



# Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

*Provisional*

**9650<sup>th</sup>** meeting

Monday, 10 June 2024, 3.25 p.m.

New York

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

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question**

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

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2024/448, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

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

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): The past eight months have been nothing short of devastating for Israelis who lost loved ones on 7 October when Hamas set the conflict into motion by carrying out acts of unthinkable violence; for Israelis and people from more than 16 other countries, whose sons and daughters, brothers and sisters are still being held hostage by Hamas; and for Israelis who face constant rocket bombardment from Hamas, rockets that are fired off by terrorists hiding in civilian areas within Gaza.

The past eight months have also been devastating for Palestinian civilians in Gaza. Nearly 2 million Palestinians have had to flee from one place to another in search of safety, and for so many that safety has been elusive. My heart aches for the young children who will forever be traumatized by seeing their family members killed, for all Palestinians who have lost loved ones in the fighting and for humanitarian workers, people who put their lives on the line to deliver aid to those in dire need, who have been caught in the crosshairs at an unprecedented level.

We continue to call on Israel to do everything possible to protect civilians. But let us not forget that Hamas's leaders are the ones who have put civilians at risk by hiding in tunnels underground and in facilities

that are near civilians and who are doing nothing to shelter those civilians. I have rarely seen anything so egregious and cowardly.

Palestinian civilians are living through sheer hell through no fault of their own. And the humanitarian situation in Gaza has gotten worse and worse and worse. Families are living in makeshift conditions, unsure of what the next day holds. Millions are grappling with the uncertainty of what will be left when they are allowed to return home. I think about the parents trying to find food for their families, about the child who has been forced to stop their education, about the elderly person who no longer has access to essential medicines. After eight months of devastation and pain and trauma, what is needed now more than ever is for the fighting to end in a sustainable way.

The United States and every single country in the Chamber want to see an immediate ceasefire, with the release of hostages. We have heard those calls time and time again since 7 October. Now the opportunity is here. We must seize it, and we must speak with one voice.

For months, the United States has worked around the clock, alongside Egypt and Qatar, to broker a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas because we know that this is the best way — actually, the only way — to bring about a durable end to this war. Since the brief ceasefire and hostage release in November, such a deal has proven elusive because Hamas has refused to accept any agreement.

But right now there is another opportunity, because, as President Biden recently announced, Israel has agreed to a comprehensive deal. That is the deal now on the table, and it is nearly identical to Hamas's own proposals. This deal would bring hostages home; ensure Israel's security; enable a surge of humanitarian relief and essential services, including water, electricity, medical facilities and rubble removal to Palestinian civilians in Gaza; and set the stage for a political settlement that provides a better future for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

This deal has been endorsed by countries across the region, including Algeria, Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, as well as by the Group of Seven and the 16 countries whose citizens are being held by Hamas. Now we are all waiting on Hamas to agree to the ceasefire deal that it claims to want, but we cannot afford to wait and wait and wait. With every passing day, needless suffering continues.

All of us, as members of the Council, therefore have a critical role to play. We can help bring about peace by adopting the draft resolution before us (S/2024/448), which calls on Hamas to take the ceasefire deal and urges both parties to fully implement the deal's terms, without delay and without conditions.

This draft resolution, put forward by the United States after consultation with all Council members, makes clear that the world wants an immediate ceasefire, with the release of hostages. The draft resolution also explains the framework of the deal. Let me take a moment to lay that out.

The first phase of this agreement would last for six weeks and include an immediate, full and complete ceasefire, with the release of hostages, including women, the elderly, and the wounded; the return of the remains of some hostages, who have been killed; the exchange of Palestinian prisoners; the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the populated areas in Gaza; the return of Palestinian civilians to their homes and neighbourhoods in all areas of Gaza, including in the north; and the safe and effective distribution of humanitarian assistance in Gaza, including housing units delivered by the international community.

Importantly, the proposal says that if negotiations take longer than six weeks in phase one, the ceasefire will continue as long as negotiations continue. And the United States, Egypt and Qatar would work to ensure that negotiations keep going, in good faith, until all the agreements are reached and phase two begins.

In the second phase, upon agreement of the parties, there would be a permanent end to hostilities in exchange for the release of all other hostages still in Gaza, and a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

Phase three would see the start of a major, multi-year reconstruction plan for Gaza, and the return of the remains of Israelis and others still in Gaza to their families.

That is the deal on the table. Israel accepted the deal because it ensures Israel's security. As President Biden made clear, Hamas is no longer capable of carrying out another 7 October, and the United States commitment to Israel's self-defence is ironclad.

I will also note that the draft resolution rejects any demographic or territorial changes in Gaza, including any actions that reduce the territory of Gaza, and it reiterates the Council's unwavering commitment to the vision of a negotiated two-State solution, where Israelis and Palestinians live side by side in peace, within secure and recognized borders, consistent with international law

and the relevant United Nations resolutions. We all agree that a negotiated outcome along these lines is the only way forward.

The draft before us also stresses the importance of unifying the West Bank and Gaza under the leadership of a reformed and revitalized Palestinian Authority. In addition, the text recalls resolutions the Council has adopted since 7 October, including resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023), and 2728 (2024) — all of which demanded that all parties to the conflict protect civilians. We need Hamas to agree to the ceasefire deal. And then we need Israel and Hamas to implement the deal, without delays or conditions.

I do not want to keep waking up to news reports of more fighting and more loss of life. I do not want the families of hostages, many of whom I know personally, to endure even one more day without their loved ones. I do not want another Palestinian family, including the relatives of people I have met with, to experience any more loss or suffering.

I want to see an enduring ceasefire, where Israel is safe — safe from the threat of further terrorist attacks and rocket fire — and Palestinians can begin rebuilding their lives in safety and security. I want to see families reunited. I want to see Palestinian children safe and fed and back in school. I want to see people return to their homes. We all want to see this better future — those of us here in the Chamber, people across the world and, most of all, those living under this terrible conflict.

We must therefore seize the opportunity before us; we must speak out with one voice in support of peace. I urge all Council members to vote “yes” on this resolution, to vote “yes” for peace.

**The President:** I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour:*

Algeria, China, Ecuador, France, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

*Against:*

None

*Abstaining:*

Russian Federation

**The President:** The draft resolution received 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2735 (2024).

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

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): Today the Security Council sent a clear message to Hamas: accept the ceasefire deal on the table. Israel has already agreed to this deal, and the fighting could stop today if Hamas would do the same. I repeat: the fighting could stop today. The Council and countries across the region and the world have endorsed this agreement. Hamas can now see that the international community is united — united behind a deal that will save lives and help Palestinian civilians in Gaza start to rebuild and heal, united behind a deal that will reunite hostages with their families after eight months in captivity, and united behind a deal that will lead to a more secure Israel and unlock the possibility of more progress, including calm along Israel's northern border with Lebanon. We cannot forget the Israelis displaced from their homes in northern Israel under threat from Hizbullah. Those attacks from terrorist groups backed by Iran must stop. They have to stop.

The ceasefire deal will pave the way toward an enduring cessation of hostilities and a better future for all. As President Biden acknowledged just the other day, the Palestinian people have endured sheer hell in this war started by Hamas. There is an opportunity to chart a different course. Hamas must take it. Egypt and Qatar have assured the United States that they are continuing to work to ensure that Hamas engages constructively, and the United States will help to ensure that Israel lives up to its obligations as well, assuming Hamas accepts the deal.

Over the past eight months, the Council has often faced divisions and the world has taken notice, with understandable frustration. But there is another side to this story, because today we adopted the fourth resolution on this conflict. For the fourth time, we have spoken out and made clear the only way to end this cycle of violence and build a durable peace is through a political settlement — one that ensures Israel no longer lives in the shadow of a terrorist group and is further integrated with the region. I want to make clear that Israel will always have the right to defend itself against threats to its security and to bring those responsible for 7 October 2023 to justice.

Today we also reaffirmed our commitment to the vision of two States, whereby Israelis and Palestinians live side by side in peace, within secure and recognized borders, consistent with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, and whereby a revitalized and reformed Palestinian Authority leads a unified West Bank and Gaza. That is the future that we must help bring about. And that all starts with the ceasefire deal that the Council endorsed today, and that the Council unequivocally called on Hamas to accept. Today we voted for peace.

**Mr. Bendjama** (Algeria): Our thoughts are with the more than 37,000 Palestinians who have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces during these last eight months. Over 20,000 of them are women and children. Those martyrs, for us, are alive with their Lord. They are watching over us from heaven.

We Algerians deeply feel the suffering of Palestinians and, with our own history of struggle against colonial occupation, we fully understand and support their legitimate and just demands. As a free and dignified people, the Palestinians will never accept living under occupation. They will never abdicate their fight for liberation.

From the start of our mandate in the Council, our objective has been and remains clear and unwavering — to halt the massacres committed by the Israeli occupying forces in Gaza. During these dark times in human history, Algeria's sole guiding principle has been the preservation of Palestinian lives. We cannot stand by while the Israeli occupying forces continue to exterminate Palestinians. We also cannot remain silent in the face of that collective punishment. To us, Palestinian lives matter.

We voted in favour of the resolution submitted by the United States (resolution 2735 (2024)) because we believe it can represent a step towards an immediate and lasting ceasefire. I would like to extend our gratitude to the United States delegation, especially Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, for their diligent efforts and for addressing some of our concerns in the final text.

Algeria engaged during the negotiations process in good faith, working closely with Palestinians and mediators to achieve a resolution that ensures an immediate ceasefire and, hopefully, will have a tangible impact on the ground. Like any other product of the Security Council, this text is not perfect, but it offers a glimmer of hope to the Palestinians, as the alternative

is the continued killing and suffering of the Palestinian people. We voted in favour of the resolution to give diplomacy a chance to reach an agreement that will end the aggression against the Palestinian people, which has lasted for far too long. It is time to halt the killing.

The resolution ensures the following.

First, the immediate ceasefire will continue as long as negotiations continue. The mediators — the United States, Egypt and Qatar — will work tirelessly to reach an agreement on the second phase of the proposed deal. That was one of our key concerns.

Secondly, the resolution guarantees the return of Gazans to their homes and neighbourhoods, including in the north of Gaza, within six weeks. It counters the occupying Power's attempts to empty the north of Gaza of its inhabitants.

Thirdly, the resolution sends a clear message that no changes to Gaza's demographics or territory will be permitted. So, no buffer zones will be established in Gaza, and the Israeli occupation forces must withdraw from the entire Gaza Strip.

Fourthly, given the unprecedented level of destruction in Gaza, which will take decades to clear, the international community, through this resolution, has reaffirmed its commitment to the Palestinian people and the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. Guided by its solidarity with the Palestinian people, my country, Algeria, will do its part and contribute to the international reconstruction effort.

Fifthly, the resolution reaffirms the international community's commitment to the establishment of a Palestinian State. Action taken by the occupying Power to undermine the establishment of a Palestinian State is futile. The resolute commitment of the international community will soon make the Palestinian State a reality.

The occupying forces' continued barbarity will only result in more senseless deaths, as we witnessed this weekend in the Nuseirat refugee camp. Such crimes against humanity cannot go unpunished. For those killed in Nuseirat and in all occupied Palestinian territories, and for the Palestinian children and women, we reaffirm Algeria's commitment to accountability. Those responsible for killing Palestinians will face justice. No one will be immune. No one will be above the law.

In conclusion, if the orders of the International Court of Justice are not enforced and those responsible are not held accountable, sooner or later another genocide will

loom on the horizon. It is evident that unless the root causes of the Palestinian tragedy are properly addressed, new tragedies, catastrophes and killings and more suffering are inevitable. Therefore, our first objective must be to end the occupation. My country, Algeria, will remain steadfast in supporting the Palestinian people until they attain their inalienable rights, including self-determination and the establishment of their State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom voted in favour of this resolution (resolution 2735 (2024)) as an important step in bringing about an end to the conflict that has raged since the horrific attacks on 7 October 2023 and in moving towards lasting peace.

The situation in Gaza is catastrophic, and the suffering has gone on for far too long. The deal on the table is something that the United Kingdom has long called for. It is the best way to get the remaining hostages out, bring about an immediate ceasefire leading to a permanent end to hostilities and enable a significant scaling-up of much-needed humanitarian aid. We call upon the parties to seize this opportunity and move towards a lasting peace that guarantees security and stability for both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples.

Far too many lives have been lost already. There is a desperate need for humanitarian assistance in Gaza, and hostages have now been held for more than eight months. News of the rescue of four hostages will be a huge relief to their families. Our thoughts are also with the families of those who are still being held captive and all the innocent people — both Palestinian and Israeli — who have already lost their lives or been affected by the conflict. We must secure the release of all hostages and end the fighting.

The United Kingdom applauds the diplomatic efforts of Qatar, Egypt and the United States in negotiating the deal that is on the table. We note that Israel has accepted the deal and call upon Hamas to accept the terms and bring an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people and the hostages that remain in detention. We must then see a rapid increase in the flows of humanitarian aid throughout the entire Gaza Strip, with the opening of all border crossings and the facilitation of the minimum operating requirements of the United Nations and international humanitarian organizations.

The United Kingdom remains in steadfast support of a credible and irreversible pathway towards a two-State solution with Israel and Palestine living side by

side in peace and delivering security for both nations and the wider region. As we have made clear, a sustainable peace must also include Hamas no longer being in control of Gaza and international support for the Palestinian Authority so that it can resume governance and security responsibilities across the West Bank and Gaza. The United Kingdom stands ready to support that.

The United Kingdom has long advocated for a deal such as the one on the table. The conflict has gone on for far too long. Now more than ever is the time for diplomacy. Now is the time for peace.

**Mrs. Frazier** (Malta): We thank our colleagues from the United States for submitting resolution 2735 (2024), which complements the commendable diplomatic efforts of Egypt, Qatar and the United States towards achieving a comprehensive ceasefire in Gaza.

Malta voted in favour of the resolution as the crisis remains untenable. We welcome the Council's ability to support a resolution that is aimed at putting an end to the harrowing cycle of violence. Malta has consistently called for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the release of all hostages held and a comprehensive response to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. We fully support initiatives that bring us closer to those imperatives.

On Saturday, we welcomed the news that four hostages abducted during the 7 October attack by Hamas were successfully rescued by Israeli forces. All those that remain in captivity must be immediately and unconditionally released. However, the images from the aftermath of the Israeli operation into Nuseirat refugee camp, in which scores of Palestinians, including children were reportedly killed, are truly horrifying. That incident is not isolated and is emblematic of the scale of the suffering in Gaza. We unequivocally stress that international humanitarian law must be respected by all parties. We further emphasize the need to address the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Humanitarian aid must be delivered at scale into and throughout the Gaza Strip. Crucially, aid distribution must also be safe and unhindered.

We need full compliance and implementation of the relevant Council resolutions and the full, immediate and effective implementation of the orders of the International Court of Justice. A ceasefire, as outlined in the proposal, remains essential to dealing with the deepening and immediate-term humanitarian concerns.

The ceasefire proposal would also lead to the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from the full territory of Gaza and create the space to mount an international reconstruction effort for Gaza. Most importantly, it would put the parties on the path towards reviving a credible political process for a lasting and sustainable peace that is anchored in the two-State solution. We urge both parties to the conflict to accept and fulfil the terms of the ceasefire proposal without delay and without condition. It is high time to put an end to the unprecedented suffering and usher the return of hope, stability and peace for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland voted in favour of resolution 2735 (2024) submitted by the United States of America and welcomes its adoption. I would like to thank the United States delegation for that initiative.

The resolution calls on the parties to conclude and implement, without delay or conditions, the three-phase proposal for a ceasefire in Gaza. That plan currently represents the best chance for an end to the appalling violence raging in the Middle East, which has claimed tens of thousands of civilian victims since the acts of terror committed by Hamas on 7 October, which we strongly condemned.

Switzerland has consistently called for full respect by the parties with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. That call was clearly reflected in resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023) and 2728 (2024). Through the latter, the Council called for an immediate ceasefire that is respected by all parties and leads to a lasting ceasefire.

The adopted resolution is also consistent with respect for international law. It calls on the parties to implement a ceasefire without delay or conditions, to release the hostages and to facilitate the supply of humanitarian aid through all possible routes and crossing points, as well as throughout the Gaza Strip. However, Switzerland deeply regrets that, despite the request of several delegations, including our own, the call for respect for international law, and in particular international humanitarian law and human rights law, did not get the recognition in the text voted on today that it had received in previous resolutions.

The events of the past few days have once again demonstrated that respect by the parties to the conflict with their obligations under international law is vital if

further bloodshed and civilian deaths are to be avoided. We are relieved that four hostages have — after long months — been reunited with their families and call once again for the immediate release of all those still being held. We are, however, alarmed by the very high number of Palestinian casualties reported in recent days, in particular during the rescue operation in Nuseirat. We reiterate that a distinction must always be made between civilians and combatants and between civilian objects and military targets.

With its affirmative vote today, Switzerland has confirmed its support for the negotiations led by Egypt, Qatar and the United States, whose efforts we commend. We now call on Israel and Hamas to conclude and implement the agreement as soon as possible. The Council's collective support for such an agreement is aimed at finally putting an end to the human suffering, stopping the continuing escalation of violence in the region and laying the foundations for a solution of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace, within secure and recognized borders.

**Mr. Yamazaki (Japan):** The devastating conflict in Gaza has gone on for far too long, with too much suffering and loss of innocent life. The catastrophic humanitarian situation is indescribable. Many of the hostages are still being held in appalling conditions.

Japan greatly appreciates the vigorous diplomatic efforts led by the United States, Egypt and Qatar. And we strongly support the three-phase proposal outlined by President Biden. If Hamas accepts the deal and both parties commit immediately and sincerely to negotiations based on that proposal, the long-awaited ceasefire and the release of hostages will finally be achieved. That is what the Security Council should call for right now. That is why we voted in favour of resolution 2735 (2024), proposed by the United States.

The resolution was adopted, and we must seize this opportunity. Japan hopes that this strong pronouncement by the Council will help the parties finally reach a ceasefire deal that will allow for the release of all hostages and the influx of critical humanitarian aid at scale.

Today the Security Council upheld its responsibility to maintain international peace and security by expressing our strong desire to see the end of the vicious cycle of violence. The Council must stand ready to take necessary action again, just as we have done today. The people of Gaza and the hostages still being held by Hamas are counting on us.

**Mrs. Blokar Drobič (Slovenia):** Slovenia voted in favour of resolution 2735 (2024), focusing on the comprehensive ceasefire deal in Gaza. We would like to thank the United States, as the penholder, for its efforts.

Since the start of the conflict, Slovenia has been calling for a strong, united voice from the Council on this issue. We believe that calls by the international community, efforts by mediators and bilateral efforts are intertwined and should be mutually reinforcing. We deeply appreciate the determination of Egypt, Qatar and the United States to reach this deal.

The Security Council is the primary organ entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. Its voice should be clear and united. We therefore welcome the resolution presented today, seeking the Council's endorsement of this deal. We call on both parties to fully and immediately accept and implement it.

Let me underline our consistent call for the full respect of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. International law is clear. It prohibits hostage-taking; it prohibits the denial of humanitarian access to civilians and attacks against humanitarian workers; it includes the right to voluntary return of displaced persons. My point is that many of the elements of this deal should already be taking place, as should have been the case for the implementation of the previous three Council resolutions, along with the orders of the International Court of Justice on provisional measures.

For months we have been saying that the suffering in Gaza must end. We have been constantly calling for the immediate release of hostages. However, military operations for the release of hostages that result in hundreds of civilians killed and injured, as was the case in the operation carried out in the Nuseirat refugee camp on Saturday, cannot be the new normal. The principles of international humanitarian law and international human rights law also apply to hostage rescue operations. The denial of aid to civilians, including women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons; the killing of humanitarian and United Nations personnel; the targeting of United Nations premises; the siege of hospitals; the amputation of children's limbs without anaesthesia; women giving birth without appropriate assistance; mass graves; the targeting, attack and destruction of civilian areas in Gaza and in Israel — none of that should be taking place.

Photos of children — some of them born during this war — dying because of malnutrition will go down in history as one of the conflicts that the Council should have prevented. We therefore once again call for an immediate ceasefire as the first step towards achieving a comprehensive solution.

That is why we support an international peace conference, under the auspices of the United Nations. That is why we underscore our commitment to the two-State solution, based on pre-1967 borders and the unification of the Gaza Strip with the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, under the Palestinian Authority.

Everyone has their part to play, and every step contributes to the peace process. In our opinion, only two sovereign and equal States can make that peace happen. That is why my country last week recognized Palestine as an independent and sovereign State, and we call on others to follow suit so that the future generations in Israel and Palestine can live side by side in peace, security and prosperity.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The conflict in Gaza has lasted over eight months, killing more than 37,000 Palestinians and leaving more than 2 million people in an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe. Israel's large-scale offensive against Rafah and its attack on the Nuseirat refugee camp over the past two days have caused additional heavy casualties.

In the face of this human tragedy, the international community long ago reached an overwhelming consensus. Both the Security Council and the emergency special session of the General Assembly have adopted multiple resolutions containing clear demands, namely: an immediate, unconditional and lasting ceasefire; the immediate release of all hostages and Palestinian detainees; the guaranteed, unimpeded entry into Gaza of sufficient humanitarian relief and its timely delivery to those in need; the protection of civilians; and strict accountability for acts in Gaza in breach of international humanitarian law.

On 31 May, the United States leader announced the Gaza ceasefire proposal. The United States subsequently submitted the text of resolution 2735 (2024) to the Security Council, urging Israel and Hamas to accept the proposal and demanding its full, immediate and unconditional implementation.

It would be more logical for the parties concerned to reach an agreement first and then for the Security Council to take action to endorse it. However, if the

Council's actions in this case are conducive to reaching agreement and an immediate and permanent ceasefire, then they are positive steps.

Based on the views of the Council members, the sponsor revised the text of the resolution, but many ambiguities remain. We still have reasonable concerns about whether the main parties will accept the ceasefire proposal and whether the three-phase arrangement can be carried out smoothly. We also note that the resolution states that if the first phase of negotiations exceeds six weeks, the ceasefire will continue as long as the negotiations continue and the relevant parties will work to ensure that the negotiations continue until an agreement is reached.

The sponsors also indicated that Israel accepted the ceasefire proposal. Our understanding is that once the ceasefire is achieved, fighting will not restart. The immediate realization of a permanent ceasefire has been the strong appeal of China and the Council members for months, and it has also been the most fervent hope of the people of Gaza, who are suffering acutely. Given the urgent need to stop more killings and alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe, China voted in favour of the resolution.

All Council resolutions are legally binding. The resolution just adopted has the same binding force as resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023) and 2728 (2024)—all of which should be fully and effectively implemented. We hope that the sponsor will make sincere efforts and work in an impartial and responsible manner to promote an immediate and permanent ceasefire. China will work with all parties to push for an early end to the fighting in Gaza and bring the Palestinian-Israeli question back to the correct track of the two-State solution as early as possible.

**Ms. Persaud** (Guyana): Some 247 days have passed since Hamas's horrific attack on Israel and since Israel launched a war on Gaza, unprecedented in scale and impact. The death toll from that war is staggering, with thousands of Palestinians killed in barbaric ways. The humanitarian situation is catastrophic, and Gaza has been made an abyss of destruction. Despite the adoption of resolutions, by both the Security Council and the General Assembly, calling, *inter alia*, for the protection of civilians and a ceasefire, the war has persisted, with civilians continuing to face grave danger.

Today Guyana voted in favour of the resolution submitted by the United States (resolution 2735 (2024)) because we viewed it as another valuable contribution,

this time by the United States, Egypt and Qatar, towards achieving the end of the war and bringing relief to the hundreds of thousands of civilians suffering in Gaza and to the Israeli hostages and their families.

Specifically, Guyana notes that the ceasefire proposal with which the resolution deals aligns in several ways with previous resolutions adopted by the Council. It is still critical, however, for the Security Council, in keeping with its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, to redouble efforts towards the urgent achievement of a ceasefire, the release of all hostages in Gaza and of Palestinians illegally detained, and for a surge in humanitarian assistance in Gaza. Those are the steps needed to bring immediate relief to civilians being ravaged by Israel's eight-month-old war on Gaza. Those steps are also foundational to the reconstruction of Gaza and, more broadly, to reviving the vision of the two-State solution, which is the only just and comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian question.

As Guyana supported the resolution adopted today, we wish to reflect on three key elements not included in this resolution but warranting continued attention.

First, this resolution was considered in the context of the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, one of the most egregious consequences of the war. For Guyana, the ceasefire proposal is logically seen as a response to, inter alia, the unprecedented humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Secondly, we reiterate our demand for adherence to international law, including international humanitarian law. As Guyana has consistently pointed out, the war is characterized by the violation of international law with seeming impunity. In that context, it is therefore important to continuously emphasize the parties' obligations to strictly comply with international law. The Security Council should be the lead voice in that regard.

Thirdly and finally, as we welcome the proposal for a ceasefire, the Council itself must continue to unequivocally demand a permanent ceasefire.

In conclusion, Guyana stresses that the Council's responsibility for achieving a just end to the war is not eliminated by the adoption of this resolution. The Council must continue to work assiduously to bring an end to the war and to ensure accountability for all the atrocities committed during its course. We must also redouble efforts to chart a path towards the swift implementation of the two-State solution. As ever, Guyana is committed to those goals.

**Mr. De La Gasca** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador has once again voted in favour of peace. It has supported this resolution (resolution 2735 (2024)) because it believes that the Security Council should make its voice heard in support of a proposal that can finally stop the war. This proposal, which must be accepted by both parties, will put into effect an immediate and total ceasefire, allow for the release of hostages and facilitate the alleviation of the horrific humanitarian situation of civilians in Gaza. The implementation of all stages of this proposal also envisages the initiation of a Gaza reconstruction plan and rejects any attempt at territorial or demographic change in the Gaza Strip.

This war, which began with the terrorist acts of Hamas on 7 October 2023, which Ecuador will not cease to condemn, continues to cause much pain and suffering. My country therefore believes that the proposal presented on 31 May is an opportunity that must be seized to stop the spiral of violence. We must work now to ensure that this is the last war in this long conflict and a step towards a peaceful, negotiated, definitive and just solution for the parties, with the existence of two States, Palestine and Israel, on the basis of the 1967 borders and the relevant resolutions.

**Mr. Sowa** (Sierra Leone): Sierra Leone would like to thank the United States for its initiative in working on this resolution (resolution 2735 (2024)). We further acknowledge and support the ongoing diplomatic efforts spearheaded by Qatar, Egypt and the United States aimed at achieving a deal that will bring about tangible results on the ground.

It is in anticipation of that result that Sierra Leone voted in favour of the resolution just considered. As we have previously stated in the Security Council, Sierra Leone shares the view that the actions of the Council should complement ongoing diplomatic efforts that will bring about a meaningful pact for a sustainable peace.

While we do not agree with all the elements in the resolution, it is important that, as the body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, we urge both Israel and Hamas to seize this opportunity to meaningfully engage and commit to an agreement that will lead to a ceasefire, the release of hostages and an exchange of Palestinian prisoners, and allow for the effective distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale throughout the Gaza Strip, the reconstruction of Gaza and the actualization of the two-State solution.

The recent outcome of Israel's extensive raid in central Gaza on 8 June 2024 to release four hostages taken by Hamas on 7 October 2023 is an indication that,

until a comprehensive deal is reached by both parties, such operations, with devastating consequences for the civilian population, will continue.

To avoid future catastrophes and put an end to this brutal conflict, Sierra Leone reiterates the need for parties to the conflict to respect and implement all resolutions adopted by the Council, for international law to be upheld and for all International Court of Justice measures to be complied with. It is our sincere hope that the parties to the conflict will approach the negotiating table with empathy, flexibility and careful consideration of the impact of the conflict on the women, children, elderly and other vulnerable groups who, since 7 October 2023, have been victims of their actions. Sierra Leone reiterates its unwavering commitment to this cause, until a just and lasting solution is achieved.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia abstained in the voting on the Security Council resolution submitted by the United States endorsing the mediators' proposal on a ceasefire in Gaza (resolution 2735 (2024)).

From the very beginning of the escalation in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, we have consistently and unwaveringly advocated for the imperative of establishing a permanent ceasefire, and for the release of hostages and the normalization of the humanitarian situation in Gaza. We have always welcomed any diplomatic efforts on the ground aimed at a ceasefire, with parameters acceptable to both sides.

At the same time, we have several questions about the United States resolution, in which the Council welcomes a deal, the final parameters of which remain unknown to all, except perhaps the mediators themselves. The information circulating in open sources is quite contradictory. The sponsors have not informed the Security Council of the details of the agreements. We are essentially being offered a pig in a poke. There was no negotiations process as such on the resolution. The sponsors offered variations of the final text, in effect calling on Council members to sign up to them under time pressure. Hamas has been called upon to accept that so-called deal. But there is still no clarity as to whether Israel has formally agreed, as stipulated in the resolution, to the deal proposed by President Biden, given Israel's numerous statements about continuing the war until Hamas is completely defeated. What did Israel agree to specifically? Perhaps we are going to hear the answer to that question from the Israeli representative today.

We are convinced that the Security Council should not endorse agreements with vague parameters and without guarantees of their implementation on the ground or any clear understanding of how the parties themselves feel about them. In essence, the Council is giving *carte blanche* and endorsing a plan without knowing the details. The parameters listed in the three paragraphs are not details. Since the escalation in Gaza began, the Council has already adopted three resolutions (resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023) and 2728 (2024)), which have thus far only been implemented on paper. Today's resolution is the fourth. That cannot be called a positive trend. The fact that the Security Council has adopted a resolution with rather questionable content and without a clear demand for an immediate and permanent ceasefire undermines its authority as the main body for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We did not veto the resolution simply because we understand that it is supported by the Arab world. That said, all the questions that we have identified remain and must be answered.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Republic of Korea.

The Republic of Korea has repeatedly expressed its strong support for the diplomatic efforts carried out by the relevant countries, including the United States, Egypt and Qatar, to achieve an immediate ceasefire and the release of the hostages. The recent air strikes on refugee camps and the massive operation to rescue hostages, resulting in large numbers of civilian casualties, once again exemplify the imperative of finalizing the deal as soon as possible. More hesitation means more fatalities.

Today the Republic of Korea voted in favour of the resolution proposed by the United States (resolution 2735 (2024)) in the sincere hope that it can urgently lead to positive impacts on the ground by pressing both parties — notably Hamas — to accept and implement the terms of the deal. It is also of crucial importance that Israel stays true to its word and remains committed to the accepted proposal. No other considerations should be prioritized over the lives of innocent people, including the Israeli hostages and the Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

The Republic of Korea hopes that today's adoption can lead to a concrete outcome on the ground, including a massive expansion of humanitarian aid. The human suffering caused by this conflict is simply intolerable. As President Biden said on 31 May, it is time for this war to end.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Israel.

**Mrs. Shapir Ben Naftaly** (Israel): From the very first days following Hamas's invasion and brutal massacre on 7 October 2023, Israel's goals have been very clear: to bring all our hostages back home and to dismantle Hamas's capabilities. Israel is committed to those goals — to free all the hostages, to destroy Hamas's military and governing capabilities and to ensure that Gaza does not pose a threat to Israel in the future. And as we have echoed numerous times in this very Chamber, once those goals are met, the war will end. If Hamas were to release the hostages and turn themselves in, not one more shot would need to be fired. Yet sadly, for the past eight months, Hamas has refused to do that. In total, 120 hostages are still being held by Hamas in appalling conditions. To this day, Hamas continues to fire rockets at Israeli towns and cities, advancing their goal of murdering every Israeli.

It is Hamas that is preventing this war from ending — Hamas and Hamas alone. It is the genocidal jihadists who started this war and who choose to prolong it. Pressure must be put on Hamas, and blame must be placed where it belongs — on Hamas terrorists. The Council has adopted three resolutions calling for the release of hostages (resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023) and 2728 (2024)), and each time Hamas has utterly ignored the request. Hamas does not care what the Council has to say, because it has never been held responsible for its crimes by the Council. The pressure on the terrorists should have begun long ago, but it is still not too late — it must begin now.

Hamas's refusal to release the hostages through diplomacy has proven that the effort to bring our hostages home must also include military means. And last Saturday was the perfect example of how that can be achieved. As a result of a heroic operation, the Israel

Defense Forces rescued four hostages from Gaza. Those hostages — Noa Argamani, Almog Meir Jan, Andrey Kozlov and Shlomi Ziv — were being held in residential buildings by Palestinian families. While the hostages were guarded by terrorists, Gazan civilians were their jailers. Those so-called innocent civilians were not only cooperating with the terrorists but were complicit in their heinous crimes. As the world witnessed on Saturday, it is Israeli soldiers who sacrificed their lives to bring our hostages back home, while Hamas intentionally sacrifices Gazan children to prevent us from rescuing hostages. Israel regrets any harm to civilians, but it must be emphasized that Palestinians who cooperate with Hamas and take part in their war crimes are not uninvolved. That is the reality we face. The loss of life in Gaza is a tragedy, but if members do not put the blame on Hamas, they are advancing its strategy.

Israel stands firm in its principles, which have not changed. We will continue until all the hostages are returned and Hamas's military and governing capabilities are dismantled. Those have been our goals from day one. Just as President Biden stated on 31 May, Hamas must not stay in power. Israel will not let Hamas rearm or regroup so that Gaza can pose a threat to Israel. That is the unwavering goal that we are determined to achieve. That also means that Israel will not engage in meaningless and endless negotiations that can be exploited by Hamas as a way of stalling for time.

Hamas is solely responsible for this war. It invaded Israel, massacring innocents and taking hundreds of hostages. It continues to hold our loved ones in Gaza and continues to target Israel. It uses Gazans as human shields, while furthering its genocidal goals. The time has come for the Council to finally hold Hamas accountable, finally place the blame where it belongs and finally condemn terror. It is the Council's duty to apply relentless pressure on Hamas terrorists and ensure that all the hostages return home.

*The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.*