia (draft resolution S/2023/795) and Brazil (draft resolution S/2023/773). And we just voted in favour of resolution 2712 (2023), submitted by Malta.

At the same time, it should be noted that the Council should have adopted a more comprehensive and robust resolution much earlier. For reasons known to all, especially the repeated and deliberate obstruction of a permanent member of the Council, the current

resolution can serve only as a first step based on a minimum of consensus. Despite that, the resolution is still a positive first step towards a ceasefire and a minimum request to save lives, which helps to avert a greater humanitarian crisis and catastrophe.

We look forward to the immediate realization of sustained humanitarian pauses, as called for in the resolution, to ensure a sufficient number of days of the cessation of hostilities to allow United Nations humanitarian agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and others to carry out full-scale humanitarian operations to urgently search for and rescue missing children, to transfer and treat the seriously ill and seriously injured, and to rehabilitate critical infrastructure.

We express our grave concern and strong opposition to the clear violations of international humanitarian law taking place in Gaza. Over the past dozens of hours, Al Shifa hospital in Gaza has been under siege; operating rooms and wards have been bombarded; and premature babies have stopped breathing when the electricity powering their incubators was cut off. Thousands of people remain besieged in the hospital. Their safety and well-being are a source of concern. We urge Israel to immediately cease its military operations against civilian facilities, including hospitals, and to restore basic supplies of water, electricity, fuel, among other provisions, as soon as possible.

We reiterate that we strongly oppose the forced displacement and forced transfer of Palestinian civilians. The resolution just adopted also makes a clear call on the issue related to hostages. We reiterate our call for the personal security and humanitarian needs of the hostages to be guaranteed and for support for active diplomatic efforts to facilitate the early release of the persons concerned.

The utility of Council resolutions lies in their implementation. It is crucial that the parties concerned implement the resolution's provisions to the letter.

In that regard, Russia's concerns about monitoring and follow-up are legitimate. The Security Council must give it serious consideration and establish necessary mechanisms to monitor and report on the resolution's implementation.

On 11 November, at the Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit, country leaders called on the Security Council to take a decisive and binding decision to end the fighting in Gaza and put an end to

the violations of international law. That represents the strong voice of the regional countries and the common expectations of the international community.

The Council must assume its responsibility, in conjunction with the developments on the ground and take further meaningful and responsible actions in a timely manner. We must continue to make an immediate ceasefire an overriding priority in order to prevent further casualties and destruction as the fighting rages on. We must make the opening of humanitarian space a priority, clearing the way for adequate humanitarian supplies to enter Gaza and creating the conditions necessary for humanitarian agencies to operate in a safe and unhindered manner. We must take the revitalization of the prospects for a two-State solution as the way forward and galvanize diplomatic efforts on all sides to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. China would like to emphasize that any arrangement on the future of Gaza must respect the will and the independent choices of the Palestinian people.

War tests our conscience and justice, while peace calls for reason and wisdom. On issues concerning war and peace and the long-term peace and security of the Middle East, the Security Council must stand on the side of justice and make choices that stand the test of history.

As President of the Security Council for this month, China will continue to work with all parties to strengthen coordination and build consensus and will urge the Security Council to shoulder its due responsibilities.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): This is just a short statement to say that, following the adoption of resolution 2712 (2023), I would like to thank all Council members for their constructive engagement with us throughout this entire process.

As I said in my statement before the vote, with this adoption today, the Security Council reaffirmed its responsibility and commitment to the safeguarding of civilian lives, especially those of children.

Malta will continue to actively engage on the situation in Israel and Gaza. What we have achieved today is an important first step. We will remain steadfast

in our commitment to the protection of civilians and the plight of children and armed conflict that continue to suffer in a disproportionate manner throughout our term on the Council as an elected member.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): Gaza bleeds. Death, devastation and destruction are everywhere. No one has been spared — not our children, not our women, not our elderly, not our civilians. Nothing has been spared — not our hospitals, not the United Nations shelters and schools, not our water plants, not our homes. All that should have been protected has become the primary target of this murderous campaign.

The Security Council should have called for a ceasefire a long time ago. It should have called for a ceasefire today. It should have heeded the calls of the United Nations, including the Secretary-General, and of every humanitarian organization on the planet for a humanitarian ceasefire. It should have been convinced that there is no military solution — especially not one that relies on the commission of atrocities — and it should have advanced political solutions.

The Council has finally acted today by adopting resolution 2712 (2023), a humanitarian resolution focused on children. If we are going to talk about the condemnations missing from the resolution, I have several points that I would like to remind the Council about. But before I do that, I just want to inform Council members that a few minutes ago the Foreign Ministry of the State of Israel rejected the resolution, saying that it will not implement it and that it will continue its course of action as it wishes. What is the Council going to do? It just adopted a resolution that Israel has said it will not implement.

I would like to remind the Council that the resolution did not condemn Israel's killing of 11,000 Palestinians, an overwhelming majority of whom are civilians, including 5,000 Palestinian children. It did not condemn Israel's indiscriminate attacks, its assault on hospitals and schools or its killing of United Nations staff, journalists, humanitarian personnel, doctors and rescue teams. It did not condemn the arbitrary imprisonment of thousands of Palestinian men, women and children or call for their immediate and unconditional release. The resolution did not condemn Israel's racist and disgusting propaganda methods, which have been

mocked all over the world and which are an insult to our intelligence. And yet those methods are still echoed by some politicians and media at the expense of their own credibility. Selective outrage breeds double standards and shows disregard for Palestinian lives, along with a refusal to recognize undeniable Israeli crimes.

Paragraph 1 of the resolution demands that all the parties comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians, especially children. We are fully committed to all of those rules, but do they apply to Israel? Is Israel heeding that demand? The Council has been calling on Israel for 40 days now to uphold the laws of war, yet it has chosen to continue breaching them openly and brazenly. In fact, I should say that the Council has been demanding that Israel respect international law for decades, yet Israel has dismissed the Council's calls and has continued its crimes against the Palestinian people. Has the Council ever held Israel accountable? Is it going to hold Israel accountable for rejecting the resolution it adopted this afternoon? Nothing justifies war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide — nothing. There is no honour in defending Israel when it is committing such crimes, only shame.

The bombings and incursions must stop now. Humanitarian aid must come in now — not drop by drop, just to pretend that the criminal siege has been lifted, but effectively bringing it to an end. Fuel must come in now. Thousands — indeed, millions — of lives hang in the balance. Our hospitals have been destroyed. Our people have no food or clean water. God sent them rain while the Council was still trying to get Israel to let fuel in to enable water pumps to function. The madness must be brought to an end. The moment the bombs stop, we will see results. Lives will be saved, humanitarian aid will be allowed in, thousands of people, including Palestinian children, will be rescued from under the rubble, and all those whom we could have saved days ago but who died alone, under the rubble, shouting for help that never came, will be buried. It will allow those held captive to be released. It will allow the civilian infrastructure needed for the survival of our people to be repaired. It will allow help to reach those who are wounded or sick.

The primary goal of international humanitarian law is to protect civilians, including those who are wounded or sick. In Gaza, those are the ones who are suffering most from the Israeli assault. What is happening will have long-term effects that no one should underestimate. It is

a failure of humanity of a terrifying magnitude. But for now there is an urgent need to save lives, stop the killing, end the forced displacement, allow humanitarian aid in, ensure humanitarian access and protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. Those should not be words in a resolution — they should be a reality that our people on the ground can witness immediately.

Finally, I have to address some points for those who are still trying to maintain untenable positions.

First, Israel is effectively saying that it can kill any and every Palestinian without ever being held responsible for their death, as they are either terrorists, terrorist sympathizers or human shields. Anyone allowing that logic to prevail is contributing to the killing.

Secondly, Israel considers all of us terrorists — all of our factions, our non-governmental organizations and our human rights defenders. It is acting accordingly.

Thirdly, Israel is not under a threat of destruction. It is destroying Palestine. It considers the Palestinian State a strategic threat. It is against Palestinian rule anywhere. All of its policies are designed to undermine any such rule.

Fourthly, the plan of the current Israeli Government has now been revealed in statements, leaked memorandums and op-eds. Let us stop pretending that we are not hearing what it is saying. Its plan is the continued dispossession, displacement and denial of the rights of the Palestinian people in order to complete the Nakba that started in 1948. Recognizing that is the first step towards defeating those plans, which not only deny our people their rights but also deny the region any chance of shared peace and security. What is happening in Gaza cannot be read in isolation from those aims.

We need a ceasefire now, with no further delay in international action for freedom, justice and peace. There is an alternative reality in which Palestinians are free and no Palestinian and no Israeli is killed. It is time for that to prevail. It is time for peace.

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

Mr. Miller (Israel): We have all been here before. Israel has made its stance very clear and therefore I will be brief.

The Council has just adopted a resolution that is, regrettably, detached from the reality on the ground

(resolution 2712 (2023)). Israel commends the Council for calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the 239 hostages, yet sadly, the resolution falls on deaf ears when it comes to Hamas and other terrorist organizations. On 7 October, savage Hamas terrorists launched a barbaric invasion into Israel, murdering, raping and brutalizing innocent civilians. Nearly six weeks have passed. The Council has convened on the matter almost 10 times and still has not succeeded in condemning Hamas's 7 October massacre.

The resolution focuses solely on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, yet makes no mention of what led up to that moment. The resolution makes it seem as though what we are witnessing in Gaza happened of its own accord. Following its reprehensible pogrom, Hamas has made it abundantly clear that, if given the chance, it will commit such atrocities again and again. It has shown the world that its genocidal rhetoric is not hyperbole, but an oath to annihilate Israel by any means.

Therefore, in order to defend our future, Israel had to take action. Israel's mission, as we have stated clearly before, is to eliminate Hamas's capabilities. It is not about retaliation or revenge for Hamas's violence. It is about Israel upholding its right to self-defence and ensuring that such horrors are never repeated. It is the fulfilment of our collective oath of "never again".

Israel is a law-abiding democracy strictly operating in accordance with international law. Hamas, on the other hand, is a jihadist organization hell-bent on Israel's destruction through the targeting of Israeli civilians and the use of Gazan civilians as human shields. Hamas is the antithesis of an organization that abides by international law. Hamas will pay no heed to the words of the Council. Despite the Council's intentions, Hamas does not care for its resolutions or its demands.

Israel has already implemented daily tactical humanitarian pauses, during which Gazan civilians can temporarily evacuate the active war zone. Hamas, on the other hand, murders Gazans as they try to evacuate. As of today, Israel has approved the entry of nearly 1,400 trucks with thousands of tons' worth of aid. Meanwhile, Hamas is hoarding food, fuel and medical supplies for its terror machine, leaving Gazan civilians with nothing.

For weeks, Israel has called for the temporary evacuation of all hospitals in northern Gaza in order to mitigate casualties and safeguard civilian lives, yet Hamas forcefully holds Gazan civilians in hospitals in order to continue using them as human shields. Hospitals have become fortified Hamas military bases. Yesterday, Israel supplied neonatal incubators and medical supplies to Al Shifa Hospital, and Israel is in close contact with international organizations regarding the construction of field hospitals. Just two days ago, Israel, at great risk to our soldiers' lives, hand-delivered 300 litres of fuel to Al Shifa Hospital. Hamas prevented hospital staff from accepting it.

There is no clearer proof that Israel is doing everything possible to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza, while Hamas is doing everything possible to make it worse.

Increasing the suffering of Gazan civilians is an integral part of Hamas's vicious strategy. Hamas's goal is to intensify and deteriorate the humanitarian situation in Gaza in order to broadcast Palestinian hardship to the world and, by doing so, exploit this very body to tie Israel's hands. Hamas is solely responsible for the humanitarian situation in Gaza and has weaponized it to prevent Israel from defending itself.

Israel does not need a resolution to remind us to adhere to international law. Israel always adheres to international law. Hamas, the party that refuses to accept the resolution, will not even bother reading it. Therefore, the resolution does nothing to contribute to the situation on the ground.

Bringing our hostages home is Israel's top priority. Seeing as Security Council resolutions hold no sway with terrorists, Israel will continue to do whatever it takes to accomplish that goal.

As much as we all wish to believe that this resolution and the Council could have an impact on genocidal terrorists, the situation on the ground proves otherwise. The reality is that Israel has no choice but to continue with our mission to obliterate Hamas's capabilities and bring our hostages home. Should Hamas's members choose to lay down their arms, turn themselves in and hand over the hostages unscathed, the war would end immediately. Sadly, that is not Hamas's modus operandi.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.