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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Polyanskiy	(Russian Federation)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
	China	Mr. Fu Cong
	Ecuador	Mr. De La Gasca
	France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Guyana	Ms. Persaud
	Japan	Mrs. Shino
	Malta	Ms. Gatt
	Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sangjin Kim
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Kanu
	Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
	Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.

Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

I also propose to invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting. A request from this country was submitted at the last moment. We suggest making an exception, barring any objections from members of the Council, to satisfy that request, given the specificity of this situation and the growing escalation in the region.

It is so decided.

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

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: Once again, the Council is holding an emergency meeting to discuss alarming developments in the Middle East. This is just a little over a week after I briefed members on the Houthi attack on Tel Aviv and Israel's strike in response that targeted Al-Hudaydah (see S/PV.9691). Earlier today, we all saw the news that Ismail Haniyeh, the leader of the Hamas Political Bureau, was killed together with the bodyguard in Tehran. Mr. Haniyeh had been in Tehran at the invitation of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to attend the inauguration of the new President, His Excellency Mr. Masoud Pezeshkian.

In a letter to the President of the Security Council dated today, Iran accused Israel of carrying out an attack that killed Mr. Haniyeh and claimed it was a serious infringement of Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity and constituted a blatant violation of international law. Iran's supreme leader and other senior officials have vowed to avenge Mr. Haniyeh's death, warning Israel of "harsh punishment intended to instil deep regret in the perpetrator". Various non-State armed groups aligned with Iran across the region have also threatened to retaliate against Israel. In a live broadcast a few hours ago, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Israel had launched strikes against three fronts, including against Hamas, Hizbullah and the Houthis in recent days. He emphasized that Israel was fighting an existential war with Iran.

Today's strike in Tehran follows in the wake of several recent escalatory events in the region. While violence continues unabated in Gaza after months of relentless diplomatic efforts, the situation across the Blue Line and inside Lebanon is on an increasingly worrisome path. Since I last briefed you on 22 July, the negative trajectory has continued. In a tragic incident on 27 July, 12 children were killed and dozens were injured in an apparent strike on a soccer field in the Druze village of Majdal Shams in the Israeli-occupied Golan.

According to Israel Defense Forces, an Iranian-made Falaq-1 rocket was fired by Hizbullah from north of Shaba'a village in southern Lebanon. Hizbullah denied responsibility for the strike. The strike followed months of increasingly intense exchanges across the Blue Line with Lebanon and hundreds of aerial attacks towards Israel from various locations across the region that Israel has attributed to Iran-backed forces. On 30 July, the Israel Defense Forces issued a statement claiming a targeted strike in Beirut on a Hizbullah commander allegedly responsible for the deaths in Majdal Shams. Hizbullah confirmed that a senior commander, Fouad Shukur, also known as Hajj Mohsen, was killed. According to Lebanon's Ministry of Health, at least five people were killed, including two children, and many more injured.

The various attacks over the past few days represent a serious and dangerous escalation. They take place amid the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip, where Hamas continues to hold hostages abducted from Israel on 7 October 2023 and amid continued hostilities and a

catastrophic humanitarian situation for the Palestinian population in the Strip. Most recently, on 27 July, a devastating Israeli strike killing dozens, including children, took place on a school in Deir Al-Balah, where thousands of displaced Palestinians were sheltering. That was yet another reminder of the terrible toll of the war on civilians. Earlier today, an Al-Jazeera journalist and his cameraman were killed, reportedly by an Israeli air strike in Gaza, while they were reporting from Haniyeh's home.

Allow me to reiterate the Secretary-General's words from today:

"The Secretary-General has consistently called for maximum restraint by all. It is increasingly clear, however, that restraint alone is insufficient at this extremely sensitive time."

Diplomatic efforts to change the trajectory and seek a path towards regional peace and stability are urgently needed. Communication by means of missiles, armed drones and other deadly attacks must end. I echo the Secretary-General's call for all to vigorously work towards regional de-escalation in the interest of long-term peace and stability for all. The international community must work together to prevent any actions that could make the conflict much bigger and wider very quickly. We need swift and effective diplomatic efforts towards de-escalation. The Council plays a crucial role in that regard. The time is now.

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

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

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

China firmly opposes and strongly condemns the assassination of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh, which took place yesterday in Tehran, Iran's capital. That act was a blatant attempt to sabotage peace efforts and wantonly trampled on the fundamental principle of the Charter of the United Nations on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States. China is deeply worried about an exacerbation of the upheaval in the region that this incident might trigger.

The Gaza conflict has been ongoing for nearly 300 days, resulting in nearly 40,000 deaths and an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe. Over two

months ago, the Council adopted resolution 2735 (2024). As of now, however, ceasefire negotiations have yet to yield any progress, while the spillover effects of the conflict are increasingly visible with the tensions between Lebanon and Israel, between Syria and Israel and in the Red Sea sounding the alarm frequently. The Middle East situation is hanging by a thread, much to the concern of the international community.

Given the severity of the situation, the parties concerned must heed the international cause for a ceasefire and a cessation of the fighting. They must implement Council resolutions fully, actively coordinate with and support international good offices and take tangible actions to push for de-escalation and the restoration of peace and tranquillity in the region. They must not act single-mindedly and repeatedly take provocative and risky actions to stoke steady escalation.

We strongly object to and condemn the recent irresponsible acts, including Israel's attack on southern Beirut. China reiterates that military means and abuse of force offer no solution and will lead only to a bigger crisis. The continued deterioration of the Middle East situation is directly attributable to the continuous failure to implement a ceasefire in Gaza. We urge all parties to comply with the overwhelming international consensus, work jointly for an immediate ceasefire to save lives, mitigate the impact of the havoc and contain any spillovers. We urge Israel to implement Council resolutions in full, immediately halt all its military operations in Gaza and immediately stop its collective punishment of the people in Gaza. Countries with major influence must apply more pressure and work more vigorously on the parties concerned and make tangible good-faith efforts to put out the flames of war in Gaza.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

Today's meeting takes place at the moment of grave peril. We are on the precipice of catastrophe. This morning Israel committed an act of terror by assassinating Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, violating international law and the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Algeria extends its sincerest condolences and sympathy to the brotherly Palestinian people as they face this ordeal.

Make no mistake. This is not merely an attack on one man. It is a vicious assault on the very foundations of diplomatic relations, the sanctity of State sovereignty and the principles that underpin our global order. We

vehemently condemn, in the strongest possible terms, this cowardly and heinous terrorist act perpetrated by the Israeli occupying Power. Israel has embraced bloodshed, a scorched-earth policy that leaves destruction in its wake. A relentless tide of violence is flooding Gaza, the West Bank, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and now the Islamic Republic of Iran. Where will this madness end? The savage bombardment of Gaza this morning, the deliberate targeting of civilians and journalists in Gaza and the targeting of civilians in Beirut, the suffocating occupation of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese lands — these are not just illegal acts. They are a moral abomination that stains the conscience of humankind. Let us be clear: these are not acts of self-defence; they are acts of brutal aggression and flagrant defiance of justice. They are acts of sabotage of the efforts made by Egypt, Qatar and the United States to implement resolution 2735 (2024) and finally get a ceasefire.

The international community must not remain silent, defined by indifference as innocent blood is spilled and international law is shredded into pieces. With the utmost urgency, we call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza and the lifting of the inhumane Gaza blockade. A ceasefire in Gaza remains the key to stability in the Middle East. We call for a complete and irrevocable end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories. We call for full accountability for the occupying Power's heinous war crimes and egregious human rights violations. We call for unwavering compliance with all Security Council resolutions. We must act decisively to end this violence and build a lasting peace in the region.

Ms. Persaud (Guyana): I thank you, Mr. President, for so swiftly organizing this meeting following recent concerning developments in the Middle East region. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for the information provided.

The situation in the Middle East is approaching a boiling point. It appears that some actors in the region are intent on returning to the days where scores, real or imagined, were settled by the most brutal means. Civilization has taken us away from that era, with a rich body of international law now governing relations between and among international actors. We cannot afford to reverse those gains and resort to primitive approaches to settling disputes.

Civilians are the ones suffering the most. Guyana therefore condemns in the strongest terms the constant disregard for, and violation of, international law in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. We remind the parties involved that, as States Members of the United Nations, they have an obligation to abide by international law, including the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. Those obligations include respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, violations of which should be swiftly investigated, so that appropriate actions are taken against those found to be in breach of their obligations. In that context, Guyana condemns in the strongest terms the recent violations of both Iran's and Lebanon's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

We are witnessing the heightening of tensions in the region, underpinned by a constant stream of provocative rhetoric that does nothing but add fuel to a fire that is already burning. Guyana calls on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and to refrain from further actions that perpetuate the downward spiral. In that context, Guyana recalls resolution 2735 (2024) and the Security Council's call for Israel and Hamas to fully implement the terms of the ceasefire proposal announced on 31 May 2024.

We are concerned that the latest attacks in the occupied Golan Heights, Beirut and now Tehran, coupled with the continued bombardment of the Gaza Strip and violence in the West Bank, may cumulatively have negative outcomes for achieving agreement on that proposal. The central question for the Council, therefore, is whether we will continue to adopt a wait-and-see approach, or whether we will use the appropriate tools at our disposal to temper the escalating violence.

It will be a grave mistake to view the recent incidents in isolation from what is taking place in the Gaza Strip. All of the illegalities that have stemmed from various fronts in the Middle East since 7 October must be seen through the prism of the ongoing war in Gaza, a war that continues to mutilate and annihilate innocent civilians, the majority of whom are women and children, a war that also continues to kill journalists and aid workers at unprecedented levels and violates almost every rule of international humanitarian law.

The death toll climbs every day, and anger is mounting on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides for the same reason: both want security guarantees for themselves and their loved ones. In the near term,

for the Israelis, that means the release of the hostages taken in the 7 October attack, while for the Palestinians the plea is to end this war and create conditions for dignified existence. In the long term, however, security guarantees for both Israelis and Palestinians entail the exercise by the latter of their inalienable right to self-determination. The history of colonialism has shown us that no people consent to subjugation, and certainly not of the kind that Israel has visited on the Palestinian people. The desire for freedom is innate, and that is the reason that Palestinians have continued their legitimate struggle for all these decades.

The Council must therefore respond appropriately to bring this struggle to its just conclusion, where their aspiration for statehood is realized and they receive redress for all the years of violent brutality experienced at the hands of their neighbour. Guyana is prepared to do its part in any Security Council action to that end, because this is the organ that has the responsibility to make this aspiration a reality.

Allow me to conclude by lamenting the ongoing loss of life in this senseless tragedy that has enveloped the Middle East and to appeal to fellow Council members for us to work together to end the bloodshed and achieve sustainable peace for all.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): I extend my gratitude to Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

As we are gathered in this Chamber again today, no end appears to be in sight with regard to the ongoing Middle East crisis. Since the terrorist attack by Hamas on 7 October and the ensuing Israeli responses in Gaza, my delegation has repeatedly expressed our grave concern over the escalation of conflict in the region, including across the Blue Line as well as in Yemen. It is therefore extremely worrisome that such anxieties have now become a reality. What we have witnessed is the further spread of conflict, while the ceasefire deal in Gaza in accordance with resolution 2735 (2024) remains unrealized.

In addition to attacks in the occupied Golan Heights last weekend, where 12 innocent children were killed, there was a subsequent air strike on Beirut by Israel. A Hamas political leader was reportedly killed in Tehran, following the inauguration ceremony for the new Iranian President. We are deeply troubled that this series of recent escalatory incidents may result in an irreversible spiral of hostilities in the region. It

is all the more regrettable that those escalations have negatively impacted the ongoing negotiations to secure a long-overdue ceasefire in Gaza, secure the release of the hostages and ensure aid at an appropriate scale to address the ever-growing humanitarian catastrophe in line with the Council's resolutions.

The recent worrisome attacks in the region are undeniably related to ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip and further serve to illustrate the urgency of an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Now that the wider Middle East has reached a critical juncture, the choices made by major players in the coming days and weeks can fundamentally alter the political and security landscape in the Middle East. We again appeal for de-escalation. Against this spectrum, my delegation strongly opposes any actions that pour additional fuel on the fires of conflict in the region. We also urge all parties, including the relevant major players, both national and non-State actors, to exercise the utmost restraint from any measures that may aggravate the already volatile regional situation.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

A few things are true and straightforward.

First, and I want to be very clear about this, Israel has a right to defend itself against attacks from Hizbullah and other terrorists. That is precisely what it did on 30 July, when it independently responded to the 28 July attack by Hizbullah on Majdal Shams, which killed 12 children. I also want to note that the United States was not involved with Israel's response on 30 July in Lebanon. Nonetheless, there is absolutely no doubt that Hizbullah was responsible for that attack, which used an Iranian weapon and was launched from a portion of Lebanon controlled by Hizbullah. Indeed, Hizbullah has repeatedly fired rockets at Israel since 8 October, with Iran's support and backing, flouting resolution 1701 (2006). Attacks by Hizbullah have displaced more than 100,000 civilians. No member of the Council should, or would, tolerate attacks such as those. Therefore, we call on the Security Council to send an unambiguous message to Hizbullah by standing with Israel as it defends itself against Hizbullah's repeated attacks.

Secondly, Hizbullah is not the only Iranian-backed group in the region that has taken advantage of the situation in Gaza to undermine regional peace and security. The Houthis are brazenly violating

international law with their attacks on commercial and merchant vessels in the Red Sea, attacks that have affected all of us. Iran's support for the Houthis clearly violates the arms embargo and resolution 2216 (2015), and those attacks flagrantly disregard resolution 2722 (2024). Iran's arming of terrorist groups in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq is similarly destabilizing and contrary to efforts by the Security Council to de-escalate regional tensions. Iran must abide by the Council's resolutions and, failing that, the Security Council must consider additional measures to enforce its resolutions to hold Iran accountable and address repeated actions by its terrorist proxies and partners that threaten regional peace and security.

Thirdly, the United States was not aware of, or involved in, the apparent death of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. Indeed, we have no independent confirmation as to Hamas's claims regarding his death.

Fourthly, as Secretary Blinken noted earlier today, it is best not to speculate about the impact that recent events may have on peace and security in the Middle East. A broader war is neither imminent nor inevitable, although the opportunistic attacks by Iran and its network of terrorist proxies and partners across the region have repeatedly brought us closer to a regional conflict. For our part, the United States will continue to lead the way in diplomatic efforts to end the war in Gaza and reduce regional tensions. We will continue to work hard to prevent a broader regional war. That starts, as Secretary Blinken reaffirmed today, with finalizing an agreement for an immediate ceasefire with the release of hostages in Gaza, as called for in resolution 2735 (2024). A ceasefire agreement is the surest way to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people and unlock the possibility of broader stability.

The United States will therefore continue to work in partnership with Egypt, Qatar and other regional partners to seek to deliver an agreement. We have also made clear to all parties that we want to avoid an escalation of fighting along the Blue Line, between Israel and Lebanon. We remain committed to a diplomatic outcome to restore calm along the Blue Line, which would allow citizens on both sides to safely return to their homes. Again, we believe that there is still time and space for a diplomatic solution.

We encourage the members of the Council with direct influence over Iran to increase pressure on it to stop escalating its proxy conflict against Israel and

other actors. Indeed, every member of the Council should call on Iran to stop arming, advising and financing terrorist groups and to rein in the actions of proxies and partners who threaten regional peace and security. In this dangerous moment, it is imperative that we work together to reduce tensions in the region. Rest assured, the United States will continue to do our part and appreciates the efforts of other nations that share our commitment to support lasting regional peace.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): We thank China and Algeria for calling for this urgent meeting, as well as the Russian presidency for expeditiously convening it on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. We are also grateful to Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her insights.

We condemn today's air strike in Iran, which resulted in the death of Mr. Ismail Haniyeh, leader of Hamas. Our concern is that this tragic event can potentially inflame the tensions between Israel and its neighbours and trigger conflicts with far-reaching negative impact on regional and international peace and security. We strongly call on both parties to exercise the maximum restraint and approach the situation with a high degree of caution, prudence and wisdom in order to prevent further escalation of the conflict, which could hinder ongoing efforts towards bringing to a halt the war in Gaza.

We have repeatedly warned the Council about the risk of the Israel-Palestine conflict spreading across the region and about its consequences. Unfortunately, current events can compromise diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching an agreement leading to a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and to the release of Israeli hostages still under the captivity of Hamas. Israel, on its part, must comply with international legal standards and agreements, including the International Court of Justice rulings.

We also demand urgent concrete actions to address the Israel-Palestine conflict through negotiations. In that regard, we urge the parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire and effectively implement the relevant Security Council resolutions. It is imperative that the parties engage in constructive dialogue to resolve their differences peacefully. International efforts should focus on facilitating negotiations and finding a lasting resolution to the conflict. The Security Council must continue to closely monitor the situation and take all possible measures to prevent any further escalation that

may result from this attack. Careful consideration of risks and extended consequences is therefore essential during this critical moment. We reiterate our call for the implementation of a two-State solution, a solution of two independent and sovereign States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, both as Members of the United Nations.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): France is alarmed by the increase in tensions and the risk of a significant regional conflagration in the Near East and the Middle East. We call for the greatest possible responsibility and restraint to avoid a regional conflagration. Iran must stop supporting destabilizing actors and exercise and call for restraint throughout the region — in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Lebanon. France is strongly committed to regional stability and the security of its partners in the region. We call on everything to be done to avoid another military escalation. We are in contact with all parties and working for a de-escalation to avoid a war, which would have devastating consequences for the region. The President of France, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, conveyed that to the Israeli Prime Minister and the Iranian President.

We have condemned in the strongest terms the attack that struck the Druze town Majdal Shams and the occupied Syrian Golan with a very heavy death toll. France reiterates his condolences to the families of all the civilian victims. We will continue our efforts in favour of de-escalation in South Lebanon. France is committed to the security of Israel and Lebanon. The President of France has restated the commitment of France to stand with them and work towards a diplomatic solution, in coordination with the United States on the basis of resolution 1701 (2006). In that context, France supports and proposes the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, whose work is essential for regional stability.

Civilian populations have paid a heavy price in the region. International humanitarian law enjoins all parties to ensure their protection. We call for the need to respect the principles of proportionality, necessity and distinction, in conformity with the Geneva Conventions. We also recall the need to not impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance. We reaffirm our demand and that of the Council to unconditionally and immediately release all hostages and our demand for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. France reaffirms how urgent it is to achieve a solution to the

Israel-Palestine conflict, and only a two-State solution is viable. It is time to assume our responsibilities and avoid escalation, which would be devastating for the region.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I join others in thanking Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned by the escalation of tensions in the Middle East and the impact that might have on regional security and stability. I will make three points.

First, escalation and a cycle of endless violence is in no one's interests. We do not want to see further bloodshed. We urge calm and call for immediate restraint. Our Foreign Secretary is in the region as we speak reiterating that call and encouraging de-escalation. The path to peace must be through diplomatic negotiations. Long-term peace will not be secured by bombs and bullets.

Secondly, in recent weeks, we have seen reckless attacks launched by the Houthis against Tel Aviv, killing one person, and Hizbullah rockets fired on innocent children in Majdal Shams, resulting in at least 12 deaths and many more injured. We have repeatedly been clear in the Council about Iran's role in destabilizing the region through its use of proxies, including Lebanese Hizbullah and the Houthis. Those attacks are enabled by the continued supply of advanced weaponry by Iran, especially missiles, to proxy groups. That must cease. The United Kingdom is resolute in its commitment to Israel's security. We support Israel's right to defend itself in the face of such aggression in line with international humanitarian law.

Thirdly, since 7 October 2023, we have seen the terrible toll on Israelis, Palestinians and many others in the region. The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is truly appalling, with nearly 40,000 Palestinians killed. The impact of that devastation is particularly acute for women and children. The attempts by Iran and its proxies to use the suffering of those in the Gaza Strip as justification for further violence is perverse, and we reject them entirely. We support all ongoing efforts to bring stability to the region and an end to the suffering. We reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza to protect civilians, get all the hostages out, get more aid in and open a pathway towards long-term peace. That will require the parties to commit to a renewed peace process, resulting in a two-State solution with a

safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian State.

Mrs. Shino (Japan) I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

We meet here at the critical moment for the Middle East. We are extremely concerned and alarmed that the region is closer than ever to a large-scale conflict that would be difficult to contain. The events of the past few days, which have led to this meeting today, have shown how fragile the situation is.

Japan strongly condemns the reported rocket attack on 27 July that killed 12 children and youths and wounded many others in the Golan Heights. The targeting of innocent civilians is absolutely unacceptable. We are aware of the announcement by the Government of Israel about their air strikes in Beirut yesterday as well as the news of the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh last night. Japan is closely following events with grave concern and strongly urges all parties to de-escalate the situation.

We fear the region is at the brink of all-out war. The international community should make all diplomatic efforts to avert that, and Japan stands ready to do so in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders. Let us not forget that the conflict began with the heinous 7 October 2023 attack on Israel and the taking the hostages by Hamas and other groups. The ensuing hostilities in the Gaza Strip have caused unimaginable suffering for Palestinians, reportedly killing nearly 40,000, injuring tens of thousands more, displacing millions multiple times and destroying much of the Strip. The fighting has reverberated across the region, from the West Bank to Lebanon to Yemen to Syria and to Iran.

Japan reiterates its strong support for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip that can allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid at scale and the release of hostages. That is also essential to prevent a wider conflict that would only inflict more bloodshed and devastation in the Middle East. The future of the entire region and beyond is at stake.

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

Switzerland is extremely concerned about the situation in the Middle East. The attacks of the past few days in the occupied Syrian Golan, in the southern suburbs of Beirut and in Tehran represent an

acceleration of the escalation that must be stopped as a matter of urgency. We reject the spiral of violence and urge a return to diplomacy.

Switzerland urges all actors involved and those who have an influence over them to show the utmost restraint, to pursue diplomatic means in order to ease tensions and to seek solutions in line with international law. All channels of communication must be used. There is no military solution to this conflict. Dialogue and de-escalation are the only ways to avoid falling into the abyss of a regional war and to get back on the road to peace. International law, including the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries in the region, must be respected.

We call on all parties to respect and fully implement the resolutions of the Security Council, including all resolutions adopted since 7 October 2023, as well as resolution 1701 (2006). Furthermore, all parties to the conflict must respect international humanitarian law in all circumstances. Civilians are protected and must never be targeted. Too many have already been killed in the region since 7 October 2023.

The developments I mentioned and the continued fighting in the Gaza Strip continue to claim new civilian victims. That is unacceptable and must stop. We reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the release of all hostages. A ceasefire in the Gaza Strip is urgently needed, in particular to reduce civilian suffering. It would also help to calm the situation in the region, including in Lebanon and on both sides of the Blue Line. Negotiations must urgently continue in good faith. The Council must assume its responsibilities and contribute, united, to a peaceful solution. All eyes are on us. Switzerland is ready to make its contribution.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I want to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing today.

We meet today in what feels like the eye of the storm. Several traumatic days for the Middle East region have led us to this: a new unfolding spiral of attacks and retaliation. The Secretary-General said on 21 June:

“The risk for the conflict in the Middle East to widen is real and must be avoided. One rash move, one miscalculation, could trigger a catastrophe that

goes far beyond the border and, frankly, beyond the imagination.”

We deeply regret that that warning has not been heeded.

I will rewind to Saturday and the horrific attack on Majdal Shams in the occupied Syrian Golan, which we fully condemn. The incident should be investigated and the circumstances brought to light. The killing of children is outrageous and inhumane, wherever it occurs. On the same day, an attack on a school in Deir Al-Balah also resulted in civilian casualties, including many children who were sheltering there. I should not have to say it, but the life of a Druze child is equal to that of a Gazan child, is equal to that of a Lebanese child, an Israeli child or any other child across the world. Subsequent attacks in Beirut and Tehran yesterday are deeply concerning, and they represent a serious escalation. The world and our collective security, built in the aftermath of Second World War, relies on respect for the Charter of the United Nations and for international law.

As we have done before, we have called for maximum restraint by all actors. We firmly believe that there is no military solution to the crisis that is unfolding before our eyes. The positions expressed by Israel, Lebanon and Iran in letters to the Council share one common thread, that is, a concern for regional stability. We read those letters as a call to the Council to help avoid a dangerous escalation of no return. We believe that the Security Council should pronounce itself on the situation, if only to call for de-escalation and the pursuit of diplomacy and dialogue.

While the crisis in the Middle East has a long history and a variety of root causes, we cannot deny that this spiral is being exacerbated by what is happening in the Gaza Strip. The suffering of Palestinian civilians, on one side, and Israeli hostages, on the other, is fuelling flames across the entire region. I heard from everybody today, and we also repeat, that what we need now more than ever is a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the full implementation of resolution 2735 (2024). That should be done within a strict timeline. The people who rely on the Council to protect them and to maintain international peace and security simply cannot wait. We also need to start talking about the time beyond ceasefire and a sustainable peace for the region, however distant that might currently seem.

As precarious as the current situation appears to be, a full-blown regional war with catastrophic

consequences is not inevitable. The scenario that the Secretary-General described as something beyond imagination can still, and should still, be avoided at all costs. We, the Security Council, should seize the opportunity, which may well prove to be one of our last, to lead and demonstrate a firm stand from the international community.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

Malta remains deeply concerned about the escalations during the past 48 hours in the Middle East. The killing of 12 children in Majdal Shams in the occupied Golan Heights is shocking and must be condemned. Developments in Iran and Lebanon have the potential to spark further conflict and plunge the region into even greater despair. We reiterate our call on all parties to exercise restraint, prioritize de-escalation and pursue peaceful solutions to all disputes. All remaining hostages must be unconditionally released, and all parties must understand that extrajudicial executions are illegal under international law.

Following the horrific 7 October 2023 attacks by Hamas and other armed groups, the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip rages on. That has given rise to a dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. Civilians and individuals, protected and international law, including United Nations personnel, humanitarian workers and journalists, continue to risk their lives.

The prospect of a full-blown regional conflict remains worrisomely present. It would lead to a crisis of untold proportions in the region, hitting the most vulnerable, women and children in particular. That is simply unacceptable. Malta has consistently called on all parties to concentrate efforts towards preventing a regional spillover. The most effective way to achieve that is for all sides to accept the fact that widespread conflict and the death of civilians is not in anyone's interest. Efforts towards an immediate and permanent ceasefire to the Israel-Hamas conflict in the Gaza Strip must not cease. To that end, it is imperative that Hamas and Israel accept and implement the ceasefire proposal outlined in resolution 2735 (2024). We deeply regret that the latest developments and the escalating violence only undermine that and move us further away from this common goal, and we call on all parties to reduce tensions.

All parties to the conflict must fully comply with their obligations under international law, including

international humanitarian law. That includes the paramount obligations to protect civilians in the course of hostilities, including in the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We condemn the loss of any innocent civilian life and reiterate our call on all actors to pursue all possible actions to protect civilian lives. Accountability for any violation of those obligations must be equally prioritized. The implementation of all relevant Council resolutions, including resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023) and 2728 (2024), and the full, immediate and effective implementation of the orders of the International Court of Justice remain essential.

In conclusion, it is only through the prevention of regional conflict that we can restore a credible political horizon to address the situation in the Middle East. Such a political horizon must be centred towards the comprehensive realization of a two-State solution along the pre-1967 borders, while 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 relevant Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I too want to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing. And once again, I would like to reiterate the support of Ecuador for the work of the United Nations and all its organs.

Throughout its term as elected member of the Council, Ecuador has repeatedly called on the actors in this conflict to show restraint and caution and avoid exacerbating tensions and prevent violence. At this time, following the events about which we were briefed, I must reiterate that appeal with a special urgency. It is necessary that restraint be shown and to avoid any kind of action that could contribute to regional destabilization. It is essential to reduce tensions and follow up with diplomatic efforts towards a ceasefire in Gaza, the release of the hostages held by Hamas and the start of a political process towards a lasting peace. That is why, once again, I urge the parties to demonstrate political will and flexibility to finalize such an agreement. The immediate implementation of resolution 2735 (2024) is the fastest way to put a stop to the violence and reduced tensions in the region.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate our conviction that only a peaceful, negotiated, definitive and just solution, with the existence of two States, Palestine and Israel,

based on the 1967 borders and the relevant resolutions, is the only way to put a definitive end to this conflict.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting at the request of Algeria, China and the Russian Federation. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

Sierra Leone takes note of the identical letter dated 31 July 2024 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2024/584), informing them of an attack on Iranian territory that led to the death of Mr. Ismail Haniyeh, political leader of Hamas.

Sierra Leone remains deeply concerned about this recent development, bearing in mind the overall situation in the Middle East, which already poses a serious threat to regional stability and international peace and security. We affirm the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the principle enshrined in Article 2, paragraph 4, which provides that all Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. We therefore condemn the action of the killing of Mr. Haniyeh on Iranian territory, which clearly violates the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iran.

As a State party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, we have followed with interest proceedings at Pre-Trial Chamber I of the Court following the announcement by Prosecutor Karim Khan, on 20 May 2024, of the filing of applications for warrants of arrest in the situation in the State of Palestine, including against Ismail Haniyeh, based on his findings that he bears criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of Israel and the State of Palestine from at least 7 October 2023. If there was ever a quest for justice, that is the justice and accountability process our multilateral system based on the rule of law allows for, and not by unlawful killings. To that end, we call for a comprehensive investigation into the attack, as reported by Iran, to determine the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident and to ensure that those responsible be held accountable for any violation of international law.

An assessment of the situation in the Middle East indicates that the Israel-Palestine conflict, which remains unresolved, continues to fuel tensions and violence, which could not only be detrimental to the civilians already facing a dire humanitarian crisis, but could also lead to wider regional conflagration. On that note, we condemn reported attacks by Hizbullah in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights and Israel's strike on Beirut, both of which claimed the lives of innocent civilians. Such actions violate international law, including international human rights law and humanitarian law, as applicable.

In our tireless efforts to pursue peace in the Middle East, especially in relation to the Israel-Palestine conflict, Sierra Leone reiterates its call for the parties to the conflict in the region to exercise restraint and avoid all acts of retaliation that may cause further civilian harm and an expanded war in the entire region. We emphasize the need for parties to the conflict to honour their obligations outlined in the Charter of the United Nations when they pledged to join the global community and to abide by its tenets, which require its Member States to settle disputes by peaceful means, refrain from the threat or use of force and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States.

Sierra Leone reiterates the demand for an immediate permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the entire Middle East in order to prevent further aggression, civilian casualties and an exacerbation of the conflict, particularly an exacerbation of the dire humanitarian situation. A ceasefire at this stage is not only an imperative, but also a moral obligation and a practical necessity. States with influence on all sides must apply the necessary pressure to prevent a pending catastrophe.

In conclusion, we demand that parties to the conflict respect all the resolutions adopted by the Council, including, but not limited to, resolutions 2728 (2024), 2735 (2024) and 1701 (2006), as they are a reflection of our collective call for a peaceful and lasting solution to this decades-long conflict.

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

Russia in its national capacity supported the initiative of Algeria and China to convene today's meeting, relating to the new and extremely dangerous escalation in the Middle East. We studied the position

of Iran very closely, as set forth in the letter sent this morning. We are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her comprehensive briefing and assessments of the situation in Iran and the region.

Russia firmly condemns the assassination of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh following a missile strike on his residence in Tehran overnight on 31 July. This provocative attack was carried out at a time when the Hamas leader was in Iran, officially invited to participate in the inauguration ceremony of the President-elect of Iran, Masoud Pezeshkian. Those who are behind this political assassination must have known how dangerous the consequences could be for the entire region. This is a serious blow, primarily to mediation negotiations between Hamas and Israel focused on a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, and Ismail Haniyeh was a direct participant in that. We must all understand that.

The attempts to drag Iran into a regional confrontation destabilize a situation in the region that is already at a boiling point. The heinous practice of targeted assassination of high-profile political and military figures is bringing the Middle East to the brink of a region-wide war. We all remember clearly the dangerous escalation in January 2020, when the region teetered on the edge of confrontation as a result of the United States assassination on Iraqi territory of Qasem Soleimani and other Iraqi officials. We note with regret that the necessary conclusions were not drawn from that. Washington, in acting irresponsibly, set a poor example for others, and actions that undermine the stability and security of the entire region continue.

Restraint and refraining from taking steps that could lead to further escalation in the Middle East are more important today than ever. Unfortunately, we are seeing the opposite so far. Yesterday an Israeli uncrewed aerial vehicle carried out a missile strike on a residential building in a densely populated neighbourhood of a southern suburb of Beirut, near the Bahman Hospital, one of the biggest in Lebanon. Women and two children were among the dead, with more than 80 others injured. In Tel Aviv they announced that they had eradicated a senior commander of Hizbullah, whom Israel blamed for the shelling of Majdal Shams and the occupied Golan Heights.

The political assassination of Ismail Haniyeh also fits into the logic of spiralling escalation. We firmly condemn any such steps, as well as acts of violence

against civilians, which are leading to many civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. It is important not to allow the situation to slide to a full-scale regional war. Regarding the confrontation between Israel and Hizbullah, we have consistently highlighted the need for the full and comprehensive implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), which clearly sets out both the obligations of Israel to end all offensive military operations and to withdraw its armed forces from the south of Lebanon and to end the occupation of Lebanese lands, but also the provisions on moving all Hizbullah groups to the north of the Litani River.

It is clear to everyone that the key to a resolution of the current unprecedented escalation is an end to the bloodshed in the Gaza Strip, where the number of dead is approaching 40,000, and over 90,000 people have been injured. Journalists and humanitarian workers are also being targeted and killed. The only way out is a ceasefire as soon as possible, the exchange of hostages and detainees and the organization of unimpeded humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip. Only then will the process towards a peaceful solution to the Palestinian question and on an internationally recognized basis be able to restart. That will be based on the two-State principle, which is something we have unwaveringly supported. We are ready to cooperate with all of those who share those aims.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Iravani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Russian Federation for convening this emergency meeting. I also extend my gratitude to China and Algeria for requesting this meeting, as well as those members that supported convening it. We also thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

We requested this urgent meeting and attend the Council today to address a matter of grave importance and urgency, one that threatens international peace and security and challenges the very principles upon which this body was founded, as we set out in our letter to you today (S/2024/584), Mr. President, namely, the covert assassination of Mr. Ismail Haniyeh, political chief of the Palestinian Islamic resistance movement — Hamas — and a great leader of the Palestinian people in a legitimate struggle for self-determination as the result of an aggressive

act of terrorism by the Zionist occupying regime of Israel. Mr. Haniyeh, who was in Tehran on an official invitation of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to attend the inauguration ceremony of the new President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the presence of leaders of many foreign countries, was targeted, alongside his companion, in his residence in Tehran today at around 2 a.m. local time.

This act of terror is just another manifestation of the Israelis' decades-long patterns of terrorism and sabotage targeting Palestinians and other supporters and sympathizers of the Palestinian cause across the region and beyond. In addition to its terrorist objective, Israel was also pursuing political goals with this act, aiming to disrupt the first day of the new Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has prioritized strengthening peace and stability in the region and enhancing cooperation and constructive engagement with the international community. The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns in the strongest possible terms this horrible terrorist act as a most serious violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, as well as a grave breach of Iran's sovereignty and national security.

This aggressive act of terrorism, as provocative as it is, constitutes a serious breach of peace and security and requires immediate and effective action by the Security Council in the discharge of its responsibility under the Charter. This crime is not isolated, but part of a broader pattern of aggressive actions and policies by the Israeli regime against other nations in the region. Just before this heinous crime, the regime carried out a cowardly terrorist attack in the southern suburbs of Beirut, targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. The warmongering leaders of this rough regime have shown complete disregard for the basic norms and principles of international law. Their crimes reveal a lack of commitment to peace and stability in the region and suggest an intention to escalate conflict and expand the war through the entire region.

The responsibility of the United States as a strategic ally and main supporter of the Israeli regime in the region cannot be overlooked in this horrific crime. This act could not have occurred without the authorization and intelligence support of the United States. The continuation of Israel's aggression threatens peace and stability in the region. The international community, particularly the Security Council, cannot remain indifferent to such heinous crimes and must take

decisive action to address this violation and hold the perpetrators accountable.

Persistent and systematic attacks on Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip, characterized by this appropriation, the use of force and indiscriminate targeting, have resulted in a tragic loss of life, widespread destruction and a deepening humanitarian crisis. Those actions, which frequently target civilian infrastructure, residential areas and medical facilities, not only violate international humanitarian law but also constitute war crimes under the Geneva Conventions. Unfortunately, the inaction and inability of the Security Council have emboldened the current regime, allowing it to continue committing war crimes against the oppressed people of Palestine and acts of aggression against other nations in the region.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly warned of the serious repercussions that the malicious activities of the Israeli occupying regime pose to regional and international peace and security. Despite the provocations, Iran has consistently exercised maximum restraint. Following the Israeli regime's cowardly terrorist and armed attack on our diplomatic premises on Damascus on 1 April, we promptly notified the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the wrongful Israeli international act and called on the Security Council to denounce that unjustified criminal and terrorist act decisively and to take appropriate measures to prevent the recurrence of such crimes and aggression.

Regrettably, the Security Council has failed in its duty to maintain international peace and security, and a draft press statement proposed by Russia condemning Israel's atrocious act was blocked by the United States, the United Kingdom and France. Yet it is now imperative that the occupying regime be held fully accountable for its atrocities. The regime must not be allowed to evade responsibility for its violations and the consequences that follow.

For nearly 10 months, certain countries, particularly the United States, have shielded Israel from any responsibility for the massacre in the Gaza Strip and its malicious activities in the region. Those countries have not only denied the inherent right of the Palestinian resistance group to self-defence against Israeli atrocities, but they have also shamelessly justified the Israeli massacre and genocide against defenceless Palestinian people on the pretext of self-

defence for Israel. The United States and its allies have made a cynical attempt to justify and cover up the atrocities committed by the Israeli regime against the people of Palestine through an arbitrary and misleading interpretation of the concept of self-defence.

Regrettably, the United States has once again chosen to turn a blind eye to reality and overlooked the root causes of the current situation. A Palestinian resistance group like Hamas and other resistance groups in the region are not terrorists; they are legitimate groups under international law and were established to fight against occupation and aggression. The Security Council must unequivocally condemn Israel for its horrible terrorist act as a most serious violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, as well as a grave breach of Iran's sovereignty and national security. That condemnation should be strong and clear and reflect the international community's rejection of such violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Furthermore, the Security Council should take immediate steps to hold Israel accountable for this act of aggression. Such steps must include considering the imposition of sanctions and other measures that are necessary to prevent further violations and to signal that the Israeli malevolent activities will not be tolerated by the international community. The Council must also demand that Israel immediately cease all aggressive actions against the Palestinian territories and other nations in the region. That demand should be accompanied by a call for ending the occupation of the Palestinian territories, the territory of Lebanon and the Syrian-occupied Golan, in accordance with international law and the principles of the United Nations.

Finally, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its inherent right to self-defence, in accordance with international law, to respond decisively to these terrorist and criminal acts when it deems it necessary and appropriate. The Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms its commitment to upholding international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that peace and stability in the region can be achieved only through respect for those principles.

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

Ms. Abdelhady (Palestine): I thank you, Mr. President, for your swift response to Algeria and China's request to convene this emergency meeting

to address the further grave developments regarding the Palestine question and the broader situation in the Middle East. We recognize that this meeting takes place on the last day of the presidency of the Russian Federation, and we renew our appreciation for your skilled leadership of the Council in these critical times. We also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

It has been nearly 300 days since Israel launched its genocidal war on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip — a war that has gravely breached all tenets of international humanitarian law and international human rights law; a war that has flagrantly violated the Charter of the United Nations, including the cardinal principle regarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States; and a war that threatens international peace and security. Yet Israel is being permitted to wage this war in broad daylight, with no restraints and no consequences. It is doing so wilfully and wantonly in spite of the Security Council's resolutions, in spite of the orders of provisional measures of the International Court of Justice and in spite of the global demands for a ceasefire. And still the Council is failing its duty to impose a ceasefire and bring a halt to this depravity.

Every day brings more horror, loss and suffering for our people, as Israeli occupying forces massacre Palestinian civilians; assassinate officials; kill humanitarian workers, medical personnel and journalists; abduct civilians and torture and rape them in Israeli jails; bomb and destroy Palestinian homes and infrastructure; and attack United Nations premises, including schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East that shelter millions of forcibly displaced civilians who are being deliberately starved and denied access to medical care and the most basic needs for human subsistence and dignity by an occupier mercilessly chasing and hunting them down, repeatedly displacing them as they desperately search for safety in a place where no one and nowhere is safe. It is not only a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, but also an existential crisis.

Today yet another Palestinian official was assassinated by Israel. As stated by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian leadership condemns in the strongest terms the assassination in Tehran today of a former Palestinian Prime Minister and head of the political bureau of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh. A national day of mourning has been declared in Palestine, and we

solemnly acknowledge the expressions of condolence and the global condemnations of this act of terror.

Moreover, we unequivocally condemn the criminal breach of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as we condemn the repeated breaches by Israel of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, and that includes yesterday's brazen attack on Beirut. With the utmost urgency, we again call on the Security Council, the General Assembly and all law-abiding, peace-loving nations to act forthwith to bring a halt to these horrific criminal acts of aggression by Israel against the Palestinian people and on our region.

We demand accountability for this assassination, as we have continually demanded accountability for the wanton murder and injuring of over 130,000 Palestinian children, women and men across the past 300 days of horror and hell in the Gaza Strip. And we call for accountability for all of Israel's criminal policies and practices in our territory across the decades. Likewise, we reiterate our calls for accountability for all of Israel's breaches of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States in the region, including the State of Palestine.

The Charter of the United Nations must be upheld, not solely in words but also in deeds. The failure to hold Israel accountable has permitted and enabled these crimes and further emboldened Israeli Government officials, military commanders and extremist settlers to escalate their reign of terror against defenceless Palestinian civilians all across the territory of the State of Palestine, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as across the region.

Violence and terror are clearly Israel's main and only currency — not international law, not diplomacy, not mediation, not respect for human life. There is no red line for Israel, no law it will not breach, no norm it will not trample, no act too depraved or barbaric for its occupying army and settler militias and no child, woman or man off limits, even babies are considered legitimate targets. The Israeli Prime Minister and his coalition of Government extremists and military commanders believe there will never be a cost for their crimes. They believe they can literally get away with murder, get away with genocide against the Palestinian people. They believe it because it has been possible until now. No resolution, no order by the International Court of Justice, no ceasefire calls have been respected. No demand for the protection of civilians and humanitarian

access has been heeded — and still no consequences whatsoever for Israel. This has gone on even as the Palestinian people have tragically live-streamed the genocide for all the world to see, believing that somehow the world would act to save the over 2 million human lives endangered in the Gaza Strip. Every plea for help, including in the Council, has been made in the belief that the world would act in respect of the rule of law, our shared moral obligations and our collective humanity.

Yet this gruesome aggression continues, surpassing 40,000 Palestinians killed, the majority women and children, over 91,000 injured in attacks by Israeli occupying forces, nearly the entirety of Gaza's population uprooted and the decimation of the Gaza Strip and trauma of the entire population. At the same time in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli occupying forces and settler terrorists continue their violent raids, killing at least 569 Palestinians, including children. Israel's illegal colonial settlement campaign not only continues as we speak, but it is intensifying as it feverishly pursues its vowed annexationist aims, seeking to forever obstruct the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and independence and to destroy the two-State solution.

Until when? Absent any form of accountability, any serious mobilization and sanctions, including a halt to arms transfers, to pressure an end to these crimes, Israel is proving every single day that it will continue to act as a rogue State. The assassination today and all the crimes preceding it, and that have followed it in the ensuing hours, prove that beyond a shadow of a doubt. Israel openly declares its intentions to carry on, defying the Council and the international community as a whole, brazenly carrying on with its scorched-earth killing and destruction spree in the Gaza Strip, vowing to further entrench its colonial annexationist occupation and its racist, discriminatory, hateful policies against the Palestinian people and recklessly escalating tensions. It is blatantly attempting to destabilize the entire region and provoke an all-out war in the Middle East, with dangerous repercussions not only for the region, but far beyond.

The international community must confront this reality and act to stop these crimes and acts of aggression. There is no right that Israel can claim to justify these war crimes and crimes against humanity. The right to peace and security is the right of all States in the region and in every region of the world. It is not an exclusive right of Israel.

Moreover, it is a fact that Israel is an illegal occupant in the State of Palestine and possesses no rights whatsoever in our territory or over our people. That was unequivocally determined by the ICJ in the seminal advisory opinion it rendered just days ago, on 19 July. That ruling must be respected and enforced. Israel has no sovereignty rights and no right to self-defence in a territory in which it is illegally present in grave breach of every rule of international law. This illegal occupation, in all of its manifestations, must come to an end, and the Palestinian people must be free.

Israel has been the oppressor, tormentor and murderer of Palestinians for decades, and it is the long-standing destabilizer of our region. It must be stopped. The obligations of the Security Council and the General Assembly, the obligations of all States, including the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, are to act forthwith to bring an end to this unlawful, abhorrent situation. The lives of millions of civilians are at stake in the Gaza Strip and the rest of occupied Palestine and throughout the region.

We appeal to the international community to act immediately. First and foremost, the Security Council, as per its Charter duty to maintain international peace and security, must act to protect the Palestinian people and to prevent a regional war at this moment of clear and present danger. The international community has a choice to make. Let it be for peace and security. Do not let Israel drag us all into the abyss. On behalf of the State of Palestine and its people, I implore the Council to act.

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

Mr. Miller (Israel): We must first stress the rank hypocrisy on display here today. This meeting was called for by the world's number-one sponsor of terrorism, responsible for the most horrifying barbarism across the region and the globe, the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran has used its proxies — Hamas, the Houthis and Hizbullah — to target Israel and our citizens from every direction. Just last week, children were innocently playing a soccer game in the Druze village of Majdal Shams. An Iranian-supplied Falaq-1 Hizbullah rocket murdered 12 of those children and injured 30 others. Where were the condemnations of Hizbullah and their Iranian suppliers for the butchery of those 12 children? All that was heard were expressions of concern for escalation and calling for both sides, again equating a

democratic State Member of the United Nations with a vicious terrorist organization, to show restraint. Those who really seek stability in the region should welcome the removal of arch-terrorists, not call on both sides to restrain themselves.

Yesterday Israel carried out a precise strike against Hizbullah commander Fouad Shukr, a senior terrorist with the blood of Israelis and many others on his hands. He was the commander responsible for the Majdal Shams massacre, along with all of Hizbullah's incessant missile attacks against Israel for the past nine and a half months. Those attacks involved more than 6,500 rockets, hundreds of uncrewed aerial vehicles and over 1,000 anti-tank missiles, killing dozens of Israeli soldiers and civilians and forcing over 80,000 Israelis to evacuate their homes from the north of Israel. In addition, we wish to remind the Council of Shukr's responsibility for the 1983 attack on United States Marines and French forces in Beirut, murdering 241 United States soldiers and 58 French soldiers.

This operation sends a clear message: we will defend ourselves and respond with great force against those who harm us. The State of Israel will not stand idly by. We will continue to defend ourselves and our citizens. The world must support Israel at this time and demand Hizbullah's compliance with resolution 1701 (2006) by ceasing its attacks, withdrawing to the north of the Litani River and disarming.

On our side, we have a duty to ensure the safe and secure return of Israelis to their homes in northern Israel, and we will continue to act to defend all the people of Israel. However, Hizbullah, Hamas and the Houthis can only expel their venom thanks to the head of the snake. Since the horrific attack by Hamas on 7 October 2023, Iran has provided some \$800 million to Hizbullah, along with missile-precision technology, anti-tank munitions and explosive-laden uncrewed aerial vehicles. They are all used by Hizbullah against Israeli civilians. That is in addition to the more than \$260 million annually provided by Iran to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, an amount that increased over the past nine months. That support is reflected by the fact that over 30 per cent of the military arms and munitions captured by Israel in the Gaza Strip were Iranian-produced.

The actions of Hamas, the Houthis and Hizbullah are not just an Israeli or Jewish problem. The Islamic regime will target anyone who stands in its way to

achieve global tyranny. Iran uses its proxies to the detriment of Israel right now, but their vision is far wider. Now imagine those aspirations if Iran achieves its goal of possessing nuclear-weapon capabilities.

While the Council perverted its mission, prosecuting Israel as we defend our people, the Ayatollahs in Iran are formulating strategies to wipe Israel and the Jewish people from the face of the Earth. They also continue to provide millions of dollars in weapons to the Houthis, who have put them to murderous use against Israel while they strangle world shipping routes. The Houthis alone have launched over 200 attacks against Israel since the 7 October massacre.

The truth is that Hamas, Hizbullah and the Houthis are the poisonous tip of the Iran spear, which is being held against the world's throat. Where is Iran's summons to the Council for their grave violations of every relevant resolution, such as resolutions 2216 (2015) and 1701 (2006)? Where are the condemnations of Hamas and their vile attack on 7 October? Where are the condemnations for Hizbullah and the Houthis and their puppet master, the Islamic regime?

Members of the Council feigned concern for regional escalation. It quaked at the prospect of addressing the route of this escalation. I wish to cast members' minds back for a moment to 2 May 2011. Then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon celebrated the termination of Osama Bin Laden, describing it as a watershed moment in our common global fight against terrorism. He exclaimed his relief at the news that justice had been done to such a mastermind of international terrorism. Please take a moment to reflect on that reaction, just 13 years ago, and contrast it with the United Nations condemnations today. Members should ask themselves what they believe to be the reason for that drastic shift. The only conclusion we may reach is that it is because it is now Israel that is facing barbaric Iranian terror and taking necessary action to protect its citizens that the United Nations takes issue.

Iran is not merely a sponsor of terrorism; it is the very engine driving the machinery of death and destruction that threatens us all. The blood of innocent children in Majdal Shams and of the victims of the 7 October massacre and all other victims since then, the ceaseless rocket fire on Israeli towns and the ongoing plight of the 115 hostages still being held by Hamas — tomorrow for 300 days — all trace back to Tehran's ruthless ambitions.

We urge the international community to hold the Islamic Republic accountable for its crimes. The world cannot afford to cower before the Ayatollah's tyranny. We therefore demand that the Council move to condemn Iran for its continued support of regional terrorism and increase its sanctions on Tehran. It must also list the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terror organization, as it continues to lead and coordinate attacks across the Middle East and the world.

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

Mr. Aldahhak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the delegations of Algeria and China for holding this emergency meeting.

The events of the past few days demonstrate that war criminals of the Israeli occupying entity have decided to move ahead with their bloody aggression in the region and to set the region on fire and push it towards a large-scale war, with unlimited American support, to the detriment of international peace and security and the lives and blood of innocent people.

A few days ago, the Israeli occupying entity perpetrated a treacherous act of aggression and a new horrific crime against Majdal Shams — which is a Syrian town, not Israeli — in the Syrian Golan, occupied since 1967. That resulted in the martyrdom of 12 Syrian children and injured many Syrian civilians.

The occupying authorities tried to evade responsibility for that abject act of aggression, blaming the Lebanese national resistance in a failed attempt to cover up its heinous crime and find a pretext to pursue more acts of aggression against States of the region. Syria rejects all the lies contained in the letter sent by the so-called Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Israeli entity to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General on 29 July.

My country reiterates the fact that the occupied Syrian Arab Golan has always been, and will always be, Syrian territory, as affirmed by all the relevant United Nations resolutions, foremost among them resolution 497 (1981). Syria stresses that our people in the occupied Syrian Golan are Arab Syrian citizens who have always been a genuine and integral part of the Syrian population. They are deeply attached to belonging to their homeland, Syria, and to their national identity. They reject the Israeli occupation

and call for it to end, along with its criminal practices against them, as proven once again by their rejection of Israeli war criminals who tried to trade in our children's blood following the aggression in Majdal Shams. Syria underscores the responsibility of the Israeli occupation for the heinous crime committed in the town of Majdal Shams. Israel is using that crime to continue its acts of aggression against the States of the region.

My country reiterates that an occupying entity cannot claim that it is defending itself under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, as was just affirmed by the International Court of Justice. Moreover, no sane person can believe the allegations being put forward by the Israeli occupation that it is defending the populations of occupied Arab territories when it commits the worst violations against them.

In that context, Syria reiterates its rejection and condemnation of the United States statements justifying the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan because of its importance for Israel's security. My country reaffirms that maintaining international peace and security requires that the United States Administration must renounce its destructive policies and cease impeding the Security Council from implementing its mandate according to the Charter.

The Zionist entity perpetrated another crime this morning and another terrorist act of aggression in Tehran, the capital of Iran, which led to the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political office of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. That assassination demonstrates the mentality of the occupier and is the Israeli response to what is called the Biden plan, which is contained in resolution 2735 (2024), submitted by the United States delegation. Prior to that, the Israeli occupying entity committed another terrorist act of aggression, targeting a residential building in the southern suburb of Beirut. That led to the martyrdom of several persons, including one woman and two children, with dozens of people also injured in that densely populated neighbourhood.

Syria condemns in the strongest terms the Israeli acts of aggression against its territories and against the sovereignty of Iran and Lebanon and other States of the region. Syria expresses its full solidarity with those brotherly States when faced with the sinful Israeli attacks. Syria cautions that the Israeli entity continues flouting international law and ignoring Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and does

not respond to appeals from Member States of our Organization to put an end to its massacres. That could lead to a conflagration across the region and threaten international and regional peace and security.

At a time when Israel is continuing its hysterical attacks against the States of the region, the suffering of our people in the Gaza Strip continues too, owing to Israel's genocide committed for 10 months. No house, hospital, school, child, woman, humanitarian worker, health team or journalist has avoided being a target. That includes hundreds of United Nations and international humanitarian agency workers as well as journalists, who disclose to the world the unabated Israeli occupation crimes.

The Israeli war criminals would not have been able to continue perpetrating their war crimes and crimes against humanity without unlimited United States support and the hypocrisy and double standards of some Western States, which have engaged in Israel's war against the Palestinian people and have remained silent without calling for accountability for the crimes committed by the Israeli war criminals. Worse yet, they have even opened their doors to them and hosted them with cheers and applause.

In conclusion, my country, Syria, calls upon the Security Council to shoulder its primary responsibility and condemn Israel's repeated acts of aggression. The Council must act immediately to put an end to them so that they do not happen again and to hold accountable those who commit them and ensure that they do not go unpunished. Syria reiterates the fact that those acts of aggression will not weaken the determination of the peoples of the region to remain committed to their national choices and their struggle to liberate their occupied territories in line with resolutions of international legitimacy, foremost of which are resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981).

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

Mr. Hachem (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Today we meet in the Security Council 10 months after the beginning of the Israeli aggression against Gaza and Lebanon. Today we see that aggression reaching our capital, Beirut, with a bloody, clear and explicit message. The culprit is the Israeli Government and its Prime Minister. The victim is the Council's ceasefire resolution. The goal is to drag Israel's allies into a

regional war, with disastrous consequences on peoples and countries and on the present and the future.

We have said it before and we reiterate it today: Lebanon, its people and its Government do not want war. Lebanon is fully committed to resolution 1701 (2006). We have put forth a road map and a vision to arrive at a solution that would preserve Lebanon's rights and maintain stability along Lebanon's southern borders. That was a courageous initiative launched by Lebanon to stop the cycle of violence and to create an environment conducive to a dignified life for its people. Unfortunately, Lebanon has not received any serious response to its proposal, although we appreciate the efforts of friendly countries that are working to arrive at a diplomatic solution that would spare the region from war.

We have read the calls issued by Israeli officials to implement resolution 1701 (2006). The irony is that implementing the resolution would mean Israel's withdrawal from territories that it continues to occupy; stopping its violations of Lebanese sovereignty by ground, sea and air; and abiding by the international borders delineated in 1923, recognized internationally and confirmed in the 1949 armistice agreement.

Lebanon condemns in the strongest terms the aggression that targeted the southern suburb of Beirut yesterday and led to the martyrdom of seven citizens, including one woman and two children, and injured 78 persons. Lebanon believes that this aggression is the most dangerous chapter of the conflict so far. It is a dangerous escalation in that it targeted a densely populated residential area. That is a clear and flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. We have warned repeatedly of Israel's intentions to escalate the situation and launch attacks on Lebanon, which would drag the entire region into an all-out war with grave consequences.

Lebanon also condemns all the Israeli acts of aggression targeting countries in the region, the most recent of which was the assassination that took place in the Iranian capital, Tehran, only hours after the attack on the Beirut suburb. That confirms Israel's hostile intentions and its determination to expand the scope of the conflict and spread the war to the entire region.

Moreover, we condemn the outrageous crime that was perpetrated today, which killed Al-Jazeera correspondent Ismail Al-Ghoul and cameraman Rami

Al-Rifi. That pattern is adopted by Israel to target journalists. Three Lebanese journalists have also been martyred by Israel since 8 October 2023.

For the past 10 months, we have witnessed the most outrageous crimes against innocent civilians, both in Palestine and in Lebanon. The orders issued by the International Court of Justice provide further proof of the illegitimacy of the Israeli occupation and the need to end it. No one should believe that we can return to calm and stability without finding a serious solution based on Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories. No one should believe that the confrontation will end as long as occupation continues. Therefore, the primary precondition for any initiative or effort must be based on ending the occupation of the Shaba'a Farms, the Kfar Shuba Hills and the outskirts of the town of Al-Mari. Moreover, all the issues along the Blue Line about which Lebanon has expressed its reservation must be resolved and the violations of Lebanese sovereignty by land, air and sea must stop.

We are thankful and grateful for all efforts made and appreciate all attempts to achieve calm. However, establishing stability requires good intentions, national will and the men and women of a State. That is not the pattern of behaviour that we see from the Israeli Government, which has failed in all attempts to achieve calm and all diplomatic mediation and international efforts. That Government has implemented none of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council, the most recent being resolution 2735 (2024), while it seeks only to sustain and prolong Netanyahu's political career.

As for the Majdal Shams incident, the Lebanese Government condemned it in a clear statement, just as we condemned the killing of civilians. The exact circumstances of that incident are not clear yet, but we do know that it took place on occupied Syrian territory and harmed Syrian brothers. The main reason for the attack was because the area has been under Israeli occupation since 1967. Israel has implemented none of the international resolutions that compel it to withdraw from that territory and from all other occupied Arab territories. Israel's claim that it seeks to protect the population that it occupies in the occupied Syrian Golan is a baseless display of political hypocrisy. Moreover, its claim of self-defence has no basis in international law because it pertains to occupied territory.

Israel's true intention is to prolong and escalate its hostilities. It is ironic that those responsible for killing

tens of thousands of children in Gaza and the West Bank are now shedding tears for the children of the occupied Syrian Golan and taking advantage of an incident that has not been clarified to expand their aggression, in a misadventure that might put the Middle East on the brink of a volcano. I warn against providing them cover and support in justifying their massacres. History will not be merciful. The present is bitter. And the future is dark. What begins in the Middle East will spread to the entire world.

Lebanon believes in international legitimacy and, as for all small States, the Charter of the United Nations remains the legal and moral umbrella that we turn to for protection. However, given the Council's continued inability to implement its resolutions on Israel, which refuses to abide by them, our faith has been shaken, and we are more convinced that international legitimacy is no longer enough to maintain international peace and security. It is therefore important for the Council to change its approach and take a firm stand before it is too late.

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

Mr. Al-Fatlawi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for her briefing. I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to discuss the situation in the Middle East and the repercussions of the Israeli occupation and the violations perpetrated by its forces. That comes as a result of the Israeli occupation and its aggressive policies over 75 years.

What has happened since 7 October 2023 cannot be seen separately from the build-up of occupation and the usurpation of rights, to which the Security Council and the entire membership of the United Nations have not been able to find a radical and comprehensive solution after years of conflict, bloodshed, violations, stealing land and building settlements. Over those decades, the international community has used every diplomatic track and international initiative, along with Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, to end the Israeli occupation, its violations and aggressive policies against the Palestinian people. However, that usurping entity has ignored the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law and international humanitarian law without any deterrence

or accountability, while putting forward false pretexts to defend those crimes.

Like other countries around the world, Iraq has warned of the danger of escalation and expansion of the war and its repercussions on regional and international peace and security, which would lead to more instability and perpetuate tensions in the region. With its continued aggression and disregard for international resolutions, along with committing crimes, Israel seeks to ignite crises and expand the conflict, which will have serious and uncontrollable repercussions in the region. Furthermore, the acts of aggression by the Israeli occupation forces against Palestine, Lebanon and Syria are no longer a matter of self-defence, as claimed by Israel, despite their legal invalidity. Rather, they took the path of revenge and genocide.

Today we see the occupation forces launching acts of aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, under false pretexts and in blatant defiance of the purposes and principles of the United

Nations and resolutions of international legitimacy. I would like to take this opportunity to express our strong condemnation of the continued aggression against the Lebanese Republic, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran. We also condemn the criminal behaviour of assassination.

We call upon the Council and its Member States to shoulder the Council's responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security and ending the war in the Gaza Strip in order to save lives, open up border crossings for the delivery of humanitarian aid and protect the Palestinian people. The Security Council needs to be more decisive in deterring Israeli abuses and violations that undermine the stability of the region and the security of its peoples. Iraq calls for supporting the Palestinian people to achieve self-determination, end the occupation and establish their independent State on the land of Palestine.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.