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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Baeriswyl	(Switzerland)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
	China	Mr. Fu Cong
	Ecuador	Mr. De La Gasca
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
	Japan	Mr. Yamazaki
	Malta	Mrs. Frazier
	Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
	Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
	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 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to remind everyone that the Council is a place of respect — respect among members of the Organization and respect vis-à-vis their representatives. I urge all speakers to observe appropriate standards of tone, wording and content in their remarks.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Israel and Mauritania to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in this meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the 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. Joyce Msuya, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, 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. Msuya.

Ms. Msuya: I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the Council on the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. Since we previously briefed the Council on 9 October (see S/PV.9744) — just one week ago — the people of Gaza have suffered multiple mass casualty incidents owing to Israeli air strikes. In just one week, nearly 400 Palestinians have reportedly been killed in Gaza and almost 1,500 have been injured.

The world has seen the images of patients and displaced persons sheltering near Al-Aqsa Hospital, burning alive. Scores of others, including women and children, are suffering the excruciating pain of severe life-changing burns. There is no way to get them the urgent care they need to survive and manage such

injuries. If such horror does not awaken our sense of humanity and propel us to action, what will? Some 20 families lost both their shelter and belongings in the fire. Just hours before, a strike on a school serving as a shelter in Nuseirat killed more than 20 people and injured scores of others, according to local sources.

Israel's military offensive is intensifying in the north. Heavy fighting in and around Jabaliya, which is under siege, continues to be reported, as does indiscriminate rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups towards Israel. Since the beginning of October, we estimate that more than 55,000 people have been displaced from the Jabaliya area, while others remain stranded in their homes, with water and food running out. Thirteen members of a family were killed yesterday after rescue workers were again prevented from reaching the wounded trapped under the rubble, who were calling for help after their home was hit. The images emerging from the camp show a traumatized population, running for their lives, with no safe place to go.

Only three of the 10 hospitals in North Gaza governorate are now operational — and those only at minimum capacity. The facilities are facing dire shortages of fuel, blood, trauma treatment and medications. Women are giving birth under heavy bombardment. For the 155,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women in Gaza, it is an exhausting and traumatizing experience, not knowing where and how to give birth or whether their child will survive. There is no antenatal care. There is no medication. And then there is hunger. Some 11,000 pregnant women are suffering hunger and malnutrition, putting not just their lives at risk, but also the lives of their newborn babies.

On 12 October, an inter-agency team — from the United Nations, an international non-governmental organization and the Palestine Red Crescent Society — was finally able to reach the Kamal Adwan and Al-Sahaba Hospitals in northern Gaza, after nine separate attempts in which they were denied or impeded by Israeli forces — nine. The team eventually transferred more than a dozen critical patients from Kamal Adwan Hospital to Al-Shifa Hospital. Additional patients and their companions, who had previously been transferred to Kamal Adwan Hospital from Al-Awda Hospital, were also taken to Al-Shifa Hospital. The team delivered fuel to keep Kamal Adwan and Al-Awda functioning and fuel and blood units to Al-Sahaba Hospital. But humanitarian aid cannot be provided in one-off

batches. The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that Kamal Adwan Hospital is overwhelmed, as it is receiving between 50 and 70 newly injured patients each day. Those missions were completed amid fierce ongoing hostilities. Drivers from the United Nations and the Palestine Red Crescent Society were subjected to humiliating treatment during security screening and temporary detention at a checkpoint. Medical staff kept one child alive by hand-pumping oxygen for over seven hours until they made it through the checkpoint. That gives just a glimpse of the daily work of humanitarians in Gaza.

No food aid entered northern Gaza from 2 to 15 October, when a trickle was allowed in, and all essential supplies for survival are running out. Distributions of existing food supplies to people in need continue, but those stocks are quickly dwindling. In Gaza City, more than 110,000 meals are distributed each day by at least 10 kitchens, including to support an influx of people displaced from North Gaza governorate. In North Gaza governorate, between 11 and 13 October, our partners distributed more than 1,500 food parcels and 1,500 bags of wheat flour to displaced people who were trapped or sheltering in and near schools in Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia. However, there is now barely any food left to distribute, and most bakeries will be forced to shut down again in the next few days without additional fuel. Given the abject conditions and intolerable suffering in northern Gaza, the fact that humanitarian access is nearly non-existent is unconscionable.

During the first two weeks of October, just 1 out of 54 coordinated movements to the north via the Al-Rashid checkpoint was facilitated by the Israeli authorities, while another 4 were impeded but eventually accomplished. Eighty-five per cent of the movements were denied, and the rest were impeded or cancelled owing to security or logistical issues. Throughout Gaza, less than a third of the 286 humanitarian missions coordinated with the Israeli authorities in the first two weeks of October were facilitated without major incidents or delays. Every time a mission is impeded, the lives of people in need and humanitarians on the ground are put at even greater risk. That woeful and unacceptable trend must change.

Thankfully, since we last briefed the Council (see S/PV.9744), the second round of the polio vaccination campaign began in central Gaza. The WHO reports that on 14 and 15 October, nearly 157,000 children under the

age of 10 received the vaccination. The campaign once again underscored the critical role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, whose teams vaccinated 43 per cent of the children reached on the first day. It is now critical that the parties continue to respect the agreed humanitarian pauses and that access be granted throughout Gaza to ensure that we can reach all children in need of the vaccine, including in the north. As we have previously said, the success of the polio campaign shows what can be achieved when obstacles to humanitarian access are removed.

The level of suffering in Gaza defies our ability to capture it in words or even to comprehend its scale. Reality is brutal in Gaza, and it gets worse every day, as the bombs continue to fall, as fierce fighting continues unabated and as supplies essential for people's survival and humanitarian assistance are blocked at every turn.

International humanitarian law must be respected, and the Council and all Member States must exert all their influence to ensure it happens. Civilians must be protected and their essential needs must be met, whether they move or stay. Civilians must be allowed to seek protection elsewhere, and they must be guaranteed the right to voluntarily return, as international law demands. The wounded and the sick must receive the care they need, and hospitals and medical personnel must be protected. Humanitarian operations must be facilitated both into and throughout Gaza, including in the north, so that they reach all civilians in need. Hostages must be immediately released, and, until they are, they must be allowed visits from the International Committee of the Red Cross. Indiscriminate rocket fire towards Israel must stop. The provisional orders and determinations of the International Court of Justice must be respected. There must be accountability for international crimes.

The atrocities in Gaza must end, but that cannot happen through words. It must happen through action — urgent, unequivocal action. We renew our call for urgent diplomatic efforts from across the international community to de-escalate the situation, ensure respect for international law, achieve an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and agree a path towards sustainable peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Msuya for her briefing.

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

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): I extend my deepest gratitude to the Swiss presidency for scheduling this meeting swiftly.

We have again convened today again because the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, particularly in the northern region of the Strip, has reached a catastrophic level. While the international community today celebrates World Food Day, Palestinians in Gaza are struggling to find basic food. Their present is marked by suffering and deprivation, and their future is uncertain.

I thank Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya for her sobering briefing, which serves as yet another harrowing testimony from the humanitarian community. It lays bare the stark reality of how the Israeli occupying authorities are not merely disregarding international humanitarian law, but they are trampling upon the very essence of human decency. For more than a year now, the Palestinian people, especially those in Gaza, have endured suffering beyond imagination. It appears that the sadistic impulses of those responsible among the Israeli authorities know no bounds when it comes to inflicting torment and punishment upon Palestinian civilians — civilians who must not be a military target. They are protected by international law. The Israeli occupying Power should fulfil its obligation in that regard. In particular, starving civilians as a method of warfare is explicitly prohibited under international humanitarian law. That prohibition extends to depriving civilians of objects necessary for survival and impeding the delivery of relief supplies.

Surprisingly, the second vaccination campaign, which commenced on 14 October, reached more than 157,000 children in its first two days alone. How, then, is it possible that we can vaccinate those children, yet we cannot feed them? How can we secure trucks transporting vaccines, but not those carrying essential food? The inevitable conclusion is that this is not collateral damage, but a deliberate, calculated Israeli policy of starving the Palestinian people.

In its provisional measures, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel, the occupying Power, to

“take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip”.

Through resolution 2728 (2024), the Council explicitly reiterates its demand for the lifting of all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance at scale. The response from the Israeli occupying Power has been nothing short of disdainful: the closure of crossing points, increased restrictions on access and the immoral use of starvation as a method of warfare.

When we last convened, on 9 October (see S/PV.9744), last week, we raised alarms about the state of humanitarian assistance, noting that September saw the lowest levels of aid since November of 2023. We then expressed grave concern about the behaviour of the Israeli occupying authorities, which denied or impeded nearly 90 per cent of humanitarian movements between northern and southern Gaza in September. The response of the Israeli authorities to our concerns was more restrictions and more killing of Palestinian civilians — 68 of them yesterday alone. In the past week alone, a mere six trucks per day have been permitted to enter Gaza, a number so paltry it borders on the absurd given the scale of need. I want to recall that, before the crisis, there were more than 500 trucks per day.

The occupying Power's disregard for Palestinian lives does not stop there. It has escalated its tactics, adding new depths of cruelty to its actions. On the night of 13 October, it struck tents in the vicinity of the Al-Aqsa Hospital. The result was that at least four people were burned to death — yes, that is correct: burned to death. That is the occupier's perverse demonstration of how sacred it considers human life — how sacred it considers the lives of Palestinians. The situation stands on the brink of further deterioration with the potential adoption of legislation by the occupying Power halting the operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Such acts would strip Gazans of the backbone of humanitarian action and further complicate the humanitarian mission of the United Nations.

It is clear that the Israeli authorities are not listening to anyone — not the International Court of Justice, not the General Assembly, not the Council itself and not even their closest allies. But the Security Council has the authority and possesses the tools to ensure the enforcement of its decisions. The time has come for decisive action. The lives of countless civilians — Palestinian civilians — hang in the balance.

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

Slovenia is a country established on the principle of self-determination. Despite our celebration of independence, “siege” is not a foreign word to us. Our capital was under siege for three years during the Second World War. In our region, the siege of Sarajevo during the conflict in the 1990s was the longest-lasting total siege in contemporary European history. We can identify with the siege, the indiscriminate bombing and the people being killed while standing in line for food or the population without food, medicine, gas, electricity and water, the population deprived of human dignity. Back then, we declared “never again”. “Siege” is not a foreign word to Palestinians. Gaza has not only been under occupation but also under siege for years, for decades. What we are hearing and witnessing today about the Israeli Government’s attitudes towards northern Gaza is a siege within a siege — a total siege of starved and traumatized civilians.

The Security Council has met many times to discuss this topic. Given the number of meetings we have had, Slovenia wants to avoid simply repeating what our briefers have shared with us. So today I want to be clear with our message. We call for an immediate ceasefire. We call for the immediate release of the hostages. We call for the lifting of all barriers to the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Gaza. We call for basic humanitarian aid, food, water, fuel, medicine, hygiene material — basic things — to be delivered at scale. We call for the urgent delivery of winter supplies — again, basic items, such as proper shelters, warm clothes and blankets. We call for the immediate restoration of food systems and basic services. We call for the opening of all available routes to and throughout the entire Gaza Strip, including border crossings, to provide humanitarian assistance to all those in need. We call for United Nations missions to have immediate and sustained access to the north. We call for the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, schools, displacement sites and healthcare facilities. We call for an end to attacks on healthcare facilities and to the critical shortages of essential medicines and equipment. We call for an end to forced displacement, including through evacuation orders.

We call for special protection to be granted to women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons and other persons in vulnerable situations. We call for a fully functioning deconfliction mechanism to ensure the safety of humanitarian operations. We call for the protection of humanitarian and health workers, including access to appropriate protection equipment.

We call for the safety, security and respect of the United Nations, its personnel and its premises. We call for the withdrawal of legislation against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which would cause the humanitarian operations in Palestine to collapse. We call for the respect of international law, particularly international humanitarian and human rights law. We call for the full implementation of Security Council resolutions and the provisional orders of the International Court of Justice, which are binding and must be implemented. We call for an end to impunity. We call for accountability. We call for the security of Israelis and Palestinians. We call for the resumption of a meaningful and time-bound political process leading to the two-State solution. We call for the Charter of the United Nations to be upheld, including by the Council. We call for peace.

We will not forget Gaza, and we will not lose hope for the Council to speak with one voice.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): At the outset, I express my appreciation to you, Madam President, for responding to Algeria’s request to meet with a swiftness matching the urgency of the matter under consideration. I also thank Ms. Msuya for her sobering briefing.

Each time we meet in the Security Council to discuss the situation in Gaza, we tally the miseries and the unprecedented, including the Palestinians killed, maimed, displaced, orphaned, starved and detained, and we deplore, demand and condemn, as we should. We felt that the Council had fulfilled its moral and legal duty by adopting four resolutions, because they are legally binding and hence would have brought positive change for the people of Palestine and Israel. We supported all efforts towards a deal, hoping that we would have a ceasefire, release of the hostages and those Palestinians illegally detained and a renewed hope for Palestinians, even in these darkest of times. One year and 47 meetings in this Chamber later, our combined efforts have not had the expected results, and the situation in Gaza continues to worsen with each passing day. We must not allow the shredding of the moral and legal thread that holds our Organization together.

The most fundamental question facing the Council, then, is what we will do to stop this tide. Honest answers to that question with strong political will would no doubt engender the kind of action needed to save the lives of the millions of civilians in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, who have no escape. Guyana continues to be outraged by the suffering that

the Government of Israel is inflicting on the civilian population in Gaza and the inhumane conditions under which they have been forced to live. That undesirable situation is compounded by the frequent evacuation orders that have become a staple of this war and that Guyana concludes are part of a strategy to entrench instability and destroy any semblance of permanence. Displaced civilians face many hardships, including protection risks, food insecurity and an increased risk of disease. In fact, those risks are multiplied for civilians in Gaza, since many of them have been displaced multiple times since the war began in October 2023.

International humanitarian law contains clear provisions about the forced displacement of civilian populations in war. It is illegal. In the strictly limited cases in which evacuation of the civilian population is permissible, the provisions are equally clear on the conditions under which the evacuation is to be carried out. Civilians' interests must be prioritized at all times, and their safety must never be compromised. Israel has not fulfilled any of its obligations in that regard. Its latest forcible displacement of civilians in the northern Gaza governorate, coupled with its siege of the area, is unconscionable, inhumane and illegal. Civilians are so tired of their misery that many in northern Gaza who are being displaced again have decided to stay, so that if they are killed, whether by bombs or by starvation, they will at least have died in the place that they called home. Those are the stark choices that people are now making. Guyana condemns those actions by Israel and calls for it to adhere to its obligations under international humanitarian law regarding the treatment of civilians in armed conflict.

The frequent evacuation orders also have a negative impact on humanitarian operations in the territory, since humanitarian personnel are forced to constantly be on the move and to re-establish themselves in new spaces — all without security guarantees. That further exacerbates the dire humanitarian situation.

Against that backdrop, Guyana underscores the following three points.

First, the International Court of Justice has unequivocally declared the illegality of Israel's ongoing occupation, and the General Assembly has demanded that Israel bring to an end its unlawful occupation of the Palestinian territories. It is therefore illegal for the Israeli Government to move to annex territory in the Gaza Strip. Guyana condemns Israel's actions in that regard.

Secondly, there is a veritable genocide taking place in Gaza. The International Court of Justice ordered Israel to take actions to prevent genocide in Gaza in accordance with that Member State's obligations under the Geneva Conventions. Israel, however, continues to blatantly disregard the International Court of Justice's orders. In this circumstance, consideration must be given to how the Council could facilitate the implementation of the International Court of Justice orders. The floodgates have already opened in Gaza, and the Council must agree to pull the plug and stand up for Palestinians.

Thirdly, the Council has the mandate and responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We have tools at our disposal to carve out solutions to end this war. Let us use them. When legally binding resolutions and countless appeals to conscience and morality fail to change behaviour, the hand of justice must be applied.

Mr. Sowa (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting, as requested by Algeria. I would also like to thank Ms. Joyce Msuya for her very sobering briefing.

The recent developments in the Gaza Strip, particularly in the north, have once again alarmed the world as Israel intensifies its attacks on the besieged area. It has been a year of immense suffering for the population of Gaza, with collective punishment, the use of starvation as a weapon of war, multiple displacement with no access to shelter, healthcare or school for the people and students. Living in Gaza has meant enduring death, destruction and untold human suffering.

Before this escalation, humanitarian experts had already reported a decrease in aid entering Gaza since August. The rise in violence has worsened the situation, with aid to the north blocked for nearly 10 days — an alarming violation of international humanitarian law and resolution 2417 (2018), which condemns the use of starvation as a weapon of war.

Reports from the field indicate that approximately 50,000 people have been displaced from the Jabaliya area. Civilians face an impossible choice: either obey evacuation orders, experiencing multiple displacements, or stay and face starvation. Both options fall short of the protections required by international humanitarian law.

The situation in Gaza is perilous, with nowhere truly safe. In the past 72 hours, a United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near

East (UNRWA) school sheltering 6,200 displaced persons was shelled. Additionally, an Israeli air strike hit the courtyard of Al-Aqsa Hospital, causing a fire at a nearby camp. Four people died, and at least 40, including women and children, were severely injured. The destruction of the UNRWA school has halted the polio vaccination drive, placing tens of thousands of vulnerable children at further risk. A humanitarian cessation of hostilities is needed for the vaccine drive to recommence and continue, and we call for that to happen.

Meanwhile, the situation in the West Bank remains tense, with ongoing reports of civilian casualties. Sierra Leone condemns all attacks on civilians, including medical personnel, journalists and humanitarian workers. Those tragedies are traumatic for observers, but they are far worse for the civilians who live through them every day. The war has resulted in egregious human rights abuses, and the scars, especially for children, will be lasting. Those children know nothing but violence and bloodshed. That cannot continue.

Sierra Leone renews its call for the following.

First, there must be an immediate ceasefire across all of the occupied Palestinian territory and the region. That call must be repeated until the parties recognize their moral and legal obligations to end the violence and pursue peace. That call is also to remind us in the Council of our Charter of the United Nations obligation to impose a permanent ceasefire.

Secondly, we call for the opening of all entry points into Gaza to allow for the safe, unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid. Humanitarian personnel and convoys must be respected and protected under international humanitarian law and Security Council resolutions. We recall in that regard the various provisional measures of the International Court of Justice in the case of *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, which are binding on the parties, in particular Israel, on maintaining open the Rafah crossing for unhindered provision at scale of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance.

Thirdly, we emphasize the need to uphold international law, including humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and the recent International Court of Justice advisory opinion. Unbiased application of those frameworks is essential to ending impunity and ensuring accountability.

Furthermore, we stress the importance of a negotiated settlement through established diplomatic channels. In the light of that, we call for the immediate implementation of resolution 2735 (2024), which provides a foundation for an inclusive peace deal.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone remains committed to a vision of a peaceful Middle East, in which Israel and Palestine exist as two independent States, living side by side in peace and security.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I would like to express my appreciation to Acting Under-Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for her updates.

The Republic of Korea is gravely alarmed by the rapidly deteriorating situation in northern Gaza, particularly near the Jabaliya refugee camp, which is subject to intensified attacks and what appears to be the implementation of a long-standing plan to isolate and besiege the area.

Despite repeated calls for the protection of civilians and ensuring humanitarian aid, deliberate actions that disregard the principles of international humanitarian law continue unabated. Civilians, regardless of their ability or willingness to evacuate, are entitled to protection and access to basic necessities.

Sadly, in this tragic conflict, not only international law, but also humanity and morality have been completely disregarded. The air strike last weekend that killed five children playing outside a kindergarten in Gaza City exemplifies once again the repeated disregard for humanity in Gaza. Additional evidence of that lost humanity is the shocking reports that Israel did not allow food to enter northern Gaza for the first half of October, further aggravating an already desperate hunger situation.

We must recognize and underscore that the current Israel Defense Forces strategy cannot guarantee the short or long-term security of Israel. Traumatizing and brutalizing entire generations of Palestinians in Gaza will only exacerbate deep-rooted resentment and hatred, laying the ground for more violence and tragedy in future.

The modern history of the Middle East tells us that battlefield gains are mere stopgaps; there is no military solution to the conflict. The recent developments and grim images we painfully see every day demonstrate the absolute need for an immediate ceasefire to halt the carnage, free the long-suffering Israeli hostages and

save countless lives in Gaza. A ceasefire should also be the first step towards lasting peace in the region.

Last month, we saw the power of political will through the relative success of the first phase of the polio vaccination campaign; with the second phase beginning on Monday, under fire. An immediate ceasefire or, at the very least, a humanitarian pause throughout Gaza, must be urgently implemented.

We sincerely hope that Israel can demonstrate to the rest of the world that it has not lost its sense of humanity towards their neighbours by proving that it is actually implementing necessary measures to protect civilians. We therefore urge all parties, especially Israel, to immediately recalibrate towards peace, beginning with a ceasefire, the sole way for a durable solution to this extraordinarily merciless conflict.

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Msuya for her briefing.

As we have just heard, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is catastrophic. France condemns the Israeli strikes on civilian infrastructure and calls on Israel to ensure the protection of all civilians, in accordance with its obligations under international humanitarian law. We express our deep concern about the extreme gravity of the situation in northern Gaza, where the Israeli army has been conducting an operation for several days. The human toll is already very heavy: nearly 300 victims, with approximately 100 wounded in the space of a week, according to local authorities. The delivery of humanitarian aid has been hampered. New evacuation orders have been issued, even though the forced displacement of a civilian population constitutes a serious violation of international law. The Israeli authorities must remove the obstacles to the delivery of aid, as humanitarian access is at its lowest level since the beginning of the conflict.

France calls on Israel to abandon plans to criminalize the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and to prevent it from operating throughout the Palestinian territories. That would only worsen an already catastrophic humanitarian situation. We reiterate our support for UNRWA and its decisions to implement the recommendations of the Colonna report.

The war in Gaza must end without delay. That is the only way of effectively responding to the ongoing humanitarian disaster. We must no longer accept it as a fact. We call for an immediate and permanent

ceasefire, the release of all hostages and the massive delivery of aid.

France has consistently and repeatedly condemned the attacks committed by Hamas and other terrorist groups on 7 October 2023. France is pursuing its efforts aimed at implementing the two-State solution and will continue to take the initiative in that regard, including in the Security Council. Measures aimed at weakening the Palestinian Authority must cease. France calls on Israel to stop obstructing the transfer of revenues to the Palestinian Authority. France supports a reformed Palestinian Authority capable of exercising its responsibilities throughout the Palestinian territories, including the Gaza Strip.

We must also address the current war in Lebanon. The humanitarian situation is worsening as a result of intensified Israeli strikes. There too, we need an immediate ceasefire. Resolution 1701 (2006) must be fully implemented as a matter of the utmost urgency in order to achieve a long-term solution along the Blue Line that respects the security of both Israel and Lebanon.

Finally and above all, a regional conflagration must be avoided. In that respect, France condemned Hizbullah's attack on a military base in Binyamina, which killed four people and left dozens injured. France reiterates its unwavering commitment to Israel's security. Hizbullah's attacks on Israeli territory must cease.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya for her sobering and detailed briefing of the situation on the ground.

This weekend, like so many here and so many people around the world, I watched in horror as images from central Gaza poured across my screen — images of what appeared to be displaced civilians burning alive following an Israeli air strike. There are no words, simply no words, to describe what we saw.

Israel has a responsibility to do everything possible to avoid civilian casualties, even if Hamas was operating near the hospital in an attempt to use civilians as human shields. We have made that clear to Israel. Just as we have made clear to the Israeli Government, at the highest levels, that it must do more to address the intolerable and catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Some recent United States diplomacy has been discussed in the press. For the first time in weeks, the Erez crossing, in northern Gaza, has reopened, and Israeli authorities have committed to allow United Nations trucks to enter northern Gaza through at least one other route. Several dozen trucks of aid have entered northern Gaza for the first time in several weeks. But that is not enough. Many more deliveries are needed, and we will continue to push for that.

In southern Gaza, we understand that United Nations convoys will be able to use a new route, pending repairs, and that the Israel Defense Forces has committed to take steps to help secure delivery routes against armed gangs involved in violent looting and will do so on a sustained basis.

Israel is also working with the World Food Programme on a plan to improve humanitarian infrastructure across the Gaza Strip, which, if implemented, could lead to the additional delivery of desperately needed food aid.

A second round of polio vaccination is also under way in the south and will soon begin in the north. It is crucial that the Jabaliya camp is included in that effort.

We know that commitments must be followed through on and that the progress that we have seen since last week is insufficient. For our part, the United States will therefore continue to make the following clear: food and supplies must be surged into Gaza immediately, and there must be humanitarian pauses across Gaza to allow for vaccinations and the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid. A “policy of starvation” in northern Gaza would be horrific and unacceptable and would have implications under international law and United States law. The Government of Israel has said that this is not their policy, that food and other essential supplies will not be cut off, and we will be watching to see that Israel’s actions on the ground match that statement.

We also remain gravely concerned about the evacuation orders issued by Israel in northern Gaza and are closely monitoring the implementation of those orders. Furthermore, all parties must abide by resolution 2720 (2023) and reject any forced displacement of the civilian population, which would violate international law. And let us be clear: civilians are protected under international humanitarian law and may not be declared as combatants if they fail to evacuate.

We know that winter is approaching. The cold and bad weather will soon set in. One year into the

fighting, with Hamas substantially degraded, Israeli authorities should be working with the United Nations and the international community on a plan for civilians to move inland. They should be facilitating — not obstructing — efforts to provide temporary shelter, and they must restore basic services, including water, electricity and sanitation. I repeat our calls for this work to begin now.

Israel must also cooperate with the United Nations and the international community to lay the foundation for the reconstruction of Gaza because civilians must be allowed to return, including to northern Gaza, to rebuild their lives. That can be hard to imagine at a moment of so much suffering and pain, death and destruction. But we must — we must continue to work towards a future where people can rebuild and where people can heal. And for that to happen, there must be a durable peace. As we have said many times, a ceasefire with the release of all hostages could start today if Hamas — which set the conflict into motion and has no concern for the well-being of Palestinians in Gaza — would accept the deal on the table. It could happen today.

I was devastated by the new details that Hersh Goldberg-Polin’s parents shared about their son’s execution — how Hersh’s limp body was found on his knees, in a tunnel beneath Gaza, a bullet through his skull, and how he attempted to lift up his arm — his only arm — to shield himself from the bullet that ended his promising young life.

I urge some members of the Council to stop turning a blind eye to Hamas’ depraved deeds. Its acts of terror, its hostage-taking, its obstruction of a ceasefire deal and its use of civilians as human shields. And I urge members of the Council to continue to focus on direct diplomatic initiatives that can save the lives of innocent people, who did not start the war and cannot end it, but who bear the costs of it.

We must all support the United Nations as it works with Israel to step up delivery and improve the humanitarian response effort. The Council has an important role to play, but ultimately — as I have said previously — actions on the ground, more than discussions here in New York, are what will bring about real progress. That has been the focus of United States diplomacy and will continue to be our focus in the months ahead — getting humanitarian aid in, getting hostages out, and ending the conflict.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I thank Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya for her briefing.

The United Kingdom supported the call for this meeting today to discuss the urgent steps needed to address an ever-growing humanitarian tragedy in Gaza. The situation in northern Gaza is harrowing. Approximately 400,000 Gazans have been ordered to evacuate the north and move southwards to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF)-designated humanitarian zone. Many of those people will already have been displaced, some many times over, and are desperately searching for refuge. But there are no safe places in Gaza. Just this week, we saw horrifying images following the Israeli strike on Al-Aqsa Hospital, inside the IDF-designated humanitarian zone.

Those who decide to move face intimidation, active fighting zones and the threat of continued airstrikes. Those who stay face extreme hunger and appalling conditions, without access to basic services or healthcare. In the first half of October, no food aid was delivered to northern Gaza, with Israeli authorities denying or impeding the vast majority of humanitarian movements between north and south. We expect October to see the least aid enter Gaza since the beginning of the conflict, lower even than September. Families in Gaza are facing a second winter with even less resilience and fewer resources. That is unconscionable. Israel must comply fully with international humanitarian law and ensure sufficient aid reaches all parts of Gaza. We also reiterate our concern at legislative proposals seeking to undermine the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which is vital to the humanitarian response in Gaza.

Let me be clear: northern Gaza must not be cut off from the south. Palestinian civilians, including those evacuated from northern Gaza, must be permitted to return to their communities and rebuild. There must be no forcible transfer of Gazans from or within Gaza, nor any reduction in the territory of the Gaza Strip. We need to see an immediate ceasefire, to bring that devastating conflict to an end.

We must also hold in the front of our minds, the unthinkable suffering of the 101 hostages who remain in captivity in Gaza. Their ordeal has gone on for far too long. Once again, we call on Hamas to release the hostages immediately and unconditionally.

As we know, the suffering in the region goes beyond Gaza. We reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire between Hizbullah and Israel. All parties must take measures to avoid civilian casualties and ensure the safety and security of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon personnel.

In the West Bank, as my Foreign Secretary has said, we urge the Israeli Government to take action to crack down on settler violence and to stop settler expansion on Palestinian land. That is why yesterday, my Government announced further sanctions against three illegal settler outposts and four organizations in order to bring accountability to those who perpetrate such heinous human rights abuses against Palestinians.

The Palestinian people, the Israeli people and the region as a whole deserve a better reality than the daily cycle of violence and fear to which they have become accustomed. But there is a path to peace, one that would see a safe and secure Palestinian State, beside a safe and secure Israel. We urge the parties to be courageous and to take the path towards peace and a better future for their people.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Algeria for calling for this meeting, and I thank Acting Under-Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for her briefing.

The sudden escalation of the situation between Lebanon and Israel in the past few days has caused widespread concern and worry in the international community. At the same time, the situation in Gaza is not showing any sign of stabilization but has continued to deteriorate. In the past two weeks, Israel has not relented in its military operations in Gaza, but has constantly attacked and bombed schools and hospitals, completely cut off access for humanitarian supplies into northern Gaza and once again forcibly ordered the emergency evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people.

In the sea of fire caused by Israel's bombing, some displaced Palestinian civilians were burned alive and died. They are all human beings like us. Why do they have to suffer like that simply for having been born in Gaza? Two million people have been struggling on the verge of death for more than a year. How long will it take before they can see any hope of survival?

The Security Council shoulders a responsibility to maintain peace. We have held repeated discussions, expressed sympathy, voiced our positions and expressed concerns. But that is not enough. It is unacceptable to

allow the tragedy in Gaza to continue, and it is also unacceptable for the Security Council to collectively remain paralysed.

We must restore and revitalize the authority of international humanitarian law. Using starvation as a weapon of war is a serious war crime. Humanitarian organizations are a lifeline for Gaza. It is intolerable to see them face suppression, restriction and even security threats. Israel must fulfil its obligations under international humanitarian law, immediately lift the blockade and restrictions on humanitarian access to all of Gaza and cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies to facilitate and ensure the safety of humanitarian operations, such as the transportation of humanitarian supplies and polio vaccinations. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East is the mainstay of humanitarian assistance in Gaza, and China firmly opposes any attempt to discredit or suppress the Agency.

We must preserve and revitalize the effectiveness of Security Council resolutions. The Council has adopted a number of resolutions on the situation in Gaza that explicitly call for a ceasefire, but none have been effectively implemented, thus dealing a serious blow to the credibility of the entire United Nations system. Council resolutions are binding on all States and must be implemented. We support the Council's deploying every option in its toolbox to ensure that the resolutions adopted are implemented. Every member has the responsibility to safeguard the effectiveness of Council resolutions. In that regard, it is our particular hope that the United States will respond to the strong appeal by the international community and support further action by the Council to bring about an immediate ceasefire. It must be noted that the United States has reportedly provided Israel with more than \$17 billion in military aid since October 2023. Under the current circumstances, is supplying weapons on such a large scale conducive to fulfilling the objectives of the Council's resolutions? That question merits serious reflection.

We must revitalize and safeguard the political prospects of a two-State solution. The implementation of the two-State solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State are the only viable way of resolving the Palestinian question. Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are inseparable and integral parts of the State of Palestine. Future governance arrangements for Gaza should be predicated

on a full withdrawal of Israeli troops and decided through internal consultations among the Palestinian people. The implementation of the two-State solution requires the political will of both parties. Israel must stop eroding and jeopardizing the foundations of the two-State solution and return to the right track, namely, the two-State solution. The international community has the responsibility to provide international guarantees for its implementation.

China stands ready to continue playing a constructive role and to make unremitting efforts to push for a ceasefire and end the fighting as soon as possible so as to achieve peace in the region.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I thank Ms. Msuya for her harrowing briefing.

On Monday, we witnessed shocking and disquieting images of civilians being burned alive following the Israeli air strikes on Al-Aqsa Hospital, where several internally displaced people were taking refuge. Regrettably, that is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the catastrophe that is unfolding. Central Gaza alone has seen at least two mass casualty incidents since Sunday. In northern Gaza, the siege has intensified, cutting off deliveries of food and aid to the area and forcibly displacing more than 50,000 people from Jabaliya camp once more. Such levels of suffering must not be normalized or justified. The devastating consequences of the violence have exacted a heavy toll on civilians. The cost in human lives is staggering. In the past week alone, 379 Palestinians were killed and more than 1,400 were injured in Gaza. Those figures are not just statistics: they represent human beings, families, communities and futures that have been torn apart.

Malta urgently calls for an immediate and permanent cease fire. Hostages must be released unconditionally. Humanitarian aid must be allowed to flow without obstruction. All crossing points for aid must be opened without any more delays.

We strongly condemn all actions that target civilians and civilian infrastructure. It is essential that all parties, without exception, adhere to the principles of international law. They must ensure that military action and hostilities do not further entrench the suffering of civilians. No food has entered north Gaza for more than 12 days, with the World Food Programme once more warning of famine engulfing the population. The population is being deprived of basic necessities,

including healthcare. Hospitals in north Gaza are operating at minimum capacity. Those who have, once again, been forcibly displaced from the north have nowhere to go, as bombardment continues across the Strip. Hospitals, schools and places of worship are often targeted, depriving civilians of any potential sanctuary. We have heard that, with nowhere safe to go, some have chosen to die at home.

International humanitarian law is unequivocal: forced displacement is prohibited, civilians must be safeguarded at all times, and those who choose to remain in their homes must be guaranteed access to essential resources and services. Malta reiterates its call for the immediate and full implementation of the International Court of Justice's order containing provisional measures and emphasizes that international law is binding on all States.

Despite the severe insecurity and violence, the second round of polio vaccines started to be administered on Monday. We pay tribute to the brave workers from the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), who aim to vaccinate more than 590,000 children in the coming days.

We must also strive to ensure that children in Gaza are protected in the long term, when not only physical care but also psychological support will be needed. There is no actor better placed to ensure that than UNRWA. However, the Agency is facing a multitude of challenges, including strikes on its premises, such as the Al-Mufti school, which was shelled on 13 October. A total of 22 Palestinians, including 15 children, were killed in that attack.

It is concerning that legislation affecting the Agency is being considered by the Israeli Knesset, which is seeking to halt UNRWA's operation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. UNRWA is a pillar of humanitarian efforts and regional stability. Without its continued presence, the consequences will be devastating for millions who rely on its services. We once again call for the shelving of the legislation to ensure that UNRWA can continue its vital work in line with its mandate, adopted by the General Assembly by overwhelming majority.

The time for rhetoric has long passed. The situation is unsustainable. The stories are heart-wrenching. The violence must end.

The situation in the West Bank also remains alarming, in particular the financial situation of the Palestinian Authority. The increase in illegal settlements and settler violence, the situation of Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the threats to the long-established but fragile status quo regarding Jerusalem's holy sites also deserve our undivided attention. Those challenges and the conflict's expansion into Lebanon may engulf the region.

The Council has the tools and responsibility to act decisively and effectively. By pursuing a regional ceasefire, upholding international law and working towards a credible and irreversible realization of the two-State solution, we can chart a path to a peace that is both just and lasting. The world is watching, and we must not fail it.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): We thank the Swiss presidency for promptly convening this briefing, and we are grateful to Algeria for recalling our collective responsibility to address the dire situation in Gaza. We also thank Ms. Joyce Msuya and the Secretary-General for providing comprehensive information on the latest developments in Gaza.

The Middle East region, particularly the Gaza Strip, demands the unwavering attention of the Council. The situation in Gaza has reached a critical juncture, with ongoing military operations and an escalating humanitarian crisis that can no longer be ignored. Recent reports paint a harrowing picture of the northern Gaza Strip. The relentless Israeli bombardment continues unabated, resulting in mounting civilian casualties and widespread destruction of infrastructure.

The statement from Doctors without Borders detailing the entrapment of their staff members in Jabaliya and the reported casualties in the Al-Yemen Al-Saeed Hospital underscores the dire circumstances faced by both civilians and humanitarian workers. The death toll and displacement figures in Gaza are rising at an alarming rate. The scenario described by major humanitarian actors, including the United Nations, can be characterized only as catastrophic.

The evacuation orders issued for the main shelters and hospitals in Gaza, as reported by medical personnel on the ground, are terrifying. As a result of the ongoing hostilities, aid workers face insurmountable challenges in complying with those evacuation instructions. The constant threat of violence severely impedes efforts to ensure the safe passage of civilians and the

delivery of essential aid. The humanitarian crisis is therefore deepening, with food and water becoming increasingly scarce.

The Council adopted resolution 2720 (2023), in December 2023, in response to the Gaza Strip's worsening humanitarian crisis. That action underscored the urgent need for the immediate, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian civilian population throughout Gaza. We again call upon all parties to urgently implement that critical resolution. The dire situation demands immediate and decisive international action to safeguard the lives of those affected, in full accordance with relevant international norms. The Council bears the moral and the primary responsibility to act swiftly and decisively. We cannot overstate the urgency — lives are at stake.

A ceasefire is not merely necessary; it is imperative to prevent further loss of life and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in desperate need. Every moment of continued fighting exacerbates this crisis. The international community must act swiftly to bring about a peaceful resolution.

In the light of the rapidly deteriorating situation in Gaza, we reiterate our call for the Security Council to explore viable alternatives to address this crisis. To that end, we propose the following actions.

First, diplomatic efforts must be intensified to bring all parties to the negotiating table, while engaging influential nations, including members of the Council, to leverage their influence to de-escalate the conflict.

Secondly, there is a need to demand an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire to halt all hostilities, protect civilian lives and release hostages and all others held in captivity.

Thirdly, safe and secure humanitarian corridors must be established and enforced in order to ensure the delivery of essential aid and medical supplies to affected populations, including facilitating the planned second phase of polio vaccination. That necessitates the rigorous enforcement of international laws prohibiting the obstruction of aid delivery.

Fourthly, existing Security Council resolutions, particularly resolutions 2720 (2023) and 2735 (2024), must be strengthened by adopting more robust and enforceable measures that mandate immediate and unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza.

Lastly, political dialogue between the conflicting parties must be encouraged and facilitated to address the root causes of the conflict and work towards a sustainable peace agreement.

We hope that those actions are able not only to alleviate the immediate suffering of the people in Gaza, but also to pave the way for long-term stability and peace in the region. That includes the realization of the two-State solution, which the Secretary-General has rightly identified as the only way to avoid endless cycles of fear, hatred and violence. The time for decisive action is now. History will judge us harshly for any further inaction in the face of this humanitarian catastrophe.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We support Algeria's initiative to convene today's emergency meeting of the Security Council to discuss the unbearable humanitarian situation in the north of the Gaza Strip. We would like to thank the Acting Head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Joyce Msuya, for her overview of the human tragedy unfolding before our very eyes.

Given that we have witnessed incessant bombing by Israel's air force for more than 12 months, the humanitarian situation in the enclave is truly horrific. The number of civilians killed, wounded and maimed, including women and children, is staggering. In the past 24 hours alone, 55 Palestinians were killed, and more than 329 were wounded. The scale of starvation is shocking. The entire population of Gaza is in need of emergency food assistance. Mass displacement and evacuation orders have become mundane, although there is basically nowhere left to flee. In different parts of the Strip, schools, hospitals and refugee camps are being shelled. The United States media are quoting volunteer doctors working in Gazan hospitals; according to their own eyewitness accounts, they are seeing cases of gunshot wounds to the head among minors between the ages of 2 and 12 on an almost daily basis. It would appear, then, that the United Nations flag is not only failing to protect civilians, humanitarian workers and civilian social infrastructure, but that flag is also seemingly becoming a direct target for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). All humanitarian workers, including today's briefer, are stating with one voice that there is no safe place left in Gaza. That is not a figure of speech; it is a bitter reality.

For two weeks now, the international community has looked on as the Israeli military has conducted

intensive air strikes and military ground operations in the northern Gaza Strip. There have been reports of hundreds of Palestinians killed, including children. Just a few days ago, on 13 October, the Israeli air force conducted yet another outrageous air strike on schools in the Nuseirat refugee camp. As a result, at least 22 people died, including 15 children and women, while 80 people sustained injuries of varying degrees of severity. Another five minors became victims of an air strike on the Al-Shati refugee camp in the north of the enclave.

For more than a week now, the IDF has been conducting a military operation to besiege the Jabaliya camp. As a result of bombing, undernourishment and thirst, hundreds of thousands of people could die. Yet the only working bakery in the city of Jabalya was destroyed by yet another Israeli air strike, and more than 400,000 people were cut off from food and medical aid by the Israeli military. And all that is happening at a time when the World Food Programme is not delivering foodstuffs to the northern Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, food distribution centres are shut down, owing to the intensification of hostilities.

Unfortunately, all that is in keeping with the media reports about Israel implementing a so-called IDF “Generals’ Plan”, which supposedly envisages a humanitarian blockade of the north and the expulsion of the population from that territory. We hope that that appalling information will not be corroborated. In that context, we echo the words of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, who urged Israel to summon courage and display humanity, while emphasizing that the residents of the northern part of the Gaza Strip are facing a choice — flee their homes or die of starvation.

The social and economic damage that has been inflicted on the Strip over the past year is colossal. According to United Nations estimates, the enclave’s gross domestic product has fallen so far that it will take almost 70 years to get its economy back to pre-crisis levels and at least 80 years to rebuild its critical infrastructure. Those calculations are based on data from early 2024, although the mass destruction continues day in and day out. In the current circumstances, the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to the Palestinians is of the utmost importance. Nonetheless, Israel has created serious problems and restrictions, while humanitarian workers themselves are being shelled and detained on

a regular basis. In total, more than 300 humanitarian workers have been killed, making 2023 the deadliest year on record for aid workers. United Nations officials are sounding the alarm: 2024 could break a new deadly record in that regard.

Therefore, the Knesset bills aimed at banning UNRWA’s activities on the territory of Israel and revoking the privileges and immunities of its personnel do not stand up to criticism. Let me remind members that the Agency is the backbone of the United Nations humanitarian wing in Palestine and has unparalleled capabilities when it comes to providing social, educational and medical services. If the bills were to be adopted, they would threaten not only the lives of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank but also the prospects for assisting Palestinian refugees in the neighbouring Arab countries of Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. On top of the precipitously deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and the financial crisis prompted by the United States withdrawing donor support for UNRWA, those bills, if they do become laws, risk putting an end once and for all to the Agency’s activities. It seems that that is exactly what Israel is seeking. Despite all that, Washington, without any regard for the opinion of the international community, has been pumping its Middle Eastern ally with arms, while simultaneously providing it with political cover and blocking any attempt by the Security Council to stop Israel’s ruthless war machine, which is responsible for numerous crimes against the Palestinian people.

Such unilateral and unpunished actions aimed at creating irreversible facts on the ground are gross violations of Israel’s obligations as an occupying Power under the Geneva Conventions, which were adopted 75 years ago. Ironically, the Conventions were adopted largely with the aims of protecting the Jewish people, who were subjected to inhuman suffering during the Second World War, and of preventing any future persecution based on nationality. Israel does have the right to ensure its security, but undoubtedly, the path to that goal lies solely in a comprehensive Middle East settlement process and in redressing the historical injustices against Palestine by establishing an independent Palestinian State in line with the relevant decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. As we have seen time and again, any other unilateral formulas aimed at reconciling Israel with its neighbours without a just solution to the Palestinian question will not help to achieve that goal. The only

thing they can do is trigger further outbreaks of violence, such as the one the region is currently facing.

We have repeatedly stated that we stand against violence and terrorism in all its manifestations, and we stand against attacks on civilians anywhere and in any country. That also applies to the attack on Israeli civilians on 7 October 2023, which we immediately and unequivocally condemned. Nothing can justify such actions, just as nothing can justify the collective punishment and total annihilation of civilians taking place in Gaza. We firmly believe that the current catastrophic situation can and should be settled exclusively through political and diplomatic ways. To that end, we must ensure the implementation of the relevant decisions of the Security Council, immediately stop the bloodshed in the region and, most important, guarantee the implementation of the Palestinians' legitimate right to have a State of their own within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We must act without delay. We must compel the parties to the conflict to implement an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, coupled with an exchange of hostages and detainees and full and unfettered humanitarian access to the Strip. Not only will that help to relaunch the process of a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question on the basis of the two States for two peoples formula, which we have all unwaveringly supported, but it will also help to de-escalate tensions throughout the Middle East. Regrettably, resolution 2735 (2024), adopted in June at the insistence of our American colleagues, cannot ensure a ceasefire, as it hinges on the outcome of very dubious negotiations, which, moreover, are not even under way. We would like to believe that Washington will finally recognize that obvious fact and will refrain from sabotaging any relevant new Council initiatives in future. We support any such initiative.

I reiterate that the Security Council has the leverage and the necessary and time-tested tools to carry out those tasks. We are all very familiar with those tools. All we have to do now is find the political will to finally abandon narrow geopolitical interests and clearly and unequivocally demand an immediate ceasefire. We see that all Council members but one are ready to do so. We do not understand why the rest of the Council should share responsibility for the madness in Gaza, when only one member is preventing us from stopping it. We would therefore ask all those who are to speak after us to refrain from limiting themselves to general appeals to the Council and instead to personalize their

reproaches by addressing them to the State that bears the sole responsibility for what is happening.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to start by thanking the Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Joyce Msuya, for the sobering briefing that she just shared with us. Ecuador reiterates its continued support for the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

As we heard, the hostilities are ongoing, and the humanitarian situation, already extremely difficult, is becoming more complicated, in particular in the north of the Gaza Strip. Through its resolutions, the Security Council has called for the adequate and timely provision of humanitarian aid and has even provided for the creation of a mechanism to facilitate and speed up the entry of aid into Gaza and its distribution once there. That must be implemented without restrictions. The adoption of immediate measures to guarantee the provision of basic services and humanitarian aid has also been ordered by the International Court of Justice, in provisional measures handed down at the beginning of the year. The Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator has been working since January and has submitted regular reports on her work to the Council. That reporting requirement was extended a few weeks ago, with the support of all members of the Council. However, for the implementation of mandates and resolutions, expressions of support are not sufficient. The political will of the parties is indispensable. Above all, a ceasefire in Gaza is necessary. In that regard, we must see immediate compliance with resolution 2735 (2024), which entails an immediate ceasefire, the release of the hostages and the entry of humanitarian aid in a sufficient and timely manner.

As I pointed out last week (see S/PV.9744), this crisis not only requires an urgent response, but also a sustained commitment from the international community to alleviate the suffering and protect the fundamental human rights of the people of Gaza, the Palestinians and the Israelis. It is also essential to bear in mind that respect for the rules of international humanitarian law is not optional or dependent on reciprocity. Non-compliance with those rules brings with it serious international responsibilities that we cannot ignore. However, today we heard about forced displacement, impeded access to humanitarian aid and famine in northern Gaza, all of which is prohibited by international humanitarian law. That is why it

should also be reiterated today that Security Council resolutions and the orders of the International Court of Justice must always be respected, without exception, in this case and in all cases.

I would like to reiterate my country's condemnation of the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October 2023 — the immediate cause of the current violence — and its demand that all hostages be released immediately and unconditionally.

I want to end by reaffirming Ecuador's commitment to work towards a peaceful, lasting 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. Yamazaki (Japan): I also thank Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya for her update on the grim reality on the ground.

The situation in Gaza remains desperate, with no end in sight. We are now entering a second year of devastation since the horrific attack by Hamas and others on 7 October 2023. Japan once again firmly condemns the attack and hostage-taking by Hamas and demands that all remaining hostages be immediately released.

Japan is deeply disturbed by the intensifying Israeli military activities in Gaza in recent days, particularly in the north. We are appalled by the reports that attacks on displacement camps, schools and even hospitals have led to hundreds of casualties, including many women and children.

The reports that hundreds of thousands of people are still trapped in the very dangerous situation in northern Gaza are profoundly alarming. They have nowhere to go amid the continued bombardments and little access to humanitarian aid, facing an imminent risk of starvation. Moreover, Israel's repeated evacuation orders have pushed the Palestinians in northern Gaza to the south, causing yet another massive displacement.

We amplify our strong demand that all parties to the conflict act in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law. Civilians and civilian objects must be protected, and safe and unhindered access for humanitarian aid must be guaranteed at all times.

One glimmer of hope is the success of the second round of the polio vaccination campaign so far. We are grateful to the United Nations agencies and personnel involved, while taking note of the coordination efforts

by the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories. We urge all parties to ensure that the campaign can be safely completed so that this disease no longer threatens the children of Gaza and the region.

The vaccination effort demonstrates two things. First, it shows what can be achieved when the parties work together to save innocent civilians, rather than keeping them in the crossfire and depriving them of basic human necessities and dignity. Secondly, it shows the indispensable role that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East is playing on the ground. The Agency must be allowed to operate. We again express our grave concern about the bills proposed in the Israeli Knesset that would undermine its work and jeopardize essential services for millions of vulnerable Palestinian refugees.

As we all know, only a ceasefire can end that humanitarian catastrophe. The deal outlined in resolution 2735 (2024) would allow for the release of all hostages, an immediate ceasefire and the delivery of humanitarian aid to Palestinians at scale. It has been on the table for months, and the importance of the resolution remains unchanged. We strongly hope the tireless mediation efforts of the United States, Egypt and Qatar will persuade the parties to finally accept and implement it straightaway. A ceasefire and release of hostages is an absolute prerequisite for the cessation of the ongoing human tragedies.

What we see in front of us are not inevitable facts; they are human-made tragedies. All concerned actors must work relentlessly to bring a halt to the fighting. Japan will spare no diplomatic effort to that end.

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

I would like to thank, as my colleagues did, the Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Msuya, for her presentation of the catastrophic situation in Gaza. And it is catastrophic in all the fundamental areas, such as food security, health and education.

(*spoke in English*)

“The level of suffering ... defies our ability to capture it in words.”

(*spoke in French*)

I think that is a sentence that will stay with us.

Allow me by way of introduction to say what I will also say in conclusion: there must be an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, as the Security Council has for months been calling for.

Our Algerian colleague stated that we are commemorating today World Food Day and the founding 78 years ago of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which eradicated hunger or improved food security in many countries around the world. Tragically, in Gaza, this day marks a sad reminder: famine there threatens the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, starting with children.

Switzerland recalls that resolution 2417 (2018) strongly condemns “the unlawful denial of humanitarian access and depriving civilians of objects indispensable to their survival” (*para. 6*). The Rome Statute considers the use of starvation as a method of warfare to be a war crime, and those responsible must be brought to justice.

In Gaza, civilians, including the 400,000 in the north, have only international humanitarian law as a shield. It is therefore essential that the parties implement that law.

The threats facing the civilians are terrifying. Schools that have become shelters are bombed, as was the case last weekend in Jabaliya. The same applies to hospital complexes. The almost complete denial of humanitarian aid exposes the civilian population to epidemics from another age, not to mention the fact that children have not been to school for over a year.

That forces us to confront a number of questions. Is the delivery of humanitarian aid to combat the food insecurity of Gaza’s population being intentionally obstructed? Are the new evacuation orders issued by Israel to hundreds of thousands of men, women and children an attempt to introduce permanent changes in the occupied Palestinian territory? Switzerland recalls that such measures would be illegal under international humanitarian law.

At the same time, Hamas continues to launch rockets into Israel, including as far away as Tel Aviv, which we condemn. The humanitarian situation of the hostages who are still alive is also catastrophic. We have strongly condemned the atrocious acts of terror committed by Hamas on 7 October and have called for the immediate and unconditional release of the hostages. And we will continue to do so.

We have said it again and again: all parties, including Hamas and other armed groups in the Gaza Strip, must respect international humanitarian law. But Hamas’s terrible crimes in no way suspend Israel’s obligation to comply strictly with international humanitarian law.

Israel must now urgently and decisively take effective measures to provide basic services and emergency humanitarian aid to the Palestinians in Gaza, as demanded by the International Court of Justice. We recall that this is an obligation under international humanitarian law.

To that end, only close collaboration between Israel and specialized humanitarian agencies can ensure the safe, rapid and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians in need. Switzerland commends the work of those agencies — including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the World Health Organization and UNICEF — which carried out a first wave of polio vaccinations under extremely difficult conditions last month. Humanitarian agencies must be able to operate in a safe humanitarian space to carry out their work, including the second phase of vaccinations scheduled for this week.

The attacks on humanitarians — during hostilities and in the media — are unacceptable. The Council has unanimously reaffirmed its support for the Secretary-General and United Nations staff, in particular humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel who are operating in those extremely hostile conditions.

In the face of the massive escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory and the region, respect for international humanitarian law and the implementation of Security Council resolutions are fundamental and indispensable milestones for de-escalation and on the path to peace. Peace must be based on the two-State solution.

I repeat once again: there must be an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, as the Council has for months been calling for — now.

Switzerland remains ready to take, together with the other members of the Security Council, the necessary measures to achieve that.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I want to thank Algeria for requesting an urgent meeting on behalf of the Group of Arab States. We also want to thank you, Madam President, and the members of the Security Council for their swift convening of this meeting. I also add my voice to those who have thanked the Acting Under-Secretary-General and representative of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for her briefing.

A genocide is under way in the Gaza Strip. Israel feels more emboldened than ever, and the Palestinian people and the Lebanese people are paying with their lives the price of that impunity.

There is no rule Israel has not broken. There is no red line Israel has not crossed. And it has yet to be held accountable for any of it. It is that impunity while committing atrocities that explains Israel's latest plan to achieve what has been its goal all along.

Since the first days of the Israeli assault, we warned that its goal was the forcible displacement of the Palestinian people and the annexation of the Palestinian territory. What we are seeing in northern Gaza is exactly that — 400,000 Palestinians besieged, bombed, starved and left with a choice: to stay in the north and die in the bombings or from starvation or to leave to face death elsewhere. The so-called general plan is in motion. Any Palestinian that stays in the north is being considered a legitimate military target. All are hostages and bargaining chips. This is not war; these are crimes; this is genocide. Israel must be stopped, and it must be stopped now.

Israel is repeating the same pattern over and over again: deny protected status to all those who international laws were enacted to protect, notably civilians, including children and humanitarians; deny humanitarian aid, including the most vital for the survival of the population; destroy all civilian infrastructure and all conditions of life; displace the population over and over and over again, while making sure that they have nowhere to go and that they are not safe anywhere they go; kill at will and explain that it is never its own fault.

Look at what Israel did with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Israel told UNIFIL to leave and that if it stayed, it could be attacked. It is an outrageous argument, yet that is what repeatedly happened. And that is what the Israeli Prime Minister and war criminal said himself. If he

can use this argument against a United Nations force, deployed and mandated by the Council, what chance do Palestinian — and now Lebanese — civilians stand when faced with the same logic? They must choose to leave or to turn into a legitimate military target, to leave or to die. And, very often, the choice is to leave and to die.

Israel has declared an all-out war against the Palestinian people, and its attacks against the United Nations are an integral part of that war. In order to destroy the conditions of life in Gaza, Israel needs to make sure no one can help restore them, even minimally.

Israel's attack against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East is part of its assault against the Palestinian refugees the Agency serves and the Palestinian civilian population it is trying to help survive. It is genocide — cold-blooded, planned and executed genocide for the perpetrators — burning, terrifying, harrowing genocide for the victims.

What is happening in northern Gaza now is another level of monstrosity. Silence and inaction are not an option. Is the Council ready to proclaim that although Palestinians refused to surrender, even when faced with collective capital punishment, the Council decided to surrender? We know that many members around this table refuse to do so, and we count on them today to fight back with the tools provided by the Charter of the United Nations and by the law to combat those who are obliterating the Charter and the law. That is the responsibility of the Council and of each and every State around the world.

The matter is straightforward, plain and simple — the massacres have to stop; there must be a ceasefire now, with no delay and no conditions; and life-saving assistance must immediately reach the civilian population in Gaza, notably northern Gaza, with no delay and no excuses. The measure of our success will be the lives that we save.

We all see the bombardments and the destruction, the famine and the denial of humanitarian aid, even as Israel explains that it is upholding the principles of distinction and proportionality and showing photos of trucks entering Gaza. This is absurdity meeting inhumanity. By now we all know that Israel is lying. We all know Israel is committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. By now we are witnesses of the

genocide, whether we recognize it yet or will recognize it later. Enough is enough.

Let me be clear: a member of the United Nations has committed egregious, repeated and prolonged breaches of its Charter; has committed atrocities; has attacked the United Nations, declaring the Secretary-General persona non grata; has killed and maimed United Nations staff; has attacked United Nations headquarters and shelters; is openly attempting to destroy a United Nations agency; is continuously inciting opposition the United Nations and has now added attacking United Nations peacekeepers to the list. Such a member should not be among us and has already surrendered its membership by violating every single obligation and commitment that comes with it.

We are not powerless. The Council is not powerless. The United Nations is not powerless. The international community is not powerless. To the brutal use of force, we must respond with the full force of the law.

Hundreds of thousands of lives hang in the balance. The future of our region hangs in the balance. The future of our international law-based order hangs in the balance. The safety of millions of civilians in the region hangs in the balance. Regional and international peace and security hang in the balance.

That is worth fighting for. Do not surrender to the fire. Do not surrender to the arsonist. It is time to fight back, or the entire region will go up in flames. Humanity must prevail over that inhumanity.

For the record, let me state once again — we are for the protection of all civilians, and against harming any civilian. But Palestinian civilians are not lesser civilians, and their lives are not less worthy of protection. We want a Middle East where all States live in peace and security, but that must include the Palestinian State. We want peace, but the only path to peace is through freedom for the Palestinian people and respect for their right to self-determination. We are for respect for international law, by all and for the benefit of all.

Stop the genocide. End the occupation-made famine and humanitarian crisis. Let people return to where their homes once stood and their communities once lived to resume their lives and rebuild what can be rebuilt, to mourn and try to restore life. Free prisoners and hostages. Let families reunite, in life and not death, and let them try to the extent possible to heal. Help us to chart a path away from occupation and wars. Help

us to achieve freedom, justice and peace, so those horrors can never occur again — never again. It is time to act. Anything else is complicity and surrender. The Palestinian people, enduring hell, did not surrender. Neither should the Council.

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

Mr. Danon (Israel): Three hundred and seventy-six days have passed since the largest slaughter of Jews since the Holocaust. For 376 days, 101 human beings — men, women, children and the elderly — have been tormented by Hamas terrorists in their terror dungeons. Over the weekend, another brutal assault struck Israel. A Hizbullah drone attacked the northern city of Binyamina, leaving more than 60 injured and claiming the lives of four of our bravest heroes. Just days later, on Tuesday, a terrorist opened fire on a crowd of civilians near Yavne, in the centre of Israel, murdering a police officer and injuring four others. It was only through the heroic actions of an armed civilian nearby that it did not become a massacre on an unimaginable scale. While we were confronting terrorists on the ground, Hizbullah launched 320 missiles and drones on Yom Kippur, the holiest day for the Jewish people, hitting a nursing home in central Israel in the city of Herzliya.

Today we are discussing the humanitarian situation in Gaza, while Israeli civilians are being targeted on a daily basis by those who seek our destruction. The Council has managed to convene just a single meeting on our hostages in 376 days, a small gesture considering the suffering and loss we continue to endure. Still, so many Council members barely mentioned the hostages as an afterthought, if at all.

Hersh Goldberg-Polin's mother, Rachel, spoke of the conditions in which they found her son along with the five other hostages who were executed by Hamas with bullets to the back of their heads. She revealed that "he had bullet wounds in his shoulder, neck and back of the head". He was found collapsed on his knees with a 24-year-old hostage, Eden Yeryshalmi, leaning on his lap. Throughout the tunnel were bottles filled with very dark urine — an airless completely pitch-black tunnel with no plumbing.

We have been clear time and time again — Hamas must release the hostages immediately and unconditionally and lay down their arms. If any Council members truly wish to see change, they must join us in those demands.

Those who believe there is no more work to be done to protect civilians from murderous terrorists in Gaza are sorely mistaken. Only days ago, our forces discovered an arsenal of weapons and explosives inside a United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) clinic, cloaked in the blue flag of the United Nations.

Terrorists seized that facility, using it as a weapons store and a launch site. How many times have we warned of UNRWA-Gaza's infiltration by Hamas? How many months have passed since we provided a list of hundreds of names of Hamas terrorists employed by UNRWA? There has been no reply.

While we confront the ongoing threat in Gaza, along with the six other fronts from which we are continually attacked, our humanitarian efforts remain as comprehensive as ever. Just days ago, we successfully transferred the patients and staff from a hospital in Jabaliya to another facility in coordination with the Red Cross and the United Nations. In recent days we have transferred 70,000 litres of fuel to hospitals and facilitated 800 blood transfusions. Fourteen field hospitals have been established in Gaza and 30,000 tons of medicine and supplies have entered. As always, we acted in accordance with international law, going above and beyond our obligations.

We remain committed to facilitating humanitarian aid, especially in the medical field, despite Hamas' efforts to embed themselves among medical staff and patients. I encourage members to look online, where they can see the videos where Hamas actually disguised themselves as United Nations employers, and they can see them putting on vests and helmets.

Only 72 hours ago, the second polio vaccination campaign began in collaboration with UNICEF and the World Health Organization. In the first day of the second stage, more than 92,000 children under the age of 10 were vaccinated while a further 76,000 received vitamin supplement treatment. Those numbers are in addition to the more than half a million who were vaccinated in the first campaign across Gaza.

Those efforts are in response to emerging needs and in addition to the more than 1 million tons of aid delivered into Gaza, of which 700,000 tons is food aid. On 14 October alone, more than 108 trucks entered Gaza via the Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings. All the while, 530 trucks filled with aid are awaiting collection inside Gaza. Council members should pay attention to

that. The problem is not only on our side — 500 trucks are now waiting inside Gaza. There are other issues to be addressed.

Israel has flooded Gaza with as much aid as possible. Humanitarian aid trucks continue to enter Gaza, and we appreciate our international partners for their assistance. With hundreds of aid trucks waiting to be distributed inside Gaza, while others are hijacked and diverted by Hamas, this meeting has entirely missed the real issue at hand. The issue in Gaza is not a lack of aid. More than enough aid has entered to sustain every civilian in Gaza, with over 1 million tons delivered since the war began. Yet the challenges continue. Yes, we admit that. And it is not due to Israel's efforts or failure to deliver humanitarian assistance.

The real issue is Hamas. The terrorist organization has hijacked the aid, seizing it for its own purposes. They steal, store and even sell the aid that is intended for Gazan civilians, turning humanitarian relief into a profit machine. Instead of feeding the hungry or caring for the sick, Hamas uses the supplies to feed its terror machine. Hamas' exploitation of international goodwill is not new. But the scale of its corruption and violence against its own people is staggering. Aid that should be in the hands of families in need is instead being funnelled into the pockets of terrorists, with supplies either stored in secret caches or sold on the black market to enrich their leaders. Hamas has favoured its terrorists over the civilians they claim to defend, choosing to sustain their terrorist activities while leaving the people of Gaza to fend for themselves.

Israel, along with our international partners, continues to flood Gaza with aid, but it will never reach all those in need as long as Hamas remains in power. Hamas has weaponized the humanitarian situation, exploiting every opportunity to strengthen its hold, while its own people suffer. That makes it incredibly difficult to ensure that the aid reaches its intended recipients. And I know Council members all spoke about Israel, but maybe afterwards, in the consultations, they could speak about the challenges, about what happens to the trucks after they enter Gaza, from where they try to reach their destinations and the storage areas.

Israel remains committed to working with our partners to deliver humanitarian assistance, even under those dangerous and morally reprehensible conditions. As I have said before, it is far easier to criticize the democratic nation defending itself than to hold the terrorists accountable. But what is easy is rarely right.

Hamas moves through evacuation routes, hides in humanitarian zones and uses civilians as human shields.

I envision a future Gaza — one where aid reaches those for whom it is intended, where humanitarian agencies are not fronts for terrorists and where the people of Gaza can live without fear of Hamas. I know that many Council members share that vision, but it cannot be realized with Hamas in power. We will not wait for another 7 October. We will not wait while Hamas plots our destruction. We will act, and we will act according to the principles and morals that guide our nation.

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

Mr. Mohamed Laghdaf (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Joyce Msuya for her briefing. The Group of Arab States would like to thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting to resume discussions on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. We also thank Algeria for requesting the meeting, which comes one week after the Security Council met to discuss the same item and the same topic (see S/PV.9744), but failed, yet again, to act effectively to end the ongoing genocidal war against unarmed civilians in the Gaza Strip.

Once again, here we are in the Council, with accelerating developments on the ground in the Gaza Strip and mounting numbers of civilian victims, including children, women and elderly people, while the intentions of the occupation forces are proven and the international community and the Council are silent.

In the past few days, Israel has continued to commit its customary massacres, claiming the lives of more than 200 unarmed Palestinians, who have been slaughtered in the streets, burned in hospitals and buried under the rubble of residential buildings. As the occupation forces apparently take pleasure in the suffering of the victims, Israel continues to issue evacuation orders in order to isolate the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip in specific areas and exterminate them entirely. That is taking place in parallel with the occupation forces focusing their brutal aggression on the northern Gaza Strip, which is home to more than 400,000 children, women and men living under constant threat. The occupation forces continue to besiege the Jabaliya refugee camp in a systematic and continuous killing operation before the eyes of the world. Amid this overt genocidal war,

the spectre of certain famine looms over the population of the Gaza Strip, who are living outdoors in the rubble, with a complete lack of basic services such as water, food and medicine.

Israel's relentless attempts to completely get rid of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East through unfounded accusations means that those fortunate enough to survive the Israeli killing machine will be at risk of dying of starvation and disease in the coming few days and weeks, unless the Council puts an end to the genocidal war with an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, ensures that urgently needed humanitarian aid reaches the people of Gaza and secures a return to the negotiating table as soon as possible, with a view to achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace.

With the toll of this genocidal war approaching 43,000 killed and 100,000 wounded, and as it enters its second year, as we have previously underscored, stopping this war is not only a humanitarian imperative but also a way for the Council to prove its credibility and effectiveness and those of the collective security system as a whole, on which the United Nations was founded. If not, wars will continue to spread from the Middle East throughout the world and no one will be able to stop them, because there is no Council mechanism in place and its credibility has been eroded and undermined.

In conclusion, the Arab Group calls for putting an end to the Israeli aggression against Palestine and Lebanon, stopping Israel's repeated attacks on Syria and taking immediate measures to deter the occupation entity from pursuing its criminal approach, which is based on spreading murder, shedding innocent blood, sowing destruction and chaos and threatening peace and security in the region. It must be held accountable for those crimes and must not go unpunished.

The Arab Group also underscores the need to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions so as to end the Israeli occupation of Arab territories in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.