



General Assembly

Tenth Emergency Special session

40th plenary meeting
Friday, 27 October 2023, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

adjourned immediately following the conclusion of the debate.

Agenda item 5 (continued)

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

Draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25

Draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan on a point of order.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan): I take the floor with a crucial request that reflects the urgency of the situation that we are facing in the occupied Palestinian territories.

My country's proposal is centred on the submission of the critical draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, entitled "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations". We would like to be able to consider the draft resolution under agenda item 5 of the tenth emergency special session, which pertains to illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. In the light of the gravity of the situation, we are proposing a vital procedural step. We call for suspending the ongoing debate at 3 p.m., after which we intend to initiate immediate action on the draft resolution. Our intention is then to resume the debate immediately after the draft resolution's adoption, if it is adopted. It is essential to emphasize that in the event of its adoption, the tenth emergency session would be only temporarily

The President: The representative of Jordan has moved that the debate on agenda item 5 be suspended at 3 p.m. today for the Assembly to proceed to the consideration of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25 and that the debate be continued after the action on the draft resolution. It is my understanding that without setting a precedent, and given the urgency of the issue, if the Assembly were to decide to suspend the debate on the agenda item at 3 p.m. for the Assembly to proceed to the consideration of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25 and continue the debate after the action on the draft resolution, and if the Assembly were to adopt the draft resolution later today, that the tenth emergency special session would be temporarily adjourned following the conclusion of the debate on agenda item 5. I see no objection to the motion.

It was so decided (decision ES-10/204).

The President: Before proceeding further, I wish to address the question of the majority required for the adoption of the draft resolution.

In the light of Article 18, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, is there any objection to the Assembly taking action on draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25 with a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting?

I see no objection. A two-thirds majority of members present and voting is therefore required for the adoption of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, and a two-thirds

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majority of members present and voting is therefore also required for the adoption of any amendment to the draft resolution.

Mr. Pérez Ayestarán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

The member States of our Group of Friends have followed with great concern the most recent developments in the Middle East, in particular the shocking deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip, as well as in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. In that regard, at the outset, allow us to express our condolences to the families and loved ones of all the innocent civilians who have lost their lives over the past 20 days during the latest appalling spiral of violence, death and destruction. And as peace-loving nations that strictly abide by the norms of international law, we also condemn in the strongest terms all acts of violence and aggression directed against civilians. In that regard, and in the light of the continuing deterioration of the situation on the ground, including as a result of the constant bombing and air strikes, we stress the urgent need to protect civilians and prevent further loss of life, specifically by immediately halting the indiscriminate attacks on civilians, in addition to ensuring that humanitarian aid reaches the civilian population in need at this very difficult time. We underscore that international humanitarian law must be strictly respected and complied with.

We therefore urgently demand a ceasefire and an immediate end to all acts of violence and hostilities, particularly attacks directed against civilians, including women and children, and civilian objects and infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, shelters and food storage facilities. On the eve of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we call for full respect for all human rights, particularly the right to life and health. We also call for restraint, and in that regard we urge for an end to all forms of inflammatory rhetoric and dehumanizing language, which in no way contribute to the ongoing political and diplomatic efforts to defuse the situation on the ground but on the contrary only further inflame tensions and violence, while continuing to endanger the lives of thousands of innocent people.

In line with the special communiqué issued by our Group of Friends on 17 October, we would like to take this opportunity to renew our call on the responsible members of the international community, especially those who may have influence over the parties, and on the Security Council, to fulfil their duty to maintain international peace and security as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, to urge Israel to heed the calls of the Secretary-General and take the path of observance of international law, thereby ensuring full compliance with and adherence to, among other things, the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter, the Geneva Conventions, including their Additional Protocols, and other relevant provisions of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We call on Israel to immediately cease its ongoing military aggression and inhumane siege of the Gaza Strip in order to prevent an even greater catastrophe, as well as the total collapse of critical infrastructure. That would inevitably lead to additional civilian casualties, widespread hunger, disease, poverty and even greater human suffering and despair, thereby deepening the already dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza. We call on Israel to ensure rapid and unhindered access for the humanitarian assistance desperately needed on the ground, and for its distribution, including crucial life-saving supplies such as fuel, food, medicine and water. We call on it to allow the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to operate safely, effectively and without obstructions, alongside other humanitarian actors on the ground, and to cease attacks on United Nations and other humanitarian and medical personnel. And finally, we call on Israel to immediately abrogate its order for the civilian population to evacuate all areas in northern Gaza, as well as any other measure aimed at the forced transfer or mass displacement of the civilian population in Gaza.

Our Group of Friends regrets that the Security Council has been prevented from exercising its duties with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, despite the repeated and collective calls of the Group of Arab States and the international community in general for the Council to demand a comprehensive ceasefire, the protection of civilians and fairness and justice in its response to this grave situation. We trust, however, that the General Assembly will unequivocally fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter, including by adopting relevant measures aimed at redressing the current situation, particularly with regard to ensuring the protection of all civilians

and respect for other legal obligations, including those based on international humanitarian law. In that context, we want to express our support for draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, submitted by the delegation of Jordan in its capacity as Chair of the Arab Group, and to urge all responsible members of the international community to resolutely support its text.

We also want to take this opportunity to call once again for the release of all civilians, as well as Palestinian prisoners and detainees, including children, and for the adoption of urgent measures aimed at ensuring the safety and welfare of all civilians, on the one hand, and, on the other, the provision of international protection for the Palestinian civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, including on a basis of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his 2018 report to the General Assembly (A/73/346), as well as of the provisions of Security Council resolution 904 (1994).

In that context, we also express our grave concern about the escalating violence and attacks on the Palestinian civilian population in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. We demand a halt to the systematic violence, human rights violations, provocations and incitement, as well as to all settlement activities and annexation measures, and to all other breaches of the historic and illegal status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem. Those grave violations must end, and at this point we cannot overemphasize the importance of prioritizing the prevention of any further dangerous destabilization of the situation, including as part of efforts to prevent a spillover effect into the entire Middle East region.

In line with our principled and historic positions, we reaffirm our firm commitment to the cause of Palestine — a fellow member of our Group of Friends — in its just and legitimate struggle to achieve its inalienable rights, including those of self-determination, freedom, the return of Palestine refugees and justice. In that context, we emphasize, as never before, the importance of creating a credible political horizon for the realization of a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects, including for the plight of the Palestine refugees, in full accordance with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations. We stress the urgency of advancing our efforts in that regard that are aimed at fulfilling the overwhelming international consensus on a two-

State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. We stress that a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be achieved only by peaceful means. We therefore call for urgent efforts to address the root causes of this protracted and tragic conflict, ensure accountability and promote and support meaningful efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive solution.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our full commitment to preserving, promoting and defending the dominion and validity of the Charter of the United Nations, a historical treaty that constitutes a true act of faith in the best of humanity, and which despite coming under constant attack, among other things has continued to keep all of us bound to our promise to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and ensure respect for the dignity and worth of human beings. Let us act collectively, responsibly and without delay to uphold our solemn duties under the Charter.

Mr. Wallace (Jamaica): The attacks on Israeli civilians by Hamas on October 7 were abhorrent. They were acts of terror that must never be condoned. Ordinary Israeli citizens — men, women and children — were murdered, wounded, abducted or assaulted. More than 200 people, including citizens of other States and nationalities, were taken hostage. That is unacceptable. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and an end to the use of these terrorist tactics.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) notes that Israel's response to the attacks has been devastating to ordinary Palestinians in Gaza. More than 4,600 lives have been lost, more than 14,000 people wounded and approximately 1.4 million displaced. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is worsening daily, with women and children disproportionately affected. That unacceptable level of human suffering cannot go unabated. CARICOM therefore joins the call for an immediate cessation of hostilities by all parties and the opening of humanitarian corridors to facilitate unhindered access to the food, medical supplies, fuel, water and other humanitarian products and services desperately needed by the civilian population.

We commend the Secretary-General for his relentless efforts in coordinating the delivery of humanitarian assistance and supplies to those affected. We also commend the work of the United Nations staff and affiliated personnel who are working tirelessly to provide support to them. And we acknowledge the role

being played by the members of the United Nations that are actively deploying resources and facilitating access to amenities aimed at alleviating the suffering of the civilian population. CARICOM conveys its deepest condolences to the families of Israelis and Palestinians who have lost loved ones. We also empathize with the families of the United Nations staff members who were killed. CARICOM also extends its sympathies to those injured during this tragic conflict and prays for their speedy recovery.

CARICOM expresses its concern that, if the conflict is not immediately brought to an end, it could escalate into a wider regional conflict with significant implications for the stability and welfare not just of that region, but also of the broader international community, with devastating consequences, especially for vulnerable small island States such as those in CARICOM, which are already struggling to overcome multifaceted challenges.

CARICOM therefore calls on all stakeholders to take every necessary step to re-establish a pathway to peace and stability through dialogue and diplomacy and to reject any methodology that includes violence, war or terror. The ordinary people of the region — mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, sisters and brothers — all deserve to live in peace and harmony, free from the pernicious threats and constant fear of violence and terror. Let us once and for all acknowledge and accept the utter futility of war, violence and terror and recognize that dialogue and diplomacy constitute the only viable pathway to a lasting peace.

Allow me to conclude by reaffirming CARICOM's continued support for Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and the ongoing efforts of the United Nations towards a two-State solution, which is the best way to achieve comprehensive peace, security and tranquillity between Israel and Palestine. CARICOM urges the acceleration of those efforts to bring about an urgent, peaceful and lasting resolution to the conflict.

Mr. Al Rubkhi (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): I deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), namely, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, the State of Kuwait and my country, the Sultanate of Oman.

We are unfortunately meeting today in this emergency special session, as for days the Security Council has been unable to take a unified position with

regard to what is happening in the occupied Palestinian territories, specifically in the Gaza Strip, while the Israeli occupation forces have been carrying out aggression against innocent peaceful people. That is a cause of concern for us all and must be condemned by the international community for the siege, starvation, collective punishment, cutting off water and electricity supplies and preventing access to the most basic necessities of life. The GCC countries condemn those acts in the Gaza Strip and call on the international community to stand firmly against them because they contravene international law and international humanitarian law. Those acts ignore the principles stipulated in the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which obliges Israel, as an occupying Power, to protect civilians in times of war.

The United Nations indicates that, to date, more than 6,500 Palestinian citizens have been martyred in the Gaza Strip, including 2,300 children, 1,200 women and a number of international staff working at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, not to mention the wounded and seriously injured, numbering more than 17,000 people.

What is happening today in the Gaza Strip is unacceptable, but that will not deter the Palestinian people from demanding their legitimate inalienable rights, foremost of which is their rights to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Palestinian people, like the rest of the peoples who suffered from occupation, have decided to end the occupation.

The truth is clear to us all, and nothing will change it. From the point of view of the international community and even according to Security Council resolutions, Palestine is occupied territory. We are therefore surprised and outraged at those who describe the occupation as self-defence. Self-defence does not occur in occupied and usurped territories.

The GCC countries reiterate what was stated by the Secretary-General that what is happening today in the Gaza Strip did not take place in a vacuum. The Palestinian people have been subjected to a stifling occupation for 56 years, during which they have witnessed their land being swallowed up by illegal settlements. Neither the Palestinian people nor other peace-loving peoples would accept the occupation of

the land of others by force. The Palestinian people will not accept an option that is not based on ending the occupation, liquidating colonialism and the Palestinian people exercising their legitimate inalienable rights, like any other peoples of the world.

I would like to emphasize the full confidence of the GCC countries in the Secretary-General and their support for his efforts to consolidate the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law and to call for establishing security and stability. We express our condolences to him over the passing of United Nations staff who became victims of the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip.

We GCC countries adhere to international law, international humanitarian law and the resolutions of international legitimacy adopted by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice. Our countries also support the Arab Peace Initiative, a just and comprehensive peace that lays the foundation for a new stage of peaceful coexistence and common security for all the peoples in the Middle East. That peace ends decades of killing, violence, persecution and systematic violations.

Based on that, the GCC countries call on all Member States to vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, submitted by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, work for an immediate ceasefire, ensure the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza, including food, water, fuel and medicine, without obstacles, end the Israeli blockade of Gaza, resume the supply of electricity and water and refrain from any plans to forcibly displace the civilian population.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank you, Mr. President, for resuming the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly. We align ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

We are all aware that the resumption of the tenth emergency special session comes at a critical time and in a crucial context. The deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, as a result of the Israeli attacks against innocent civilians, has become disastrous. It risks spiralling dangerously in a manner that would threaten the security of the region and the world.

In that context, the State of Qatar expresses its deep regret over the failure of the Security Council to carry out its responsibilities in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Council failed to adopt any outcome to establish an immediate ceasefire or a binding resolution regarding the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. It is therefore important that the General Assembly today assume its responsibility to maintain international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter and its resolution 377 (V), entitled “Uniting for peace”.

The State of Qatar reiterates its call on all parties for de-escalation leading to a complete ceasefire, the immediate release of all prisoners, particularly civilians, ensuring the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip and the opening of safe corridors, allowing the entry of humanitarian aid. The State of Qatar reiterates its condemnation of all forms of targeting civilians, especially women and children, and its unequivocal rejection of the full siege imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, on the Gaza Strip, which deprives 2.3 million people, half of whom are children, of their basic needs, including food, water, medicine and electricity, at a time when the Israeli bombing has killed more than 7,000 victims among Gaza residents, including more than 1,700 women and more than 3,000 children. The State of Qatar reiterates its categorical rejection of the policy of collective punishment and attempts to forcibly displace the brotherly Palestinian people of Gaza and force civilians to become displaced or take refuge in neighbouring countries, which is a flagrant violation of international law.

In the face of the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, and against the backdrop of intense humanitarian and diplomatic efforts, along with the mediation efforts that the State of Qatar is undertaking vis-à-vis the situation in the Gaza Strip, we also take pride in co-sponsoring and co-presenting draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, entitled “Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations”, on behalf of the Group of Arab States. The content of the Arab draft resolution represents the minimum obligations that Member States in such circumstances should undertake to address the grave repercussions of the situation in the Gaza Strip. It also addresses a critical vacuum in terms of the situation in Gaza, while the Security Council failed to assume its legal and ethical responsibilities.

It is important that the General Assembly, through this draft resolution, provide the necessary framework required for the international response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. Support for the draft resolution should also reflect the consensus and unity of the international community towards the just Palestinian question, and, through broad support for the draft resolution, we must send a message of hope to our brotherly Palestinian people that the General Assembly is united in order to restore respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We reiterate that the only guarantee for achieving sustainable peace in the region is to reach a fair and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and the two-State solution, which guarantees the establishment of an independent Palestinian State along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and for the Palestinian people to enjoy their inalienable rights.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar continues to contribute to the ongoing diplomatic efforts to find a way out that will stop the bloodshed of our Palestinian brothers and ensure a sustainable political solution, in accordance with the well-known terms of references, and steer the region away from spiralling into chaos and violence.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the tragic situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially after the failure of the repeated efforts to adopt a Security Council resolution in that regard for reasons that are known to all.

It would have been easier to deliver a standard statement warning of the grave repercussions of the current conflict, in which we condemn the unjust Israeli aggression against Gaza, in which we address the brutality of that aggression and its violation of international law and humanitarian values and in which we reiterate the call to protect the Palestinian people and ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to them.

It is difficult for us to have to repeat all of that in all the forums that consider the crisis, starting with the Cairo peace summit, at which the President of the Republic hosted a number of world leaders in an attempt to overcome this crisis, followed by the open debate in the Security Council on the Middle East a

couple of days ago (see S/PV.9451) and then bilateral meetings with all influential international parties that communicated with Egypt. We reiterate that the truth is clear and does not need repeated explanation or elaboration if we all applied one standard rather than double standards. It is one standard that is known to us all, namely, no to targeting civilians, no to terrorism, no to breaching international humanitarian law, no to bombing hospitals and medical centres, no to killing children, no to the siege and cutting off the necessities of life, no to forcible displacement and the liquidation of human rights and no to genocide. All human beings are equal.

We made the difficult choice of dedicating our efforts and our work to striving to come up with a clear position from the General Assembly regarding the violations and crimes witnessed in the Palestinian territories so that we would not be, as the Arab proverb goes, a mute devil, who is silent about the truth. At a time when, regrettably, many voices do not speak the truth, silence is no longer an option. Enough is enough. We can no longer bear what is happening to the people of Palestine. The required position is clear and direct. It is no more than reaffirming the most basic human values, the most basic principles of international law and the most basic political and diplomatic norms in situations of armed conflict. We therefore stress the following points.

First, it is obvious that when the situation explodes along with an escalation of tensions, the United Nations system should work on ensuring a ceasefire. That is not a bias towards one party over the other or support for terrorism, but rather in order to spare innocent blood, prevent further escalation and demonstrate that the United Nations can fulfil its role in safeguarding the most basic human right, namely, the right to life. That right has been forgotten by those who pay lip service to human rights. We have heard justifications from those who want this war to continue, making them directly complicit in the abuses that we are witnessing. Is a ceasefire really so difficult?

Secondly, the policies of besieging, starvation and denial of basic needs, such as food and medication, as well as water, have no place in the twenty-first century. They are reminiscent of the practices of the Middle Ages. The General Assembly must therefore send a clear, unequivocal message that those necessities must be delivered to the Gaza Strip without any conditions, since the denial of humanitarian assistance under

such circumstances is nothing but a death sentence for the people of Gaza. Humanitarian assistance, delivered within a robust, orderly mechanism under the supervision of the United Nations — is that really difficult?

Thirdly, any attempt to forcibly displace the Palestinian people within their territories or to neighbouring countries for the third time in their history, under the pretext of protecting them or under any other pretexts, must be confronted resolutely and categorically rejected. In that regard, we can only refer to what some politicians here in this very Hall said at a similar emergency special session, lamenting rights that will be lost, while they now show understanding for the forced displacement of Palestinians to the countries of the region. Why not? They are used to ignoring that great people and their question for decades while disregarding their rights and the rights of the peoples of the region until we reached the absolute bottom. Is saying no to forcible displacement so difficult?

Fourthly, the Palestinian leadership has repeatedly insisted on providing international protection for its people under occupation for decades, especially in the light of the repeated violations by Israeli armed settler militias. However, such calls have fallen on deaf ears. Before Member States, we can only call for such protection to be provided, hoping that will awaken the conscience of those who lament the loss of human rights of all people except for the rights of the Palestinian people. They ignore that and turn their backs on such rights.

Contrary to what the proponents of killing women and children, the siege and the imposition of displacement, as well as other supporters of the war, claim, namely, that it seeks to combat and eradicate terrorism, the reality is that failing to take effective and immediate measures to stop the war will inevitably fuel terrorism and drive generations of young people towards extremist ideologies.

The truth is also that not stopping this war now before it is too late will push the entire region into a destructive regional war, affecting the interests of countries that are stalling in calling for its end more than the interests of other countries. It is also a fact that the failure to emerge from this crisis with a clear vision to revive a serious peace process that addresses the root causes of the current crisis and leads to the two-State solution would be a grave mistake with long-

term repercussions. Future generations will hold us accountable for our inaction and short-sightedness.

Egypt, as the leading country in consolidating peace in the Middle East, will continue its tireless efforts to bring about a ceasefire, protect civilians and ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance. It will continue to mediate for the release of the hostages, detainees and prisoners and work to pave the way for the resumption and revival of the peace process, which is the only way to establish peace and stability in the Middle East.

Given everything I have said, I call on Member States to support draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, under consideration at our meeting today, and to vote in favour of it to achieve justice by applying a single standard aimed only at stopping the killing, maintaining international peace and security and protecting civilians. We hope that the position of Member States will represent the nucleus for achieving and retrieving peace in the Middle East.

Stop this absurdity. Stop this war immediately. Stand on the side of truth and justice. Vote in favour of the draft resolution. Save the peace. Is that difficult?

Ms. Schwalger (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes the convening of this General Assembly emergency special session. We regret that the Security Council has been unable to perform its responsibility to act on behalf of all Member States. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us all, as members of the General Assembly, to exercise our collective political responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations to address matters of international peace and security.

Even as this meeting convenes, the conflict in Israel and Palestine escalates, the humanitarian crisis worsens and civilian lives continue to be needlessly lost. It is intolerable to see civilians, many of whom are children or infants, continue to suffer disproportionately as innocent victims of this conflict.

As I said in the Security Council a few days ago (see S/PV.9451), New Zealand condemns absolutely Hamas's terrorist attacks on Israel. We are appalled by their brutality, their targeting of civilians and the taking of hostages. Those acts are clear violations of international law. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. We support Israel's right to defend itself, in full compliance with international law, including in respect of actions taken in Gaza. Ultimately, however, no military solution

will bring about a just and lasting peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

The protection of civilians and the delivery of humanitarian assistance are the most urgent priority. New Zealand joins calls for a humanitarian pause and humanitarian corridors to enable unhindered and sustained assistance and protection, in line with the humanitarian principles, to those who desperately need it.

We recognize the bravery of humanitarian workers, who are working tirelessly in extraordinarily difficult circumstances to provide such needed assistance. We are deeply saddened that so many have been killed in the line of duty since the despicable events of 7 October.

When New Zealand last served on the Security Council in 2015 and 2016, we championed resolution 2286 (2016), which demands greater protection for health care in armed conflict, including hospitals and medical personnel. Health-care facilities must never be used for military purposes or be the object of attack.

We are deeply concerned to see hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons. Their safety and security must be protected. We call for the establishment of designated safe areas that are strictly off limits as targets or for military use.

We expect Israel and Hamas to act in accordance with international humanitarian law, which imposes obligations on all parties engaged in armed conflict. The Palestinian people must not suffer for the atrocities of Hamas, even as Hamas exploits those same civilians as human shields.

Israel also has an obligation under international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, to provide basic needs for civilians in Gaza, including food, water, energy and shelter, and to facilitate humanitarian aid.

New Zealand urges all parties, including Israel and Egypt, to continue to facilitate access for the delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza. As the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator has observed, seeing more aid and supplies entering Gaza is another glimmer of hope for the millions of people in dire need of humanitarian aid. At the same time, they need more, much more.

For its part, New Zealand is supporting humanitarian appeals for populations in Gaza, the West Bank and

Israel. We stand ready to increase our support in the coming weeks. This is not a time for political posturing or for using this conflict to advance any cause except bringing peace and security to Israel, Gaza and the wider region. It is a time for de-escalation.

Finally, New Zealand remains committed to a two-State solution, which envisions an independent State of Palestine, living in peace and security alongside the State of Israel. A new political horizon is essential. We call on the international community to take urgent action to advance the Middle East peace process. Without it, the armed conflict may eventually cease, but there will be no winners: we will never be free of the violence, the loss of innocent lives, the antisemitism and the Islamophobia that has erupted in Israel, the occupied Palestinian territories and around the world since 7 October. As the Secretary-General said, we cannot lose sight of the only realistic foundation for a true peace and stability: a two-State solution.

Mrs. Eat (Cambodia): It is my honour to address this meeting in the name of a country — Cambodia — that not so long ago was consumed by decades of wars, the killing fields, where those labelled as the oppressed and oppressors were devoured by the intense flame of hatred, vengeance and extremism, which fed the most heinous crimes against humanity.

My delegation mourns the loss of so many innocent human lives, including one Cambodian since 7 October until now, and also earlier, both in the State of Palestine and the State of Israel. The Palestine-Israel conflict is a very complex and delicate issue. Therefore, Cambodia wishes to take//make its own principled position in that regard instead of joining the statement made on behalf of any group.

Cambodia condemns all acts of terrorism and violence against innocent civilians, regardless of their race, culture or religion. We are deeply concerned by the escalation of violence and the continued suffering and loss of innocent human lives — women, children, babies and the elderly — on the lands of the present conflict.

Hatred and vengeance fuel another cycle of hatred and vengeance. A war cannot end a war and bring lasting peace and harmonious coexistence. My delegation feels the fire of anger and the pain and agony of all, and we can only appeal and hope for a sense of moderation to prevail. Now more than ever, it is of paramount importance to address the root causes of the Palestine–

Israel conflict to enable both the peoples of Israel and Palestine to coexist side by side in harmony.

Mr. Pieris (Sri Lanka), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Allow me to reiterate three points, which I raised during the recent open debate of the Security Council (see S/PV.9451).

First, it is heartbreaking to see the increasing number of civilian casualties and the pain that they endure. My delegation urges all parties to exercise the utmost restraint, abide by international humanitarian law and constructively engage in dialogue in order to de-escalate the worsening situation and achieve a ceasefire or a humanitarian pause. It is not easy, but we must make the utmost effort to avoid the widening of the war and fully appreciate the concerns and legitimate aspirations of all equally so as to end the cycle of violence.

Secondly, the lives and safety of civilians must be protected from harm in conflicts. My delegation urges the release of all civilians taken hostage. We call on all sides not to target civilians or civilian infrastructure and to allow unimpeded humanitarian access for the delivery of essential aid, such as food, water and medicines, to those in need, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Thirdly, we call on the international community to unite in a spirit of genuine solidarity and sincerity in order to foster a meaningful dialogue and negotiations leading to a just and lasting peace.

Please, stop finger pointing. Please, give peace a chance. Please, allow love for humankind to prevail for all the people on Earth, regardless of their race or faith. Please, empower the forces of moderation in order to allow the people of Israel and Palestine to live side by side in lasting peace, security and harmony.

Again, my delegation salutes the dedication and sacrifice of the United Nations staff and those of humanitarian agencies who brave formidable risks and danger to provide relief to the innocent civilians.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): I begin my statement today by expressing Liechtenstein's grave condolences to all those affected by the violence both in Israel and in Palestine since the attack by Hamas on Israel on 7 October. In the face of the ongoing escalation on the ground, we are concerned that, despite

concerted efforts, the Security Council has as yet been unable to discharge its primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security. For those grieving and suffering in Israel and Palestine today, but also for our public back home, its silence is incomprehensible. We welcome the leadership of Secretary-General Guterres and his personal engagement for the protection of civilians. But the political organs of our Organization must not remain silent in a situation where civilians have been victimized on a large scale and remain in a very precarious situation in Gaza. We therefore welcome the opportunity to meet in the format of an emergency special session today, including to consider the special report transmitted from the Council in the wake of the veto cast last week, as well as the one that we understand will be transmitted as the result of the further double veto. We encourage the President, as he has done before in meetings resulting from a use of the veto, to produce a summary of this meeting for transmission to the Security Council.

Liechtenstein condemns in the strongest possible terms the heinous terrorist attacks against Israel by Hamas and other groups and the massive violations of international humanitarian law that they have committed, including mass killings, torture, abduction, hostage-taking and the threat of the killing of hostages. We join the call for the unconditional and immediate release of all hostages and express our gratitude to those who contributed to the release of the first hostages. The firing of rockets from Gaza on civilian targets and the deliberate targeting of civilians are grave violations of international humanitarian law, amounting to war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity. Liechtenstein deplores the massive loss of life. We affirm Israel's right to defend itself and to protect its population, in accordance with international law.

We also underline the need for full respect for international humanitarian law in this massive crisis of the protection of civilians, in particular the principles of distinction and proportionality. Any collective response to Hamas's atrocity crimes must place the protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law at its centre. The disturbing number of civilian casualties, many of them children, in Gaza is unacceptable.

The ongoing investigation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) into the situation in the State of Palestine has to be an important part of our discussion. Where international humanitarian law is violated on

a large scale, accountability is essential. For almost a decade, the Court has had jurisdiction over international crimes committed on the territory of the State of Palestine, as well as those committed by Palestine nationals. That investigation has gained an ever-increased sense of urgency since 7 October, particularly given the need for clarity concerning some of the most disturbing incidents, such as the explosion at the Al Ahli Hospital, which resulted in massive casualties, the exact number of which yet remains to be determined. We expect concrete action and pronouncements from the ICC Prosecutor.

The people of Israel and of Palestine have been brought to this point by a cycle of military retaliation and revenge. Civilians have been paying the price in hurt, grief and loss for the failed policies of those in power and effective control. Their suffering has reached unprecedented heights in the past weeks, and it must be stopped as soon as possible. A diplomatic solution will be the only way to achieve that goal. We must begin by addressing the immediate humanitarian needs of Palestinians and work for the unconditional release of all hostages. We support the calls for humanitarian pauses that allow for full, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance. Yesterday the Government of Liechtenstein decided to contribute SwF100,000 to the International Committee of the Red Cross to support its activities to protect civilians and to provide humanitarian assistance.

In response to the horrors of the Second World War, the Charter of the United Nations included in its purposes:

“To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.”

Liechtenstein reaffirms the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, which is the only way to ensure the rights, and to deliver on the aspiration, of the Palestinian people — a vision of two States living side by side in peace and security, within internationally recognized borders. We commit again to a peace guided by the purposes of the Organization.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): We meet at a perilous moment — a perilous moment for Israelis and Palestinians first and foremost, but also for the region and the world. The death,

destruction and desperation playing out before our eyes are enough to make one lose faith in humankind.

How could Hamas carry out such barbaric acts of terror? How could Hamas gun down civilians, burn families alive and execute children, and do so with glee? How could Hamas take more than 200 people hostage — innocent civilians, including a 9-month-old baby and his 4-year-old brother? How could Hamas justify taking a 23-year-old American citizen, Hersh Goldberg-Polin, whose parents I met this week?

The answer is: they cannot. There is no justification for terror, none whatsoever. We all know that. We must condemn Hamas's acts of terror. Hamas's goals are single-minded, and they are sickening. They are determined to destroy Israel and kill Jews. Let us be clear: Hamas has never cared about the genuine needs, concerns or safety of the people whom it claims to represent. Hamas has no respect for the rule of law or human life. To them, Palestinian civilians are expendable. To them, Palestinian civilians are human shields. It really is despicable, and it is cowardly.

The lives of innocent Palestinians must be protected. The lives of United Nations personnel, humanitarian workers and journalists must be protected. We mourn the loss of every single innocent life in this crisis — every single one. We must not look away.

We must not become numb to the pain and the suffering of people such as Wael Al-Dahdouh — a Palestinian journalist, whose wife, son, daughter and grandson were killed in Gaza this week. My heart breaks for Wael. My heart breaks for all — all the innocent civilians who are caught up in this crisis.

The United States has made clear in both public and private conversations that, as Israel exercises its right — and indeed, its responsibility — to defend its people against a terrorist group, it must do so in line with the rules of war. There are no law-free zones in war. International humanitarian law must be respected throughout Gaza and the region by all actors.

President Biden and Secretary Blinken, in partnership with the United Nations and regional actors, are engaged in direct diplomacy to help to protect the lives of all civilians and to ensure that humanitarian assistance can flow into Gaza. As humanitarian organizations have stressed, the needs of Palestinians in Gaza are dire. Many families lack access to food, clean water and other essentials. Hospitals need fuel to

keep patients alive. This is a humanitarian emergency, and we are doing everything in our power to save lives.

The United States is the single-largest donor to the Palestinian people, having contributed more than \$1 billion to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East since 2021. Last week, President Biden announced an additional \$100 million in humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank.

While in the region, President Biden also secured an agreement with Israel, Egypt and the United Nations that allowed aid to start reaching Gaza. But much more needs to be done. Much more is needed, and it is needed urgently.

We continue to encourage Israel, Egypt and all partners to take concrete steps to alleviate the humanitarian crisis, just as we continue to urge and encourage all Member States, particularly those with the greatest capacity to give, to help us to meet the United Nations appeal for the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Time is of the essence, and lives hang in the balance. As Member States will notice, two key words are missing in draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, before us. The first is Hamas. It is outrageous that this draft resolution fails to name the perpetrators of the 7 October terrorist attacks: Hamas. Hamas. It is outrageous.

Another key word missing in this draft resolution is hostage. This draft resolution makes no mention of the innocent people, including citizens of many Member States represented in this Hall here today who have citizens who are being held hostage by Hamas and other terrorist groups. Those are omissions of evil, and they give cover to, and they empower, Hamas's brutality. No Member State — no Member State — should allow that to happen. Member States should not let it stand.

That is why we have co-sponsored draft amendment A/ES-10/L.26, put forward by Canada, which corrects those glaring omissions. The draft amendment is straightforward, and it is unobjectionable. It calls on us to condemn Hamas's terrorist attacks on 7 October, and it calls for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages. It should be easy. That is the bare minimum that we would hope to see in this draft resolution. We urge all Member States to vote in favour on the draft amendment. The General Assembly must send a clear message to the world that we stand against all acts of

terror and that we stand with all those who are being held hostage.

We believe that the Security Council — a body charged with maintaining international peace and security — must send that same message. That is why this week we put forward a Security Council draft resolution that garnered the support of the majority of the Council (draft resolution S/2023/792). In drafting that text, we solicited input from all Council members, including Russia and China. The product of our consultations was a balanced and strong draft resolution, which, among other things, condemned Hamas's terrorist attacks, called for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages, stressed the urgency of addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, including through humanitarian pauses, and made clear that we must keep the hope of a two-State solution alive.

Again, it was a strong and balanced text. But, unfortunately, Russia and China decided to veto the draft resolution. While the United States worked to forge consensus around a balanced product, Russia has put forward bad-faith, one-sided draft resolutions without any consultations whatsoever (draft resolutions S/2023/772 and S/2023/795). One-sided resolutions, whether they are put forward in the Security Council or the General Assembly, will not help to advance peace — not when they ignore the facts on the ground. One-sided resolutions are purely rhetorical documents that seek to divide us at a time when we should all be coming together, and we must not cling to long-standing lines of division.

As President Biden said yesterday, there is no going back to the status quo as it stood on 6 October. We must not go back to the status quo where Hamas terrorizes Israel and uses Palestinian civilians as human shields. And we must not go back to a status quo where extremist settlers can attack and terrorize Palestinians in the West Bank. The status quo is untenable, and it is unacceptable.

That means that, when this crisis is over, there has to be a vision of what comes next. In our view, that vision must be centred around a two-State solution. Getting there will require concerted efforts by all of us — Israelis, Palestinians, regional partners and global leaders — to put us on a path for peace to integrate Israel with the region, while insisting that the aspirations of the Palestinian people be part of a more hopeful future.

We deeply regret that the draft resolution now under consideration is detrimental to that vision. But, while that draft resolution is deeply flawed and does not meet this moment, the United States will continue to work with all Member States to chart a future where Israelis and Palestinians have equal measures of security, freedom, justice, opportunity and dignity and a future where Palestinians realize their legitimate right to self-determination and a State of their own.

Mr. Mythen (Ireland): At the outset, allow me to thank the President for convening this crucial debate under the resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly. I also want to express my thanks to the Secretary-General and commend his leadership and personal commitment to the protection of civilians, access of vital humanitarian aid to Gaza and the resolution of the conflict.

Ireland unreservedly condemns the heinous and barbaric acts by Hamas on 7 October. The deliberate taking of hostages, including women, children and the elderly, is simply unconscionable. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

In the face of such appalling attacks, Israel has the right to defend itself but must comply with international law, in particular international humanitarian law. We stress the applicability of international humanitarian law to all armed conflict. That includes the prohibition on the targeting of civilians, the prohibitions on indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, the prohibition on collective punishment and the prohibitions on the taking of hostages and the use of human shields. Those are obligations that bind all parties to armed conflict: State and non-State actors alike.

Earlier this week, we heard yet another deeply concerning briefing from Special Coordinator Wennesland on the situation on the ground (see S/PV.9451). We are also highly troubled about the impact of recent events on regional stability, and we call on all regional and international actors to act responsibly.

We are gravely concerned about the situation in Gaza and the particular impact of the conflict on children. We renew our call on Israel to end the blockade of Gaza and to allow meaningful humanitarian access, especially of fuel, to enable hospitals and relief organizations to function. Civilians in Gaza must have access to basic necessities: water, medicine, food and fuel. There must be rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for the benefit of civilians in the Gaza Strip.

Ireland again echoes the Secretary-General's call for a humanitarian ceasefire or a humanitarian pause to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the population can be comprehensively met.

We offer our deepest condolences to the families of the staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) who lost their lives during this conflict. We commend UNRWA and all other United Nations and humanitarian personnel on the ground for their selfless work in support of the people of Gaza and across the Middle East.

In response to the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe now unfolding in the Gaza Strip, Ireland announced an immediate package of €13 million last week — €10 million for UNRWA and €3 million for the Palestine Humanitarian Fund of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. We urge other partners to also step up and support that vital work. We are also highly concerned at the serious increase in violence in the West Bank, including the further forced displacement of Palestinian communities.

A comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East may seem further away than ever. However, we must all work towards that end. Lasting peace can be based only on an enduring commitment to mutual recognition, freedom from violence, incitement and terror and the two-State solution. We reaffirm our support for those principles here today.

Ireland's position on how to achieve that is long-standing and based on respect for international law and the agreed international parameters. The two-State solution, which ends the occupation and meets Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, based on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, offers the only prospect — the only prospect — for sustainable peace.

Ireland has consistently opposed all uses of the veto in the Security Council, and we will continue to do so. We welcome these General Assembly debates as a means of calling the permanent members to account when they prevent the Council from taking action in defence of international peace and security.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): Singapore welcomes the convening of this emergency special session of the General Assembly. We are disappointed that the

Security Council, which has met on several occasions to discuss this issue, was not able to agree on a prompt and united response.

At the outset, I wish to express Singapore's utmost support for the efforts of the Secretary-General to sustain the flow of humanitarian assistance to the civilians affected by this terrible tragedy in Gaza. We commend the Secretary-General for his leadership role in facilitating the flow of humanitarian assistance, and we recognize the important contributions made by United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations on the ground. We support all efforts to defuse tensions in order to avoid an escalation of the conflict.

Respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law has always been a fundamental guiding principle of Singapore's foreign policy. The United Nations Charter and international law provide the foundation for international peace and security.

On 7 October, Hamas carried out a major coordinated terrorist attack on Israel, deliberately targeting civilians, murdering and kidnapping them and perpetrating abhorrent acts of terror. We mourn the loss and suffering of so many innocent civilians, including children and the elderly. That attack cannot be condoned or justified by any rationale. We condemn that terrorist attack in the strongest possible terms. We also call for the immediate and safe release of all hostages taken by Hamas.

In that regard, it is worth recalling that, just in June this year, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 77/298). That calls for the international community to reiterate its strong and unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes.

Under international law, Israel has the legitimate right to defend its citizens and its territory. However, Israel also has an obligation to comply with international humanitarian law. All parties must abide by international humanitarian law and do their utmost to protect the safety and security of civilians. We welcome all efforts to establish and uphold safe zones and routes that will keep civilians out of harm's way and allow for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Singapore is deeply saddened by the dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza strip and the loss of so many civilian lives. That is a massive humanitarian

crisis. We urge all parties involved to allow the rapid, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid and essential services to the civilian population in the Gaza Strip. The Singapore Government has made a financial contribution to support humanitarian relief operations through the Singapore Red Cross. Many Singaporeans have also made their own contribution to the relief operations, and it is our hope that their contributions will reach those in need quickly.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a long-standing one, and it must be resolved in accordance with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. That is the only way to stop the repeated cycles of violence. Singapore's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been consistent. We continue to hold the view that the only viable path to a durable, just and comprehensive solution is a negotiated two-State solution, consistent with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We support the right of the Palestinian people to a homeland and Israel's right to live within secure borders. Both Palestinians and Israelis deserve to live in peace, security and dignity. We call on leaders from both sides to show leadership, exercise restraint and take the difficult, but necessary steps towards the vision of a two-State solution.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

Mr. Skoog (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 member States, as well as North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Andorra, Monaco and San Marino.

I want to thank the President for convening this emergency special session, as the situation is deeply alarming for so many people and risks spiralling out of control throughout the region. I want to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations and all its personnel for their relentless work on the ground, often at the risk of their lives, as well as the tireless efforts of our Secretary-General.

We regret that the use of vetoes has prevented the Security Council's efforts from addressing the situation and from fulfilling its mandate and responsibility. This dramatic conflict and humanitarian situation would have required a united, timely and strong message from the Council, which the latter failed to deliver. That is deeply regrettable. We know that efforts are

still under way to have an outcome at the Council, and we encourage Council members to find that common position soon.

The EU's position is well known. The EU reiterates its condemnation of Hamas in the strongest possible terms for its brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks across Israel. The use of civilians as human shields by Hamas is a particularly deplorable atrocity.

The EU strongly emphasizes Israel's right to defend itself, in line with international law and international humanitarian law. We reiterate our call on Hamas to immediately release all hostages without any preconditions.

The EU reiterates the importance of ensuring the protection of all civilians at all times, in line with international humanitarian law. It deplores all loss of civilian life.

We express our gravest concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, and we call for continued, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and aid to reach those in need through all necessary measures, including humanitarian corridors and pauses for humanitarian needs. We will work closely with partners in the region to protect civilians, provide assistance and facilitate access to food, water, medical care, fuel and shelter, of course ensuring that such assistance is not abused by terrorist organizations.

We recall the need to avoid regional escalation and to engage with partners in that respect, including, of course, with the Palestinian Authority. The EU is ready to contribute to reviving a political process on the basis of the two-State solution, including through the Peace Day Effort, welcomes diplomatic peace and security initiatives and supports the holding of an international peace conference soon.

We stress the need to fight the dissemination of disinformation and illegal content and highlight the legal responsibility of platforms in that context.

We understand the rationale to adopt a draft resolution at the General Assembly in the absence of one at the Security Council. We engaged constructively and proposed amendments. The priorities and positions that I have outlined here, in addition to the points that we have made over the past weeks, will guide our approach to the draft resolution put forward (A/ES-10/L.25). The purpose of the United Nations is to overcome divisions.

Mr. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (see A/ES-10/PV.39), of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and of the Sultanate of Oman, on behalf of the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

At the outset, allow me to thank the President for the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, which is convening in the light of the tragic circumstances that the Palestinian people are facing as a result of a bloody and disproportionate military campaign by the Israeli occupying forces.

As a result of those critical and painful conditions, following the dangerous developments in the Gaza Strip, thousands of civilians, including children, women and the elderly, have been killed. Hospitals, schools, shelters and infrastructure are being bombed everywhere, not only creating a humanitarian catastrophe but also having serious consequences for the security of the region and the world.

My country has clearly condemned the targeting of civilians by any party and has called for the need for a ceasefire, an end to the bloodshed, the immediate lifting of the siege, the release of the hostages and the provision of humanitarian assistance and support to those affected. We also condemn attempts at forcible displacement and the policies of collective punishment against the people of Gaza, including the starvation of civilians as a weapon of war, as well as the prevention of access for, and the delivery of, humanitarian aid to civilians and depriving them of their life-saving basic needs. We reaffirm that our priority is to work for peace and call for compliance with international conventions and international law.

The current crisis is the result of the failure of the international community to end the occupation and implement the two-State solution. Silence in the face of illegitimate Israeli practices, whether over the past 70 years or even recently, is what has led the region to the current crisis. We reiterate our warning of the possibility of the conflict expanding in a manner that would threaten all the peoples of the region and international peace and security.

In the light of the siege, killings and displacement, as well as the failure of the international community to date to call for a ceasefire and allow the entry of

emergency humanitarian aid, we express our dismay at the double standards and selectivity in addressing the crisis. We also express our deep regret regarding such hesitation to support the right of the Palestinian people to enjoy a dignified life or to condemn the current human tragedy that they are facing.

Safeguarding international peace and security is at the core of the work of the Organization. Today we see the Organization failing to undertake its important role with all the delays in finding a solution that addresses this crisis amid the ongoing Israeli violations of international conventions, including international humanitarian law. All that undermines the confidence in the mechanisms of international legitimacy and the credibility of those who defend them. That will negatively affect our capability to safeguard international peace and security.

Achieving justice should not be done by viewing ongoing events from one perspective. I would therefore like to emphasize what the Secretary-General said, namely, that it is important to acknowledge that such attacks did not happen in a vacuum, as the Palestinian people had suffered from a suffocating occupation that had lasted for 56 years.

The time has come for the Organization to assume the responsibilities for which it was established and for the international community to take a firm and serious stance to stop the killing of defenceless civilians, lift the siege and ensure the prompt entry of humanitarian and relief aid, including food, medicine and water, in order to prevent an escalation of the humanitarian tragedy and avoid expanding the conflict, threatening international and regional security.

The Government of my country is making intense effort, in communication with sisterly and friendly countries, to find a practical and prompt solution that will stop the bloodshed and put an end to the escalation and the ongoing and worsening cycles of violence. We strive for achieving a better future for our region so that it enjoys peace, stability and development. We reiterate our demand to advance the peace process, in accordance with the Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, aimed at finding a just and comprehensive solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in a manner that would realize security, stability and prosperity for all.

In conclusion, we call on Member States to co-sponsor and support draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, submitted today, which seeks to serve the best interests of international peace and security.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): We have convened here today as we collectively grieve for the thousands of Israeli and Palestinian civilians who have lost their lives since 7 October. This is one of the darkest and most volatile periods that the Middle East has seen in recent years.

Hamas's heinous and terrorist crimes on 7 October, as well as the indiscriminate rocket fire on civilians in Israel, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms, will resonate for generations, manifested as trauma, anguish, anger and heartbreak. Many Israelis are still living the nightmare of knowing that their loved ones continue to suffer. Terror has no justification, and we must be clear in rejecting it. Hamas must immediately and unconditionally release all hostages.

Israel has the right to self-defence, in line with international humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction, necessity and proportionality. On the other hand, on the other side of Gaza's walls, it is not only hostages who are suffering; millions of Palestinian civilians are under siege, with extremely limited, if any, access to water, food, fuel, electricity, medicine and shelter.

In conformity with international law, all parties are obliged to ensure that civilians are protected. We must urgently and genuinely address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Malta continues to strongly call for the establishment of a humanitarian ceasefire or pauses and humanitarian corridors. People must be allowed to bury their dead. Hospitals need fuel and anaesthesia. Over 2 million people require sustenance. The sustained provision of life-saving services is paramount.

The protection of humanitarian facilities, such as hospitals and designated safe zones, and unimpeded access for humanitarian and United Nations personnel, including aid convoys, are also critical. We are devastated to learn that 35 humanitarians of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East lost their lives in Gaza. We commend the Agency for its heroic work over these past weeks. As diplomats, we urgently need to do our job to allow them the ability to keep doing theirs.

Malta welcomes the current efforts towards allowing humanitarian aid into Gaza through the Rafah crossing and commends all partners involved. However, we note that the current volume of aid is limited and needs to be adequately scaled up.

This crisis is also having a devastating impact on women and children. Ensuring that humanitarian supplies are gender responsive and that women are involved in the distribution is essential for meeting the needs of women and girls, who are at higher risk of gender-based violence and psychological trauma.

The conflict has reawakened tangible risks of regional fissures and increased further uncertainty in an already turbulent world. We must collectively unite to mitigate any risks or miscalculations, which may lead this conflict to spill over into the West Bank or into the broader Middle East region. We call for all parties to exercise restraint, de-escalate and respect the norms of international law.

In view of such urgent necessities and risks, together with the elected members of the Security Council, Malta is now closely working on a text that we hope can garner consensus and address the situation on the ground.

Palestinians have for far too long dreamt of a reality that embraces their legitimate aspirations, that is not choked by decades of occupation, violence and displacement — a reality that ensures the dignity of their children. Israelis too deserve to live in peace and security, without being held hostage by terror.

To that end, Malta remains committed to a lasting and sustainable peace in the Middle East — a peace that is based on a two-State solution along the pre-1967 borders, addressing the legitimate aspirations of both sides, with Jerusalem as the future capital of two States, living side by side in peace and security, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters.

We therefore urge all Member States to support draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, which is before us today. Peace is not optional and demands to be steered by a recognition of our common humanity.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I thank the President for convening this resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly in response to the request of the Arab and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) groups.

We are witnessing a human tragedy of epic proportions unfold in front of our eyes. Israel's campaign of bombardment and air strikes, which has now continued for 20 days, has killed 7,000 helpless Palestinians, half of them children, and wounded 17,000 others. Entire families and neighbourhoods have been wiped out. The Palestinians are being bombed indiscriminately and without mercy or compunction. Their essential lifelines — water, food, fuel — have been cut off. Over 1 million Palestinians are internally displaced in Gaza, and even those who are displaced cannot hide from the Israeli bombs that rain down on them. Forty per cent of Gaza City has been destroyed, and yet the Israeli onslaught continues. It has also spread, almost without note, to the West Bank.

Thirty-seven staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Palestine have tragically lost their lives, many with their families and their homes gone. Forty UNRWA buildings and warehouses have been damaged by Israeli air strikes. As noted by one United Nations official working in Gaza, the largest open-air prison in the world, it has today become the graveyard of a population trapped between war, siege and deprivation.

Pakistan strongly and unequivocally condemns the Israeli air strikes and the systematic and barbaric crimes against the Palestinians, particularly the attacks on schools, residential buildings and even hospitals, such as the Al Ahli Baptist Hospital, where hundreds of sick and injured civilians — men, women and children — were killed. Those Israeli attacks on civilians, civilian objects and infrastructure and the blockade of water, food and fuel, as well as the forced transfer of people from the occupied territory, are flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Indeed, what we are witnessing on our television screens and what the Palestinian people in Gaza are suffering may amount to a veritable genocide.

As our Secretary-General has warned, and as we can all perceive, the situation “is growing more dire by the hour”. The war “risks spiralling throughout the region”. In this moment, the Secretary-General said:

“it is vital to be clear on principles, starting with the fundamental principle of respecting and protecting civilians.” (S/PV.9451, p.2)

We are repelled by the crude and disrespectful Israeli response to the Secretary-General's circumspect and valid views. The General Assembly should collectively reject those insulting remarks and reaffirm our full confidence in the Secretary-General.

As human beings, we must be appalled at the magnitude of the suffering of the helpless Palestinian civilians, especially the children and women. I am sure that all of us are also appalled by the vicious and callous way in which the Palestinians are being slaughtered by cowardly aerial bombardment and long-range artillery. They are being crucified not by a militant organization, but by a Government that claims to be democratic. We must also be appalled by those who, by blocking the call for a ceasefire in the Security Council, have enabled the continuation of the Israeli slaughter of innocents.

It is the hope of the Arab and OIC countries that the General Assembly, acting under the Uniting for Peace process, will succeed where the Security Council has failed. The co-sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/ES-10/L.25 seek three objectives: first, an immediate and unconditional ceasefire; the Israeli killing machine must be stopped in Gaza and the West Bank; secondly, the flow of sufficient and sustained humanitarian assistance into Gaza to preserve lives and to prevent further suffering of innocent Palestinians; and, thirdly, to ensure that the Palestinian population of Gaza is not further displaced within or outside Gaza.

It is shocking that even those largely humanitarian objectives, set out in the most circumspect language, have been opposed by some in the General Assembly. Even the call for a ceasefire has faced objections. That position is unjustifiable legally and morally.

Furthermore, an amendment (A/ES-10/L.26) has been presented to insert condemnatory language that is one-sided, discriminatory and legally contentious. If equity is to be served, we would need to insert language to reflect the realities of this war in a balance and clear manner: first, to reaffirm the right of the Palestinian people under international law to struggle by all possible means, including armed struggle, to secure their freedom from foreign occupation and exercise their right to self-determination; and, secondly, to strongly and unequivocally condemn Israel's barbarous and indiscriminate bombing of Palestinian civilians and protected objects and sites, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. Without such balancing

language, we will vote resolutely against the one-sided Canadian draft amendment.

In the context of this war, consideration should also be given to some form of an accountability mechanism. The crimes that are being committed cannot go unpunished. We have several recent precedents of accountability mechanisms from which to choose.

Finally, for the future, we need to consider ways to prevent a recurrence of such slaughter. The OIC Foreign Ministers have proposed the deployment of a protection force to safeguard Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip, and perhaps also in the West Bank. We should give serious consideration to that.

It is only once this war is brought to an end and once the killing stops that we can turn to find a durable solution. The draft resolution that we have presented seeks to do just that — to stop the killing, to stop the war and to turn back to find a durable political solution. I urge all Member States to vote for our draft resolution. I urge them all to vote against the one-sided Canadian draft amendment.

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): Thailand welcomes the convening of this tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly today because of the urgency of the situation and the plight of all affected civilians.

Thailand is deeply concerned over the escalation of hostilities and violence in the Middle East, caused by the unprecedented developments in Israel and Gaza. The heightened hostilities and the scale and scope of violence have claimed thousands of innocent lives, with many more injured and displaced. Those include children, women, the elderly and the sick. The massive and escalating use of force has destroyed their livelihoods and communities. Thailand is profoundly shocked and deeply saddened by the attack on the Al Ahli Arab Hospital in the north of Gaza, resulting in loss of life of innocent civilians and casualties.

To alleviate the suffering of civilians, we oppose the withholding of access to basic necessities, such as water, food, electricity and fuel, as weapons of war. Such access should be restored. We also oppose the targeting of critical civilian infrastructure. That should cease.

Thailand offers its deepest condolences to everyone who lost their lives and their bereaved families. Our deepest sympathies are extended to all those who are suffering. No family should have to face such tragedy.

No family should have to feel such anguish. No family should have to mourn such loss of loved ones.

We are also victims. Thai nationals were killed and injured. We are deeply concerned for the safety of Thai nationals, as well as those captured and held hostage. We strongly appeal for their immediate release and safe return. That was echoed by the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in their statement of 20 October. We therefore welcome the references in draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25 calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

Thailand condemns in the strongest terms all forms of violence and attacks on civilians in conflict situations, including capturing and taking them hostage. Thailand urges all sides to respect and fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law and to ensure the safety and dignity of civilians in conflict situations. The protection of innocent lives and civilians must be a priority at all times. That should be our calling at this critical juncture. That should be our unifying catalyst as we seek to alleviate the suffering.

As the situation escalates, the most urgent concern is for all civilians who have been affected. Unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance must be ensured. We welcome the efforts by various parties to ensure such access to humanitarian assistance. In that connection, we welcome the initial humanitarian relief that recently entered Gaza and hope that that will be increased in the days ahead. Many lives are at stake. Many more are at risk. We appeal to the international community to continue to mobilize humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza in order to ensure that they have access to basic necessities, including safe and clean water, food and medical care.

Thailand joins other speakers in the call for all sides to take immediate steps to prevent the escalation of violence and implement an immediate ceasefire. We appeal to all sides to seek all avenues to resolve the current situation and work towards a long-term peace through diplomacy.

Thailand will continue to support the United Nations and the international community in any way in which we can to de-escalate the situation. We reaffirm our support for genuine dialogue, with a view to finding a mutually agreed peaceful solution to the issue, in accordance with the two-State solution, by which the States of Israel and Palestine live side by side in peace and security within secure and recognized

borders, consistent with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Let us do our utmost to save lives and to bring those captured and held hostage home.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): Viet Nam is participating in this emergency special session with a heavy heart and with great concern over the escalated situation in the Middle East. It is regrettable that the Security Council has been unable to take action on this urgent matter. We urge the Council to continue to work together to address the situation immediately. We also hope that the Council and the United Nations at large can send a unified and constructive message aimed at de-escalating tensions, ending hostilities, protecting civilians and promoting dialogue and negotiations.

My home country is not unfamiliar with disproportionate casualties and the destruction of critical infrastructure in situations of conflict. That takes an incredibly heavy toll not only on human life, but also on socioeconomic foundations, which impedes development for decades.

Viet Nam therefore once and again condemns in the strongest terms all indiscriminate attacks targeted at civilians and critical civilian infrastructure. They must be protected under international law, especially in compliance with international humanitarian law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. I would like to express our deep sympathy and condolences to the families of all civilians who lost their lives, including United Nations workers, in the recent flare-ups of conflict, starting on 7 October, and the continuous events thereafter.

If history can tell us anything, it is that it is innocent civilians who bear the brunt of armed conflict. All human life is precious, irrespective of race, religion or gender. That is why all acts of hostilities and violence must end immediately in order to stop further suffering and bloodshed. The hostages must be safely released at once and without conditions.

We strongly urge all parties to refrain from the use of force and to exercise the utmost restraint. Violence only incites more violence. There is a lot of work to be done. We call for the urgent provision, especially by the United Nations, of rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian assistance. Water, food, medical supplies, fuel and electricity must reach those in serious need.

We urge all parties concerned to make every effort to facilitate that.

Viet Nam welcomes and commends all international mediation and reconciliation efforts towards a peaceful, just and lasting resolution to this conflict, which must be based on international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. Durable peace can be achieved only through a comprehensive solution. It is our consistent position to support the two-State solution for the establishment of an independent State of Palestine that coexists in peace with the State of Israel, based on the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Viet Nam calls on all parties concerned to work towards an environment that is conducive to the cessation of hostilities, the de-escalation of tensions and the return to peace talks and negotiations. All of us must actively contribute to that end.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): Austria aligns itself with the statement of the European Union made earlier.

At the outset, let me once again emphasize that Austria condemns the heinous terrorist attack by Hamas on Israeli civilians on 7 October in the strongest possible terms. The attack was unprecedented in its brutality. There is no justification for terror.

Israel has the inherent right to defend itself in the face of such violent and indiscriminate attacks, in line with international humanitarian law. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages abducted by Hamas and other terrorist organizations. Our joint priority must now be to prevent a regional escalation of violence and hostilities, and we welcome the efforts of all partners in that regard. We call on all regional actors to refrain from any action that adds further fuel to the fire.

Let us be clear. It was the barbaric terror attack by Hamas that brought unbearable suffering on innocent people. It is Hamas that puts the civilian population in Gaza in harm's way, including by using them as human shields. By purposefully directing its resources and urgently needed fuel to its rocket launchers, instead of to desalination plants and hospitals, Hamas also bears responsibility for the humanitarian hardships of the civilians in Gaza.

International humanitarian law must be respected at all times. It is crucial to ensure the protection of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools,

and to allow humanitarian access to deliver food, water and medicine to Gaza. We express our concern at the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, and we reiterate the importance of the provision of urgent humanitarian aid and ensuring that it is not abused by terrorist organizations. We support the call for safe, full and unimpeded access throughout Gaza and a sustained effort to deliver vital life-saving assistance to the population. We therefore welcome the recent humanitarian deliveries via the Rafah crossing point and thank all actors involved, including Egypt, the United States, the United Nations and Israel, in facilitating those deliveries.

Both Israelis and Palestinians alike have the right to live in peace and security. We should not allow anyone to undermine the positive dynamic that led to a normalization of relations between several Arab countries and Israel. But it has become more than clear who is not interested in any sort of peace — Hamas and other terror organizations. They have no future to offer to the Palestinian people. Genuine peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians alike can be achieved only through a political solution. For us, the goal is clear: we need a negotiated two-State solution, allowing Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in peace and security. Our guiding principle is, and will remain, international law.

Let me briefly turn to another aspect of this debate. One reason for gathering in the General Assembly Hall today is that several vetoes prevented the Security Council from adopting a draft resolution. As we have said on other occasions, the veto right of the permanent members should not paralyse the Security Council from discharging its duties. We therefore welcome the fact that we have had the opportunity to have this discussion here today.

Mr. Önal (Türkiye): I thank the President for convening this emergency special session.

For three weeks now, unspeakable scenes of human suffering continue to unfold in Gaza. Millions of civilians are under indiscriminate bombing. Collectively punished under a complete siege, they are deprived of water, food, electricity and fuel. There can be no justification for the indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure. Those acts of collective punishment and attempts at forced displacement of people are unacceptable and have to be stopped. We must be unequivocal in condemning and

opposing the loss of each and every innocent life. There is an urgent need for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. Uninterrupted humanitarian access to and within Gaza is also an absolute necessity. In that connection, we commend the efforts of the Secretary-General and the relevant United Nations agencies on the ground.

Under those dire circumstances, the international community must come up with a unified position to make such imperatives happen. It is the responsibility of the United Nations to help to achieve that unity and deliver results in terms of maintaining international peace and security. However, that has not been possible to date due to the paralysis of the Security Council. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the General Assembly to rise to the occasion and do its utmost to make the United Nations system function.

It is in that understanding that, as Türkiye, we co-sponsored draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, entitled "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations", and call on all Member States to support the draft resolution. It includes the bare minimum requirements to stop the carnage and help to de-escalate the situation on the ground.

We must prevent this conflict from spiralling out of control and spilling over to other areas. Sustained security cannot be achieved by targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. No peace is possible or sustainable as long as the Palestinian aspirations for freedom, dignity and statehood continue to be oppressed. A just and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be realized only through a peace process based on the two-State solution.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Tunisia welcomes the convening of the tenth emergency special session on the question of Palestine. We support the statement delivered by the representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on behalf of the Group of Arab States, as well as that delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. My country's delegation would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

After the failure of the Security Council on four occasions to adopt a draft resolution to end the unabated aggression and genocide perpetrated by the occupying forces against the Palestinian people over the past three weeks, which has resulted in more than 7,000 martyrs

to date, we hope that the international community will be able through this emergency special session to meet its historical and moral responsibilities and uphold justice and the values upon which the Organization was established, as well as human rights, peace and security.

While we categorically condemn in the strongest terms the war crimes perpetrated by the occupying Power against innocent Palestinian civilians through the systematic killing of children, women and families, with targeted attacks on hospitals, schools, aid workers and places of worship, as well as using hunger and halting essential services, which are being used as a means of war, we cannot allow the international community to remain silent and the international institutions and bodies, in particular the Security Council, to fail to uphold their responsibilities. How long does the international community need to take action? How many Palestinian civilians must die for the world and the international order to honour their moral, humanitarian and legal responsibilities and demand an immediate ceasefire?

As we have stated on a number of occasions, we reject double standards and selective treatment regarding international legitimacy, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the international humanitarian law, or manipulating them for passing fallacies and justifying crimes. We reiterate our support for the Secretary-General and our appreciation for his tireless efforts to achieve a ceasefire and to deliver humanitarian assistance to Gaza. We also reject attempts to criticize and doubt the Secretary-General.

We are at a critical juncture today, where we are witnessing genocide and the forced displacement of the residents of Gaza from their land, as well as unprecedented practices of blockade and abuse carried out before the eyes of the world and in contempt of all international and legal conventions. If the international community, the United Nations and its institutions fail to intervene today and to address the situation in an effective and responsible manner to stop such heinous crimes against humanity, provide uninterrupted and non-selective humanitarian assistance and end the coercive displacement of the Palestinian people and the historic injustice befalling them for more than seven decades, the international order will then have agreed to find itself hostage to political considerations and systematic and grave violations of international law, human rights and all the principles and values upon which the United Nations was founded.

Tunisia is keen to uphold the principles of justice and law and rejects all forms of injustice and aggression. We reiterate our support for the brotherly Palestinian people and call for an end to the war crimes and acts of aggression being committed by the occupying forces. We again call for ending the occupation and reinstating rights for their owners.

Tunisia rejects attempts to equate the occupying aggressor with the aggressed and erroneous ideas about the right to self-defence to justify genocide. Justice is clear: the rights of the Palestinian people are not subject to the statute of limitations, and they will not be abolished by the brutal aggression of the occupation. My country hopes that the General Assembly will adopt draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, calling for an immediate ceasefire to end further bloodletting, providing protection for the Palestinian people and preventing attempts to forcibly displace them, while ensuring the delivery of sustained humanitarian and medical assistance to the Gaza Strip. In that context, we call on Member States to vote in favour of the draft resolution put forward by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan so as to put an end to this humanitarian tragedy.

Mr. França Danese (Brazil): Brazil welcomes the reconvening of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly after the failure by the Security Council to adopt any of four draft resolutions on the situation in Israel and Palestine (draft resolutions S/2023/772, S/2023/773, S/2023/792 and S/2023/795). One of them (draft resolution S/2023/773) was proposed by Brazil and was not adopted due to the veto by one permanent member despite having received 12 votes in favour — four-fifths of the Council membership.

We worked tirelessly in an inclusive and constructive manner, with diligence and a sense of duty, with all delegations willing to engage with our proposal. Our goal was that of presenting a text that carried a resolute and united response by the Security Council. We did not shy away from the negotiations and deliberations on the proposals that were put forward by other members of the Security Council.

We still believe that our first draft resolution could have been the Council's best possible outcome when we presented it. The robust support given by Council members to the draft resolution, for which we are very grateful, indicates that it was a balanced text. It was solidly rooted in international humanitarian law and

international human rights law and fundamentally committed to the humanitarian imperative.

Such an imperative demands that we be clear and firm in our condemnation of all violence against all civilians — Israelis, Palestinians or otherwise. That is why my delegation expressed, and now reiterates, Brazil's unequivocal condemnation of the heinous terrorist acts by Hamas, including the taking of hostages. That is also why we clearly condemn the attacks that are indiscriminately killing and wounding civilians and destroying civilian objects in the Gaza Strip, and the deprivation of its civilian population of means indispensable for their survival. It is again the humanitarian imperative and international humanitarian law that indicate what must be done. All hostages must be immediately and unconditionally released.

The continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential goods and services to civilians throughout the Gaza Strip, including but not limited to water, food, medical supplies, fuel and electricity, must be secured. It is also urgent to guarantee full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access. Mechanisms such as humanitarian pauses and corridors must be swiftly established to facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid. A cessation of hostilities is urgently needed so that conditions can be created for a complete, durable and respected ceasefire.

Our collective response to this crisis, which we all fear will only deteriorate if nothing is done, will be a watershed moment for the United Nations. It will be a testament to the effectiveness of multilateralism or its further weakening. It will show whether the United Nations can be serious about preventing, stopping or, at least, mitigating the horrors of war. The Assembly and the Security Council must act decisively. The world is watching us, and this is not rhetoric. The world is truly watching us and expects an effective response.

Brazil will continue to work tirelessly as President, and then as a regular member, of the Security Council to make its voice heard loud and clear on this heartbreaking conflict. Once the immediate crisis has been overcome, we all must redouble efforts to address the root causes of the tragedy unfolding before our eyes. Mere conflict management has failed. It is a recipe for continued violence and permanent instability.

Mr. Al-Fatlawi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to

the President for his approval to convene the tenth emergency special session on the question of Palestine.

My country's delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and of Mauritania, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The tragic situation of the Palestinian people due to the military actions and the barbaric crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces, the blockade and the lack of provision of basic necessities, as well as the systematic and continuous violations committed against them, compel us, as Members of the United Nations, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to fulfil our collective responsibilities to put an end to the crimes, massacres and ongoing destruction of residential neighbourhoods, with their inhabitants, infrastructure and services. After all those crimes, how can one explain silence about them? How can one interpret the failure to take any binding measures to stop such crimes? What can we say about the continuation of those massacres and genocide by the occupation forces without any kind of deterrence? Is that encouragement for the Israeli occupation forces to continue those crimes under false pretences?

We are witnessing a historic turning point within the United Nations, which was founded to establish and promote international peace and security. Indeed, for the past three weeks, the Security Council has failed to fulfil its legal, ethical and humanitarian responsibilities and to adopt the necessary measures to maintain international peace and security, protect civilians and save lives by the immediate ending of military actions or opening border crossings to ensure the delivery of aid and relief supplies. We note with regret that the Security Council is incapable of implementing the noble objectives and purposes that we seek to establish and promote. The United Nations failed to find a lasting solution for the Palestinian question during the past seven decades.

This emergency special session is taking place owing to the continuation of Israeli acts of aggression for more than three weeks against our Palestinian people, in particular in the Gaza Strip. That is a systematic genocide, an imposed blockade and coercive displacement. Those crimes continue the crimes committed over the past 70 years before the very eyes of

the international community, in particular the Security Council. That is a flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law, the Charter and international treaties and conventions. Today, as the diplomatic process under way in the Security Council has confirmed, the Council is regrettably unable to fulfil its legal, ethical and humanitarian responsibilities with regard to maintaining international peace and security and to put an end to such brutal actions and continuous violations against our Palestinian people.

We find ourselves amid a diplomatic process of the international community that we, the Member States, represent here at this emergency session, driven by a humanitarian factor free of selectivity in terms of humanitarian and destiny issues in the world. The occupation authorities must be compelled to adopt an immediate ceasefire, open border crossing points, ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance and relief supplies, completely lift the blockade against the Gaza Strip, stop expulsions, achieve a safe and complete prisoner exchange and establish a fund for reconstruction following the destruction caused by the Israeli occupying forces in the Gaza Strip.

The role of the General Assembly in maintaining international peace and security was, and is still, the platform to which oppressed peoples resort. Our Palestinian people suffered injustice for more than 70 years, and now we have an opportunity to take a collective stance to put an end to injustice and uphold their right to life. We must recognize that their resistance to occupation and their right to defend their freedom and dignity are a right guaranteed by international law.

Many of the tragic images and stories of innocent Palestinian civilians, women and children will stay in our memories. The same applies to the position taken by the Security Council, which will stay in our memories and in the history of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate Iraq's steadfast position in supporting the Palestinian question and people and in their fulfilling their aspirations towards enjoying all their legitimate and inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination, the right to return and the establishment of their Palestinian State on the land of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Lord Ahmad (United Kingdom): May I begin by expressing our deep appreciation for this institution, the United Nations, and, indeed, all of our humanitarian

partners for their incredible efforts — life-saving efforts — in what are the most challenging of circumstances.

At this point, I also want to share our sincerest of condolences for the 30 staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the 16 medical staff who have lost their lives since 7 October. Equally, we record our sincere condolences to the victims and the families of the horrendous Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel on 7 October. Equally, we extend our condolences to the families of the innocent Palestinians who were killed in this tragic conflict. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un* — To God we belong. To God we return.

Every life that is lost is a tragedy, not just for a family in Israel, Gaza or the West Bank, but it is a loss for all humanity — an Israeli life or a Palestinian life, irrespective of being Jewish, Christian or Muslim. Every life matters. Every life lost is a tragedy. Therefore, as we recall the tragic consequences of what we are witnessing, we call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law. That means the unconditional release of the hostages, taking every possible step to avoid the harming of civilians and, importantly, enabling unhindered humanitarian access.

We all know — it has been said from this rostrum countless times during this debate — that the humanitarian crisis in Gaza is growing. For its part, the United Kingdom has provided an additional \$37 million to help provide water, food, medicine and fuel in Gaza. In that regard, may we put on record our thanks for the tireless work of the Secretary-General and the United Nations to ensure that that life-saving aid reaches those most in need.

While we welcome the important first step of 54 trucks passing through the Rafah border crossing, we urge the scaling up of that assistance, including to enable fuel for civilian use to pass into Gaza, vital to keep hospitals and the humanitarian response running. Those humanitarian pauses are an important part of ensuring that that can happen.

Turning to the attacks on Israel on 7 October, my Prime Minister has been clear: the United Kingdom stands with Israel in the face of Hamas's terrorist attacks. We will always support an ally against a terrorist attack and its right to self-defence. But that must be — I assure the President, and we make that case — within international humanitarian law. If I may

just also put it from a personal perspective as a Muslim, terrorism is evil. Every terror act is against humanity, and we should condemn it unequivocally.

Draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, before us, could therefore have been clearer on that very point. In our view, it should also unequivocally condemn those terror attacks — Hamas's terror attacks — which killed more than 1,400 people and, as we know, at this very time hold more than 200 hostages. However, we have equally been clear that all possible precautions and steps should be taken to minimize harm to civilians in this conflict and, indeed, for any movement of civilians to be both voluntary and safe.

We stand at a crucial juncture. Yet, in this moment of darkness, let us, the United Nations, come together. May we come together and not lose sight of the promise that the United Nations holds true of a two-State solution: a secure, safe Israel, side by side with a viable Palestinian State. I assure the Assembly of this, that we, the United Kingdom, will continue to work closely with all partners in the region and beyond in those efforts, because peace must prevail and to prevent the situation from spreading and causing wider insecurity and instability.

It was my Prime Minister who said hope and humanity must win against the scourge of aggression and terrorism — love over hate, light over darkness, peace — *shalom, salam*.

Mr. García Toma (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the victims, irrespective of their nationality or faith, and voices its unconditional solidarity with the populations affected by the devastating conflict in the Middle East, which has remained unresolved for decades, and which has experienced a new and serious escalation of hostilities since 7 October.

We are meeting in accordance with resolution 377 (V), entitled “Uniting for peace”, which provides that:

“if the Security Council, because of lack of unanimity of its permanent members, fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security (...), the General Assembly shall consider the matter immediately with a view to making appropriate recommendations to Members (...) to maintain

or restore international peace and security". (*resolution 377 A (V), para. 1*)

That has occurred as a result of the failure to adopt several Security Council draft resolutions (draft resolutions S/2023/772, S/2023/773, S/2023/792 and S/2023/795).

Only a few weeks ago, in the general debate, my country addressed Member States with a very clear message:

"Peru promotes peace, and to achieve that peace it is necessary to apply the Charter of the United Nations in all circumstances." (A/78/PV.5, p.28)

While the Charter provides for the right of veto, its Article 24, paragraph 2, provides that:

"In discharging these duties the Security Council shall act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations."

In accordance with Article 1, paragraph 3, its purposes include solving international problems of a humanitarian character.

Consequently, under the teleological and logical reading of the Charter, which Peru advocates, the veto should not be used in a way that would have a negative impact on the fulfilment of the purposes of the Organization.

The stalemate to which the Council is subjecting us is extremely worrisome. We are even more dismayed when that happens while humankind looks on in astonishment at the continuing fighting and bloodshed, which affects thousands of innocent civilians.

As representatives of our peoples, with responsibility for international peace and security, we have an obligation to guiltily ask ourselves: What are we doing to remedy this real tragedy? Are we fulfilling our duties, or are we inexcusably ignoring them? Are we trying to agree or to blame each other? The heavy burden of dealing with the answers to those questions is clearly greater for States with direct commitments to a just and lasting solution.

Last week, the Security Council had before it a clear and viable option for concrete action. Draft resolution S/2023/773, submitted by Brazil, included a balanced set of diverse perspectives of members and received 12 votes in favour. However, one permanent

member decided to use its veto right (see S/PV.9442), and it seems that we are still far from consensus.

In such circumstances, Peru reaffirms that consensus must be sought with regard to the following elements. First is the establishment of a ceasefire for humanitarian purposes. Second is the firm and unconditional condemnation of all acts of terrorism and acts of violence and hostilities against civilians. Third is the unequivocal rejection and condemnation of the heinous terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October, as well as the taking of hostages. In that regard, based on its own historical experience of that kind of despicable action, Peru categorically reaffirms its condemnation of terrorism in all its manifestations, wherever it may occur. Fourth is the request for the immediate and unconditional release of all persons deprived of their freedom and held hostage. Fifth is a strong call on all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law and international humanitarian law. In that context, the commitment to the protection of civilians, humanitarian workers, civilian infrastructure and humanitarian goods is inescapable. Sixth is the adoption of specific provisions to ensure full, rapid, safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance, as well as the provision of basic necessities and services, such as water, food and medical supplies, for the population. Seventh is the call to rescind the order for civilians and United Nations personnel to evacuate all areas of the northern part of the Gaza Strip and relocate to southern Gaza. In that regard, Peru recalls that the right to self-defence must be in compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law, and in accordance with the principles of distinction, necessity, proportionality and precaution. Eighth is the call for all parties alike to act with the utmost restraint and humanity so as to prevent an escalation in the region.

We would like to express Peru's support for the work of the Secretary-General, particularly his humanitarian efforts. We also agree with him that the grievances against the Palestinian people cannot justify the atrocious attacks by Hamas, and that those heinous attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

Peru reaffirms its historic commitment to a lasting solution to the Middle East conflict, in accordance with international law, and therefore recognizes Israel and Palestine as sovereign States and maintains

diplomatic relations with both. Indeed, from a historical perspective, there is one aspect that we should not overlook: the question of Palestine is intrinsically linked to this Organization. In 1947, this very General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), entitled “Future government of Palestine”, in which it established the existence of two States — one Arab and one Jewish. Since 1967, the Security Council has succeeded in adopting 11 resolutions on the subject, the provisions of which, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, are binding on all Member States. It is therefore urgent that negotiations be resumed in good faith in order to achieve a just and lasting solution that will allow the two States, Palestine and Israel, to at last live side by side in peace, within secure, mutually agreed and internationally recognized borders, in accordance with international norms.

On 19 July, Peru addressed the General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 76/262, when another member of the Security Council used its veto right during the vote on a draft resolution, also of a humanitarian nature (see A/77/PV.91). The message that we delivered on that occasion is also applicable today. In order to fulfil the purposes of the Charter, it is essential that all Security Council members, especially the permanent members, refrain from politicizing humanitarian issues. That means, among other things, no longer putting geopolitical considerations before humanitarian and emergency relief issues. We hope that the proposal to be put forward by the 10 elected members of the Security Council will receive the support demanded by

the international community from those with the right to veto.

Peru reiterates that obligations are permanent. They were in force prior to the conflict situation with which we are dealing and continue to be fully respected despite the failure of the Security Council to adopt any agreement. Similarly, we reaffirm our position that humanitarian assistance, wherever it is required, must be provided in a rapid, safe and unimpeded manner and in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

We reiterate the need for urgent measures and decisions, in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, to be taken immediately to save human lives and to strengthen collective trust in multilateralism as an effective tool to achieve peace. Peru fervently hopes that the right path will be found with clear-sightedness and selflessness and that it will be pursued with the speed that the situation demands.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers this afternoon in this Hall after the consideration of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.25, as agreed earlier.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 5.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.