



# General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

**75<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting  
Wednesday, 1 May 2024, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Francis . . . . . (Trinidad and Tobago)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Hilale (Morocco), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

## Agenda item 63 (continued)

### Use of the veto

**Mr. Yamazaki (Japan):** Nearly seven months of devastating conflict have brought about a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and an increasingly volatile atmosphere in the region. Tens of thousands have been killed or wounded; most of the population is displaced; and there is a continued risk of famine. Although the Security Council adopted a resolution in March demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza (resolution 2728 (2024)), that has sadly not come to fruition. We are grateful for the intense ongoing diplomatic efforts, especially by the United States, Egypt and Qatar, to bring about a cessation of hostilities and the release of all hostages, and we hope that those will be realized soon. Still, much more needs to be done to achieve a lasting peace.

We consistently hear calls for a two-State solution in the Assembly. Japan has strongly upheld the Palestinian right to self-determination through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with Israel. In 2012, Japan voted in favour of resolution 67/19, which granted Palestine the status of non-member observer State at the United Nations. After 12 years since then, last month Japan voted in favour of Security

Council draft resolution S/2024/312 (see S/PV.9609), as to Palestine's full United Nations membership as a comprehensive decision, recognizing that Palestine meets the criteria for admission, while also taking into account the perspective of promoting the establishment of a Palestinian State through peaceful negotiations between the parties concerned.

Japan will remain committed to working with fellow members in the Council and beyond to bring peace, security and stability to the region and to realize the vision of a two-State solution at last. In the meantime, the international community must continue to exert all its efforts to achieve a sustainable ceasefire in Gaza as soon as possible, with all the hostages released and humanitarian supplies brought in.

**Mr. Kim Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea):** We have again witnessed another example of hypocrisy, double standards and high-handed behaviour by the United States at the Security Council.

Since the outbreak of the conflict between Hamas and Israel, the United States has exercised its veto power five times on important draft resolutions related to the safety and prosperity of the Palestinian people, including casting a veto on the application by Palestine for full membership at the United Nations (see S/PV.9609). By exercising its veto power, the United States has demonstrated its true colours and attitude towards the issues of lasting peace and security in the Middle East, as well as resolving the Palestinian issue.

The United States insists that it voted against the draft resolution on the admission of new Members

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(S/2024/312) because the application by Palestine does not meet the criteria for membership, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. Those claims are a clear violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter, which stipulates that appropriate measures should be taken to develop friendly relations among nations and strengthen universal peace, based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of all peoples. The right to self-determination is a fundamental principle of international laws and treaties, including the United Nations Charter. According to that principle, all people and nations have the right to freely determine their own political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. The right to self-determination must be applied to the Palestinian people without exception.

What is more unacceptable is that the United States claims that the admission of the State of Palestine as a full United Nations Member can come only from direct negotiation with Israel. Independence, with statehood, is the undeniable national right of the Palestinian people. Such legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people for statehood cannot be subject to negotiation.

Furthermore, the admission of the State of Palestine as a full United Nations Member is not a gift to be given as result of negotiation with Israel. As of today, 140 States Members of the United Nations have recognized Palestine as an independent State. Such significant international recognition of Palestinian statehood clearly demonstrates that Palestine deserves to be a full Member of the United Nations.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea strongly supports Palestine's full United Nations membership and their just struggle to regain their legitimate national rights, including the establishment of an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

**Mr. Prabowo** (Indonesia): I thank the President for convening this important meeting.

Nearly two weeks ago, Indonesia challenged the Security Council to stand on the right side of history (see S/PV.9608). Yet, once again, we reconvene in this Hall to reflect on the use of the veto, this time against recommending full membership of the State of Palestine to the United Nations (see S/PV.9609). A single raise of a hand has dismissed the other 142 countries that recognized the State of Palestine. Perhaps more importantly, a single raise of a hand has dismissed

a nation's inalienable right to justice and equality. Once again, we are faced with the same question: was the veto just? Was it accountable? Or is it in fact not only unjust, but an antiquated privilege? The answer seems to be crystal clear.

Allow me to underline two points. First, the State of Palestine deserves full membership in the United Nations. It is key to advance the two-State solution. It is key to rectify the injustices that Palestinians have endured for decades, including the current catastrophe in Gaza. Secondly, our meeting today must go beyond discussing the abuse of the veto. We must go beyond making repetitive loops over and over. Instead, it must be a catalyst for further action to restore the Council's credibility and to further empower the General Assembly. Each and every one of us, the States Members of the United Nations, have the obligation to maintain international peace and security under the Charter of the United Nations.

In that regard, Indonesia supports the measures taken by the Group of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries requesting the President of the General Assembly to convene an emergency special session. We are heartened to note that the President has scheduled the special session to take place in the immediate future. We call upon this Assembly to make a firm recommendation for collective measures, thereby sending a clear message that the denial of the basic rights and dignity of the Palestinian people cannot be tolerated.

**Ms. Schwalger** (New Zealand): New Zealand has actively supported the veto initiative from its inception, and we remain a proud proponent of resolution 76/262. That resolution created a mechanism to ensure accountability between United Nations organs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and to ask permanent members of the Security Council that have cast a veto to explain themselves to the wider United Nations membership.

New Zealand believes that the veto is fundamentally undemocratic in its nature. We are therefore disappointed in any use of the veto, whether it is in the process of admitting new Members to the United Nations or in situations where the Council has a responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

It is important to recognize the context in which that veto was cast. In New Zealand's case, we support

the establishment of a Palestinian State as an expression of the fundamental right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. We have done so for decades. For us, it is a matter of when, not if, we see a Palestinian State alongside the State of Israel.

Serious negotiations are needed to see genuine progress on the two-State solution. Action to revive the Middle East peace process is critical, and we will continue to call on the parties to return to the negotiating table urgently in an effort to work towards a two-State solution.

It is critical that we not lose focus on the current crisis. Civilians are experiencing extreme suffering as the war continues. Israel needs to do more to meet its obligations under international humanitarian law. It must facilitate rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access into Gaza, including full cooperation with the United Nations to provide food, medicine and other aid and basic services. The need remains for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, an urgent de-escalation and the delivery of critically needed humanitarian aid. That must be our immediate priority.

**Mr. Kuymizakis** (Malta): Malta expresses its disappointment in the necessity to convene following the veto cast at the Security Council on 18 April (see S/PV.9609). Malta voted in favour of the Security Council draft resolution presented by Algeria, recommending full membership of Palestine in the United Nations (S/2024/312). We express our regret that the veto hindered the Security Council from reaching a recommendation.

Malta's vote was aimed at seeking to advance peace through the two-State solution. That remains the only realistic foundation for sustainable peace and stability in the Middle East. We voted in favour of a solution that has garnered the long-standing support of the majority of the international community for decades. Malta supports Palestine's full membership in the United Nations and believes that it meets all the requirements set out in Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Moreover, it is crucial to emphasize that only through the realization of a two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine coexisting peacefully and securely, can we envision a genuine prospect for peace not only in the region but also throughout the broader Middle East. Full membership within the United Nations would have offered a beacon of hope during a period fraught with considerable turmoil and uncertainty.

Malta reaffirms its position that an immediate and permanent ceasefire is the only avenue through which we can prevent further deterioration and begin to address the catastrophic impact of the war, which has led to the deaths of over 35,000 people, the majority of whom are women and children.

We underline that a ceasefire would also be conducive to the immediate and urgent release of all hostages, who have now been held by Hamas and other groups for over 200 days. We strongly reiterate our full condemnation of the 7 October terror attacks by Hamas and other armed groups, including the taking of hostages and the continued rocket fire at Israeli population centres.

We are deeply concerned and alarmed at the prospect of an Israeli ground invasion of Rafah. Such a military action in Rafah, where over 1 million internally displaced civilians are currently residing and facing the threat of famine, would be utterly unjustifiable.

We reiterate that all Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2728 (2024), 2720 (2023) and 2712 (2023), must be respected and implemented by all parties. The provisional orders of the International Court of Justice on 26 January and 28 March must be complied with.

Furthermore, international humanitarian law must be respected by all parties. We especially recall the international humanitarian law obligations of all parties to protect civilians and humanitarian workers.

In conclusion, Malta underlines its steadfast commitment to the realization of a two-State solution along the pre-1967 borders, addressing the legitimate aspirations of both sides, with Jerusalem as the future capital of two States, living side by side in peace and security, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the internationally agreed parameters.

**Mr. Aldahhak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of the United Arab Emirates, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and of Uganda, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/78/PV.74). We would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

This meeting is held following the use of the veto by the United States of America against the Security Council draft resolution (S/2024/312) submitted by the sisterly Algeria to grant the State of Palestine full

membership in the United Nations (see S/PV.9609). The Algerian draft resolution was supported by more than 140 States from among the Arab Group, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Non-Aligned Movement and other States that support the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people and their firm and inalienable right to establish their own independent State and full membership in the United Nations.

The United States Administration's veto of the draft resolution once again highlights its disregard for the provisions of international law, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the will of Member States.

We condemn the use of the veto by the United States five times within a few months in order to provide political cover, impunity and unconditional support to the Israeli occupation authorities, prevent the Security Council from carrying out its mandate of the maintenance of international peace and security and enable war criminals in the occupying entity to continue their genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Palestinian people, while they continue their efforts to escalate the situation in the region and threaten international peace and security through conducting repeated aggressions by the entity of occupation against Syrian territories and the countries of the region.

We reaffirm our support for the brotherly Palestinian people in their struggle to liberate their land, establish an independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital, and be granted full membership in the United Nations. We stress the need to immediately stop the Israeli aggression, ensure humanitarian access for the people of Gaza and prevent their displacement.

We also warn against the repercussions of repeated Israeli attacks on the countries of the region, which threaten regional and international peace and security. We call on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities, take immediate action to stop the attacks, ensure that they are not repeated and hold the occupation authorities accountable for them.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is now in its seventh decade. Generations of Palestinian people have lost their homes and have lived in displacement. That is an open wound on the conscience of humankind. The establishment of an independent State is the long-held aspiration of the Palestinian people. Full membership in the United

Nations is a crucial step in that historical process. With its veto, the United States has mercilessly shattered the decades-long dream of the Palestinian people (see S/PV.9609). For China, that is deeply disappointing.

Palestine formally submitted its application as early as 2011. However, owing to the opposition of some countries, the Council's action was put on hold at that time. During the past 13 years, the political prospects for the two-State solution have continued to be eroded and undermined, while the suffering of the Palestinian people has worsened. Under such circumstances, accepting Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations so as to ensure that it can enjoy equal status with Israel and provide the international guarantee for the implementation of the two-State solution is an urgent responsibility from which the international community must not shy away.

On the Palestinian-Israeli issue, the United States has used its veto dozens of times. Since the outbreak of the current conflict in Gaza, the United States has used its veto five times — four times to block the ceasefire in Gaza and this time to single-handedly block Palestine's formal admission to the United Nations. Showing intransigence, based on its own interests and geopolitical calculations, the United States has repeatedly resorted to the veto in an abusive manner, which is not commensurate with the role of a responsible Power. We hope that the United States will genuinely uphold an objective and impartial position and join the international community's action for justice so as to play the constructive role expected of it in stopping the war and alleviating the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

The war in Gaza is still ongoing, creating an unprecedented humanitarian disaster. We urge Israel to immediately cease all military operations, abandon its plan to attack Rafah, immediately open all land crossings, ensure rapid, safe and large-scale humanitarian access and provide the necessary facilitation for the transportation and distribution of relief supplies by the United Nations humanitarian agencies.

The implementation of the two-State solution is the fundamental way out of the Middle East issue. China calls for greater international diplomatic efforts to revitalize the political prospects for the two-State solution. China supports the Security Council's early reconsideration of Palestine's application for full membership in the United Nations, and we hope that

individual countries will cease to impose obstacles to that end.

China will continue to work with all parties to achieve the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, peaceful coexistence between Palestine and Israel and lasting peace in the Middle East.

**Mr. Moncado** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/78/PV.74).

When the United Nations endorsed the partition of Palestine in 1947, the plan called for the creation of two States — one Arab and one Jewish. The State of Israel was established in 1948, but the Arab State for the Palestinians was not. The Palestinians were not consulted about the dispossession of their land in order to create Israel and were cheated of the promise of a national State that never materialized.

A free and sovereign Palestinian State is the opposite of the annexation plans that Israel is implementing on the ground. For more than 75 years, Israel has refused to recognize the existence of the Palestinian people as a nation with political rights and claims to have a veto right, through the United States, over the existence of the Palestinian State. That *de facto* veto is a perverse incentive to persist in its settlement expansion plans.

Israel believes that it is above the law, and its conduct remains unchecked because it has the support of the major Western Powers, spearheaded by the United States Government. That framework of impunity has convinced Israel that it has a free hand to unleash a wave of violence, using the strategy of masking one crime with an even greater crime. Only yesterday, the Israeli Prime Minister announced that he would attack Rafah city, in Gaza, regardless of whether a ceasefire agreement was reached. The leaders of the Israeli regime make no secret of their plans. They are proud of their atrocities, declaring their intention to escalate the massacres.

Their contempt for international law is clear from the fact that, in league with the United States, Israel is conducting a campaign of coercion against the International Criminal Court to prevent it from carrying out its duty to investigate the genocide taking

place in Gaza. We therefore cannot expect any action from Israel that would rectify the current situation.

Today Israel is the most dangerous regime in the region because its recent history has convinced it that war entrenches its oppression of the Palestinian people. It is time to tell the world that a criminal State such as Israel has lost its capacity to prevent the recognition of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations.

For all of those reasons, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expresses its support for the members of the Security Council that, on 18 April, voted in favour of the draft resolution (S/2024/312) recommending to the General Assembly the admission of Palestine as a full State Member of the United Nations (see S/PV.9609). That is a demonstration of the Palestinian people's right to freedom, self-determination and independence. It is an act of decolonization to right an injustice that should shame us all.

Sadly, in a historic vote, only the United States veto denied Palestine recognition as a full State Member of the United Nations. The issue has not been voted on before because of the United States opposition. It is clear to the world that that country is the main obstacle to the freedom of the Palestinian people and to peace in the Middle East.

The United States is the only country with the real power to control Israel's criminal behaviour, since Israel cannot overcome its obsession with war on its own. The fiction that Israel can violate international law without the support of the United States must end. If the United States does not act as a rational State, responsible for its international obligations, as demanded by the current situation, it risks being dragged into a larger conflict by Israel.

The United States needs to demonstrate its willingness to make the two-State solution a reality and live up to its own words and international law. It is time to settle the historic debt of the Palestine partition plan, adopted by the United States and this General Assembly 77 years ago.

**Mrs. Vives Balmaña** (Andorra) (*spoke in French*): I thank the President for having convened this meeting, but, above all, I would like to commend Liechtenstein's diplomatic efforts, which led to the veto initiative, without which we would not be able to speak today. That initiative, which arose from resolution 76/262, and which marked its second anniversary a few days ago,

strengthens the transparency and accountability of the exercise of the right of veto within the Security Council.

Andorra is deeply committed to the proper functioning of the United Nations system and advocates effective and inclusive multilateralism to manage the many crises facing the world. It is therefore essential that the Security Council, whose main responsibility is to maintain peace and security, be able to find the necessary consensus to act effectively.

*(spoke in Spanish)*

The Principality of Andorra is following the situation in the Middle East, particularly in Gaza, with great concern. We once again condemn in the strongest terms the terrorist acts perpetrated in Israel on 7 October 2023. We deeply regret the very high number of civilian casualties since that date and the huge impact on women and children, as well as the humanitarian workers of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other agencies and entities who paid for their acts of service with their lives.

The deplorable situation of civilians in the Gaza Strip, particularly the conditions of women, children and the elderly, continues to worsen with every passing day. We once again call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and respect for international humanitarian law. We also continue to demand an immediate and lasting ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages.

With regard to the ceasefire, we have witnessed how, when there is the will, progress can be made. We therefore applaud the painstaking work done by the elected 10, which enabled the adoption of Security Council resolution 2728 (2024). However, we should remain accountable and regret the fact that that binding resolution was not implemented. In that regard, Andorra once again calls on all the parties concerned to engage in active dialogue, since that is the only way towards lasting peace in the region.

We also regret that the Security Council draft resolution (S/2024/312) that was to recommend granting Palestine full United Nations membership was not adopted (see S/PV.9609). Palestine had already submitted a first application in 2011, which enabled it to obtain non-member observer State status in 2012. However, that is not enough. We must meet its aspirations, as they are fully in line with the principles

and criteria set out in the Charter of the United Nations, which, as Member States, we all champion and defend. Consequently, Andorra supports the admission of Palestine as a full Member. A lasting peace can be achieved only through inclusion, not exclusion.

**Mr. Hmoud** (Jordan) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the President for having convened this meeting.

The Kingdom of Jordan supports the statement made on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/78/PV.74). I would like to make this statement in our national capacity.

This meeting is being held because the Security Council recently failed to adopt a draft resolution (S/2024/312), submitted by the sisterly People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. That draft resolution contains a request to grant Palestine full membership in the United Nations. The draft resolution was not adopted because a permanent member of the Security Council, the United States, exercised the veto against it (see S/PV.9609).

Jordan expresses its extreme regret that the Security Council has been unable to implement its own resolutions on the two-State solution in a manner that upholds the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, in particular the right to freedom, a State and self-determination.

Jordan stresses that recognizing the State of Palestine and its full membership in the United Nations has become an urgent need and a moral imperative for the international community, particularly since Israel continues to destroy any chance for a just and comprehensive peace, either through the results of its continued violations and illegal measures in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, or through its ongoing barbaric war on the Gaza Strip. Since it began some seven months ago, the war has killed more than 34,000 Palestinian martyrs, most of whom were defenceless women and children.

In that regard, Jordan reiterates its call for an immediate end to the Israeli aggression on Gaza and for the continuous, urgent and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid. We condemn in the strongest terms the attacks that Israeli settlers launched this morning on the two Jordanian aid convoys, carrying basic humanitarian supplies destined for Gaza through the Karem Abu Salem and Beit Hanoun crossing points.

We note that Israel's failure to provide protection to aid convoys and allowing them to be attacked are a blatant violation of its legal obligations as the occupying Power.

Jordan warns of the dangerous repercussions that may arise from the continued deprivation by Israel, the occupying Power, of the full rights of the Palestinian people, particularly given the strong support among the international community for the establishment of a Palestinian State on Palestinian soil, in line with the two-State solution.

We call on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities by preventing Israel from dragging the entire region into further conflict, tension and wars through its continued unjust aggression against Gaza and denial of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, as well as its continued undermining of the prospects for a just and comprehensive peace.

In conclusion, we stress the centrality of ending the Israeli occupation and establishing the independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, along the 4 June 1967 borders and in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, the Arab Peace Initiative and the two-State solution.

**Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would first like to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this meeting, in accordance with resolution 76/262. The Kingdom of Morocco, whose monarch, King Mohammed VI, Chair of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), accords great importance to the Palestinian issue and remains convinced of its centrality and primary standing in the Middle East region. We consider that the resolution of the Palestinian question is key to stability and peace in the region.

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its full and complete support for the brotherly Palestinian people's legitimate rights, which are based on international legitimacy, and the two-State solution agreed upon by the international community, which would lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Kingdom of Morocco calls for the need to launch a genuine peace process that would lead to such a resolution.

Palestine's full membership in the United Nations has become an urgent priority, as it is part of the two-State solution agreed upon by the international

community. The Kingdom of Morocco therefore renews its strong support for the request to grant Palestine full membership in the United Nations because we are convinced that granting Palestine membership will bolster the chances of achieving peace in the region.

The Kingdom of Morocco stresses its rejection of any measures that would undermine the legal and historic status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its holy sites, including Al-Aqsa Mosque, or that impose restrictions on worshippers entering the Mosque. We emphasize the importance of preserving its cultural and Islamic character and avoiding all forms of provocation and escalation.

The Al-Quds Committee, which is chaired by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, continues to play its practical and political role to support the Palestinian people in general and the people of Jerusalem in particular. We continue to work at the political level and in the field through the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency, under the personal and direct supervision of His Majesty the King.

Unfortunately, the humanitarian disaster in the Gaza Strip, which has continued for more than six months, threatens international and regional peace and security and has repercussions for the entire world. Israeli military actions in the Gaza Strip have exposed grave violations that contravene international law and international humanitarian law. The number of victims of that crisis has reached an unprecedented level, not to mention famine, as well as the targeting of humanitarian workers, in violation of international law and human values.

The Kingdom of Morocco once again calls for imposing an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and ensuring the protection of civilians in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law. We call for allowing unimpeded access for adequate humanitarian aid to people in the Gaza Strip, the release of all prisoners of war and detainees and the establishment of a political horizon for the Palestinian question. We also call for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023) and 2728 (2024).

The Kingdom of Morocco stresses that it does not accept any threats to expand the scope of military operations to cover all areas in Gaza, including Rafah, because that could result in an escalation of the situation and a worsening humanitarian crisis there.

We also reiterate the need to empower our brotherly Palestinian people in Gaza by allowing them safe, adequate, unimpeded and continuous access to humanitarian aid. The Kingdom of Morocco has supported that since the crisis started, in implementation of the order of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chair of the Al-Quds Committee. We reiterate the important and fundamental role that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) plays in providing services to Palestinian refugees. We stress the importance of supporting UNRWA with all necessary and adequate resources to allow it to perform its noble work.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Morocco continues to hold on to the path of peace option. We will continue to work towards any international efforts that seek to relaunch dialogue and negotiations in order to reach a just and comprehensive solution that would guarantee the Palestinian people all their rights, most importantly, the right to an independent, sovereign State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

**Mr. Al-Dobhany** (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank the President for having convened this meeting.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representative of the United Arab Emirates, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and of Uganda, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/78/PV.74).

It is disappointing that the veto was used (see S/PV.9609) against Security Council draft resolution S/2024/312, submitted by Algeria on behalf of the Group of Arab States, which encapsulated the well-deserved aspirations of the Palestinian people in obtaining full membership at the United Nations. The Palestinian people have suffered decades of injustice and marginalization as a result of the arbitrary measures and discriminatory policies of the Israeli occupation authorities, including being deprived of their right to self-determination and independence.

We highly appreciate the historic position of peace-loving States members of the Security Council that voted in favour of the rights of the Palestinian people and for granting full membership to the State of Palestine (S/PV.9609). It is regrettable that the Security Council has once again failed to support the right of the Palestinian people to their inalienable rights after the repeated failure to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire to stop the genocide and bloodbath in Gaza, all

of which represent a disgrace for the Security Council and humankind as a whole.

It is unacceptable for the Security Council to remain hostage to political calculations and narrow interests in disregard for the demands of more than 140 States that have recognized the State of Palestine, and the number continues to grow. It disregards the human and legal right to self-determination and the two-State solution, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the most recent being Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), and resolutions of the Assembly 181(II) and 194(III). All those resolutions provide for the implementation of the two-State solution to enable the Palestinian people to restore their dignity, realize their inalienable rights and establish their independent, sovereign State on the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

That encourages the Israeli occupying Power to continue to commit brutal crimes and daily massacres against Palestinian civilians, most of whom are women and children, in blatant violation of international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as all international conventions. The Israeli occupation prevents the delivery of humanitarian aid and seeks to forcibly displace Palestinians away from their homeland. The Israeli occupation forces are even preparing a ground invasion of Rafah, which is the last refuge for more than 1.5 million displaced Palestinians.

That would cause an unacceptable humanitarian disaster because Israel, the occupying Power, knows that the Security Council has become paralysed and is unable to stop its war, its crimes and its brutal violations against the Palestinian people or to hold the perpetrators accountable.

While we reiterate our rejection of the policy of bias and covering up for the Israeli occupation plans by providing protection to those authorities, with the toll in Gaza reaching more than 35,000 martyrs and more than 75,000 people injured, the majority women and children, over the past five months, we reject the double standards that prolong the conflict owing to the complete failure to implement any of the related resolutions for the past 75 years. We call once more for the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023) and 2728 (2024).

In conclusion, we reiterate that, together with all peace-loving countries and nations, we will continue to mobilize at all levels in all forums until the State

of Palestine obtains full membership in the United Nations, in line with international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. The Security Council must shoulder its mandated responsibility, and there must be an immediate, permanent ceasefire, the unimpeded delivery of all humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip and an end to the policies of forced displacement of the Palestinian people, providing the Palestinians with international protection in all occupied Palestinian territories and holding Israel accountable for all its crimes against Palestinians.

**Mr. Vasconcelos y Cruz** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): During the most recent open debate of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East (see S/PV.9608), the vast majority of Member States, including Mexico, welcomed Palestine's aspiration to become a full Member of this Organization.

The United States veto on 18 April (see S/PV.9609) imposed on us a decision contrary to the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, the will of the international community and the spirit of universality that underpins the United Nations. Thirteen years after that request was first made, it is unacceptable that the admission of the Palestinian State was blocked once again. By closing the door to Palestine, contrary to the decision of three permanent and nine elected members of the Council, the veto has once again demonstrated its power to erode trust among Members of the Organization and exacerbate polarization.

Mexico has categorically stated that the veto should not be seen as a privilege, but a responsibility. Its use has a negative impact on the international arena. The Franco-Mexican initiative to limit the exercise of the veto in cases of mass atrocities is an effort to limit the harmful consequences of the veto, especially for the civilian population. We reiterate our call on countries that have not yet done so to join that initiative.

In Mexico's latest statement on a veto related to the situation in Palestine, our country argued that we were facing a failure of diplomacy.

Along with diplomatic failures, we must also now acknowledge the failure of weapons. Since 7 October, more than 34,000 civilians have lost their lives in Gaza, and there has been an unprecedented escalation of regional tensions. At the same time, Hamas remains an active organization and is holding more than 100 hostages. We are closer to a regional conflagration than the return to the negotiating table. We also support the

diplomatic efforts under way to achieve a ceasefire and the release of the hostages.

Mexico reaffirms its support for a solution to the conflict, which entails the existence of two States, guarantees Israel's security and allows for the establishment of a politically and economically viable Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel within internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

Finally, we are convinced that Palestine will occupy its rightful place in this Hall in the near future.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Almost two weeks ago, on 18 April, we saw the United States again used its veto power to block Palestine's application for United Nations membership. (see S/PV.9609.) Left almost completely isolated, the American colleagues said they vetoed the Algerian draft resolution (S/2024/312) because they did not want to obstruct the negotiation process, which would result in the establishment of two States on the basis of the existing international legal framework. In other words, according to their logic, if Palestine obtained the status of a full-fledged State Member of the United Nations, it would impede negotiations with Israel. We categorically disagree with that logic. Granting the Palestinian application would mean nothing other than correcting the historical injustice against Palestine, which should have become a State and been admitted to the United Nations in 1948. That is our common duty to the Palestinians, not some carrot that should induce them to be more accommodating in negotiations with Israel.

We deeply regret those actions by our American colleagues. They absolutely do not reflect the principled position taken by the other members of the Security Council, which have essentially become hostage to the United States on the Middle East issue over the past six months.

In general, we have to say that no one expects anything new from General Assembly meetings that convene after American vetoes on Palestine. Discussions in the General Assembly have already assumed a routine character. For the fifth time since the beginning of the current escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, we have predictably heard many beautiful words from our American colleagues, which always boil down to the fact that the United States engages in active diplomatic efforts on the ground. In

other words, Washington prefers a unilateral approach to the multilateral one, and it asks others not to get in the way.

But let us try to give an honest and objective assessment of the results of that unilateral approach. What did the United States quiet diplomacy achieve while 35,000 people were killed in Gaza? Did it succeed in persuading the parties to a ceasefire? The answer is clear: it did not. On the contrary, Israel has been conducting a bloody operation in Gaza for almost seven months, pausing at its own discretion, as tactically expedient, without paying attention to three resolutions adopted by the Council. Recently, there have been horrifying reports of mass graves being discovered in the enclave. An independent international investigation is needed to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to account.

Many towns in the Gaza Strip have been razed to the ground, hospitals and schools destroyed and roads damaged. The Mine Action Service estimates that the removal of unexploded ordnance in Gaza will take 14 years.

There are no prospects for a lasting agreement on a cessation of hostilities. It is worth noting that when the Security Council adopted resolution 2728 (2024), demanding an immediate ceasefire for the period of Ramadan, the United States was quick to declare the allegedly non-binding nature of that resolution, which only added fuel to the fire, giving West Jerusalem a free hand not only in the enclave, but also in the West Bank.

Have our American colleagues succeeded in putting an end to illegal settlement activity in the West Bank? Clearly no. Since 7 October of last year, at least 18 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli settlers, with the connivance of the Israel Defence Forces. Over that time, 1,200 Palestinians were expelled from their land, and their homes were demolished. Against that backdrop, in 2023, the Israeli authorities issued the record number of 12,349 permits for the illegal construction of settlements. That is almost three times as many as in 2022. It has been a long time since we heard words of condemnation of the occupying Power's illegal expansion in the West Bank from the American representatives. We have not heard any today either.

The next legitimate question is whether the release of the hostages has been achieved. Again, the answer is no. But that is not surprising, since the ongoing operation in Gaza, most of whose victims are

Palestinian civilians, primarily women and children, is not conducive to resolving that issue in the indirect negotiations between Hamas and Israel. Given West Jerusalem's announced plans to attack Rafah, it is obvious that Israel is interested only in a military solution to the Palestinian question, even at the cost of the lives of the remaining hostages. Unfortunately, our American colleagues openly play along. The American Security Council draft resolution (S/2024/239), which we, together with China, vetoed in March, was also part of the plans of the American-Israeli tandem. It essentially gave consent to conduct future operations in Gaza.

Have American diplomats managed to help to establish meaningful humanitarian access to Gaza? Unfortunately, the answer to that question is also negative. The Secretariat unequivocally states that such a task cannot be accomplished without achieving a cessation of hostilities. The tragic incident with the World Central Kitchen workers was grim confirmation of that. The problem of the safe distribution of humanitarian cargo in the enclave and the unimpeded obtaining of permits from the Israeli side for the transportation of humanitarian aid has not been resolved either. The proposed alternatives, in the form of deliveries by air and sea, do not significantly change that situation. Even an outside observer can easily be convinced of the indispensability of deliveries by land, having seen the horrific footage that has circulated around the world. It shows poor people in dire need being killed by containers falling on their heads and drowning while trying to retrieve packages from the water. That is not a post-apocalyptic movie but, unfortunately, the realities of life in Gaza in 2024.

Instead of persuading its ally to do everything possible to ensure the adequate delivery of aid by land, Washington is investing huge sums of money in building a temporary pier in Gaza that makes no practical sense in peacetime. That sum would be enough to cover a quarter of the humanitarian appeal of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for an entire year. Meanwhile, the Agency, which serves as a lifeline for the enclave and Palestinian refugees, has received a black mark from the United States, which had suspended its funding because of hitherto unconfirmed Israeli accusations against 19 Agency employees of involvement in the 7 October Hamas attack.

We all realize that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, like the Arab-Israeli conflict in general, does not, and cannot, have a military solution. Violence begets violence, and that vicious circle can be broken only if we achieve an unconditional ceasefire and begin a serious discussion of the prospects for a just political settlement.

For that to happen, hostilities must cease, and certain conditions must be created. We are deeply convinced that Palestine's full membership in the United Nations is one of those conditions. That would put on an equal footing the starting negotiating positions of the parties, one of which was immediately granted such membership in 1949. It is Palestine's admission to the United Nations that would be the first practical step towards a long-awaited two-State solution to the Middle East problem. The overwhelming majority of United Nations Members have spoken loudly and unequivocally about that during today's meeting.

I want to believe that Washington will finally decide not to oppose the world community, but to join forces with it. This is desired not only by us, but also by ordinary Americans — it is no coincidence that, these days, in the United States there are mass demonstrations by students, outraged at their Government's indulgence of Israel's aggressive line and supply of weapons to it, with which Palestinian women and children are killed.

That can, and must, come to an end. Russia will continue to do its utmost to ensure that the massacre in Gaza is stopped, and that the future parameters of Israel's coexistence with an independent Palestine, with full United Nations membership status, as well as with other Arab neighbours, are decided at the negotiating table, not on the battlefield.

**Mr. Afonso** (Mozambique): Mozambique welcomes the convening of this meeting of the General Assembly. The purpose is to consider the question of a veto cast by a permanent member of the Security Council (see S/PV.9609) on a draft resolution concerning the State of Palestine's application for admission to the United Nations (S/2024/312). We hold the view that there is undeniable merit in that application.

First, it is our firm belief that peoples are born with the inherent right to self-determination. It is a right that is deeply anchored in the Charter of the United Nations, in the principles and norms of international law and in natural law itself. It is a right that does not depend on a plebiscite or referendum or, for that matter, on a judgment of other alien peoples and Governments.

At present, 140 States Members of the United Nations have extended their recognition to the State of Palestine. More Members are on the verge of doing the same. That quasi-universal recognition is a testament that Palestine fulfils the requirements of statehood, which, under the law of the nations, include a population, territory and Government and the capacity to engage in relations with other States.

Under Article 4 of the United Nations Charter, and on the basis of our record since it proclaimed its statehood, Palestine is clearly a peace-loving nation. Throughout the years, it has demonstrated its acceptance of the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations. Furthermore, it has shown the ability and willingness to carry out those obligations.

It is against that backdrop that the Republic of Mozambique formally recognized the State of Palestine as an independent and sovereign State in the same manner that we entertain diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. That is the foundation on which we embrace the vision of a two-State solution, of two independent and sovereign States, Israel and Palestine, both as full Members of the United Nations, coexisting as good neighbours, living side by side in peace and security, as prescribed by the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

As we did in the Security Council meeting, we wish to reaffirm once again the legitimate right of the State of Palestine to be admitted fully into the family of the United Nations. Denying that right clearly demonstrates the need and urgency for reform of the Security Council.

The adoption by consensus on 26 April 2022 of resolution 76/262, entitled "Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council", is a testament to the renewed call by the entire United Nations membership for reform of its most important organ, that is, the Security Council.

**Mr. Hauri** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Nearly seven months after Hamas's acts of terror in Israel, tensions are at their highest in the Middle East. Switzerland condemned both the Israeli attack on the Iranian Consulate in Damascus on 1 April and the coordinated Iranian attacks on Israel on 13 and 14 April.

In view of the tragic consequences of the conflict in the Middle East for civilian populations and the risks

of regionalization of the conflict, on several occasions we have already called for the full implementation of the Security Council resolutions. Furthermore, as reiterated by those resolutions, all parties must strictly respect their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law.

However, instead of the immediate ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages demanded by resolution 2728 (2024), the situation in Gaza has only worsened. Already subject to hostilities and displacement, an entire population of more than 2 million people, including very large numbers of children, continues to face imminent starvation. We recall that its use as a method of warfare is strictly prohibited by international humanitarian law and constitutes a war crime.

With regard to the situation in Rafah, Switzerland is deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that a large-scale military offensive could have both directly on the civilian population and for the delivery of humanitarian aid. We wonder how such an offensive in Rafah, a densely populated region, could be carried out in compliance with international humanitarian law.

Last January, the International Court of Justice confirmed the urgent need to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza. Switzerland therefore welcomes reports that humanitarian aid arriving in Gaza has increased in recent weeks. However, that aid is still less than that delivered before 7 October and, given the immense needs of the population, it is clearly insufficient. That is why all efforts must be stepped up to ensure that the required aid can be delivered via all crossing points and distributed throughout the Gaza Strip.

At the same time, Switzerland is deeply concerned by the record levels of violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and condemns all violence against civilians. Violent acts committed by settlers and the displacement of entire communities are unacceptable.

Switzerland supports action by the Security Council based on the ability of its members to negotiate and agree on a common objective. Following numerous vetoes since 7 October, Switzerland actively worked for the consensus in the Council that led to the adoption of three binding resolutions — resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023) and 2728 (2024).

With regard to the draft resolution submitted by Algeria in support of the Palestinian request for full membership in the United Nations (S/2024/312), Switzerland abstained, without opposing it. We believed that the current context of uncertainty and instability was not conducive to such action, and that it would be better to proceed with Palestine's accession to the United Nations as a full Member at a time when such a measure would be in line with the logic of an emerging peace.

However, that abstention does not change our firm support for a solution of two democratic States, living side by side in peace, within secure borders recognized since 1967, with Gaza as an integral part of the future Palestinian State.

On the basis of that objective, Switzerland stands ready to support all concerted efforts to restore an emerging peace dynamic and a political horizon for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

**Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the President for convening this important meeting on resolution 76/262 under the agenda item entitled "Use of the veto".

My country's delegation associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/75/PV.74)

Our meeting today is the fourth in a series of meetings of the General Assembly on Gaza as part of the veto initiative. It is being held following the use of the veto in the Security Council on 18 April (see S/PV.9609) against the draft resolution submitted by the sisterly State of Algeria, on behalf of the Arab Group, on granting the State of Palestine full membership in the United Nations (S/2024/312).

The State of Qatar expresses its deep regret at the Council's failure to adopt the draft resolution. That is a sad event for justice and a setback for efforts to bring about peace in the region. In that regard, the State of Qatar stresses its firm position regarding the just and legitimate request by our brotherly Palestinian people for full membership in the United Nations, especially since that request meets the conditions and criteria set forth in Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations. The State of Qatar believes that it is time for the international community and the Security Council to do justice to the brotherly Palestinian people and to end

the historical injustice imposed on them by accepting their State within the international community, in line with the Charter and the relevant United Nations resolutions, in a way that addresses the aspirations of the brotherly Palestinian people, who are struggling for freedom, justice, self-determination and independence.

Our meeting today is being held under extremely dangerous humanitarian and political circumstances, given the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip as a result of the ongoing Israeli aggression against our Palestinian brothers for more than six months. The number of victims has reached more than 34,000 people, and there are tens of thousands of injured and missing persons under the rubble, while the majority are women and children. In that regard, the State of Qatar condemns in the strongest terms the Israeli threats to invade the city of Rafah. My country categorically rejects the launching of any military operation in Rafah and warns of a humanitarian catastrophe in the city.

The State of Qatar once again calls on the Security Council to assume its responsibilities and take the necessary measures to put an immediate end to the Israeli aggression, ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need and stop the policy of collective punishment and the use of starvation as a weapon of war. We stress the need to provide full protection for civilians, in line with international law and international humanitarian law.

I take this opportunity to reiterate that the State of Qatar welcomes the report of the Independent Review Group on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), appointed by the Secretary-General, which did justice to UNRWA. We call on all donor countries to continue, and increase, their support to UNRWA to meet the unprecedented challenges facing it, especially given the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Despite the ongoing challenges, the State of Qatar continues its mediation efforts together with the Arab Republic of Egypt and the United States of America so as to reach an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza in order to release prisoners and detainees, ensure the delivery of more humanitarian aid and protect civilians in the Gaza Strip, thereby paving the way for the launch of a serious political process that leads to a just and comprehensive settlement of the

Palestinian question, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar reiterates its firm and historic position in support of the steadfastness of the brotherly Palestinian people and their just cause, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative, which guarantees the establishment of an independent Palestinian State along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The State of Qatar stresses that the admission of Palestine to full membership in the United Nations is an established right that represents an essential and a fateful step towards a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian question. In that regard, we reiterate our call on the Council to take the right decision by recommending the acceptance of Palestine's request as a full State Member of the United Nations.

**Mr. Sangjin Kim** (Republic of Korea): Since the outbreak of the terrorist attacks by Hamas and the subsequent military operations by Israel, the General Assembly has convened several plenary meetings to discuss the current situation in Gaza, pursuant to resolution 76/262. Today's plenary meeting is particularly meaningful to the Republic of Korea, as it is related to issues of admission to the United Nations.

Korea, which had to go through a long process to finally be admitted to the United Nations three decades ago, understands better than any other country the aspirations of Palestine to be admitted to the United Nations. Since its first application in 2011, or perhaps since the United Nations partition plan for Palestine in 1947, Palestine and its people have dreamt to be a full Member of this Organization. We believe that, some day in the future, when the times comes, such aspirations of the Palestinian people will become a reality, just as Korea's dream was realized three decades ago.

With due consideration of the relevant circumstances, including the imperative of renewed and strengthened efforts to revitalize the path towards the two-State solution, the Republic of Korea voted in favour of the Security Council draft resolution (S/2024/132) on the admission of Palestine into the United Nations (see S/PV.9609).

Indeed, the matter weighed heavily, and it was not an easy decision for Korea. Regarding the criteria pursuant to Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations, many opinions were raised in the process

of our internal review, and our vote in favour did not constitute a bilateral recognition of Palestine as a State. However, it was the urgent need to revitalize the negotiations between the parties that made us vote in favour.

The negotiations between the parties on the two-State solution have been stalled now for decades. In the course of the deadlock, the tragic conflict in Gaza has reminded us of the acute necessity to resume those negotiations to lay the ground for sustainable peace in the Middle East.

As many Members argued, the admission of Palestine as a Member of the United Nations might have positively impacted the resumption of the talks between the parties.

However, on this occasion, we once again were able to witness that all members of the Security Council share the common goal of the two-State solution. We also became confident that a comprehensive approach to the Middle East peace process as a whole can be another meaningful way to get close to that long-term solution.

The Republic of Korea is willing to participate in deliberations by the Security Council to push peace and stability in the Middle East forward, based on the vision of the two-State solution as a long-term destination.

In order to arrive at that long-term destination, the current situation in Gaza needs to end immediately. In that regard, the Republic of Korea would like to reaffirm its firm position calling for an immediate ceasefire, along with the release of all remaining hostages and expanded humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza. Any ground operation in Rafah should not happen.

**Mr. Agyeman** (Ghana): As a result of the use of the veto by a permanent member of the Security Council (see S/PV.9609), today's meeting is regrettable. It highlights once again the strong concerns that Ghana and many other countries have with the continued maintenance of that anachronistic privilege, which has often been wielded to frustrate democratic decision-making in the Security Council and the collective approach required for maintaining peace and security in an evolved world order.

The recent veto against the admission of the State of Palestine into full membership of the United Nations has come against the crosswinds of the overwhelming aspiration of many to see the State of Palestine as a full

Member of this Organization. While some States yet still refuse to acknowledge the statehood of Palestine, 140 Member States, including Ghana, recognize the State of Palestine. Its admission into the United Nations should therefore not be confused with the recognition of its statehood or of its inalienable right to self-determination.

We remain unconvinced by the rationale given for the dissenting vote in the Security Council. For Ghana, which recognized the State of Palestine on 29 November 1988, we are not in doubt that Palestine's eventual full membership of this Organization would have a positive impact on sustainable peace and global stability, based on its full and unhindered contributions and adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Indeed, while we note many missteps that may have been taken on the Palestinian question in the past, the original commitment of the international community, of 29 November 1947, to seeing the existence of the States of Israel and Palestine, living side by side, within secure and recognized borders and with a shared understanding of mutual security, should serve as a strong motivation to right the wrongs of the past and a more hopeful future for the Middle East.

The Middle East, as we all see, is yet again on the brink, and the unresolved situation of Palestine is the major fault line that continues to create fragilities for the entire region and beyond.

In the view of Ghana, therefore, we all have a responsibility to help the parties to reverse their course. We must muster a unified resolve to support an immediate and permanent ceasefire and the full and unconditional implementation of Security Council resolution 2728 (2024) and all other relevant resolutions, as well as for the unconditional release of all hostages, the enhancement of actions to give true meaning to the commitments for the provision of large-scale humanitarian assistance in Gaza and the guaranteeing of the safety and security of all humanitarian personnel.

The toll of the war in Gaza since 7 October has been devastating, and its prolongation is unacceptable. We are particularly distressed by the emerging details of the mass graves that have been found around the Nasser Hospital and the Al-Shifa Hospital following the withdrawal of the Israeli Defence Forces. We support the call for an independent international investigation

of that worrisome incident and for the attribution of accountability, as may be necessary.

Ghana is also particularly concerned by the growing regional implications of the conflict in Gaza. We deplore the recent cross-border incidents, which have escalated tensions and insecurity in the region and threatened global peace and security. We have studied the footage of the retaliatory missile attacks of 14 April and their trajectories and inherent capabilities, and we use this occasion to urge a firm de-escalation of regional tensions.

We strongly appeal to the countries of the Middle East to prioritize the stability of the region above everything else and reset, in due time, relations for a neighbourhood of peace, tolerance and respect for the territorial integrity of one another. We also urge the friends of the region to assume postures that would not upset the balance of power in the region, as such efforts would not enhance deterrence or serve the cause of peace.

Without a doubt, the question of Palestine is complex, and its resolution complicated, but it is also a situation that we must have the courage to objectively confront, mindful of the history of the region and the aspirations of the two nations for peace, stability and security.

As a peace-loving country that maintains relations with both the State of Israel and the State of Palestine, Ghana renews its call for peace in Palestine and, beyond the State of Palestine's admission into the United Nations, urges a revitalization of the peace process to address mutual concerns that neighbouring States should necessarily resolve. The dark clouds that currently hang over the Middle East skies are ominous, and we all must do what we can to bring about a better horizon.

**Mr. Hachem** (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the President for convening this meeting.

Lebanon associates itself with the statement made by the representative of the sisterly United Arab Emirates, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/78/PV.74).

Lebanon deeply regrets that, on 18 April, the Security Council was unable to adopt the draft resolution (S/2024/312), submitted by Algeria, recommending that Palestine be granted full membership in this Organization (see S/PV.9609). We believe that

the Council's failure to adopt the draft resolution contributes to prolonging the conflict. The Council's failure to adopt the draft resolution on the pretext that the time is not ripe for the recognition of the State of Palestine therefore only contributes to prolonging the suffering of the Palestinian people.

Given the paralysis shown by the Security Council on that issue, we look forward to the convening of the forty-ninth plenary meeting of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly next week. That meeting will be an opportunity for the international community to speak with one clear voice to endorse and demand the right of Palestine to take its rightful place in this Organization.

We applaud the countries that recently recognized Palestine and joined more than 140 countries that had already recognized it. We urge more countries to take that noble and principled step, which supports efforts to reach a two-State solution.

Palestine is a peace-loving State that has repeatedly declared its respect for the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations. It is able and willing to implement those obligations. Moreover, it satisfies the components of a people, government and territory.

The members of the Security Council have a collective and individual responsibility to press for the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Council, the latest of which is resolution 2728 (2024). They must work to reduce the escalation in the region and stop the war in Gaza without delay so as to prevent matters getting out of control.

For seven months, we have been clearly witnessing the security of the Middle East and Palestine being linked to that of the world. The fear that the war would spread is no longer a threat, but it is a reality. Israel's continuous and daily violations of the sovereignty of neighbouring countries, in particular Lebanon, are increasingly jeopardizing the security and stability of the region.

Lebanon is paying the highest price, as it has in the past, for the absence of a Palestinian State. Recognizing the State of Palestine is the best and only solution to the problems of the region. It is the path to stability and to ensuring security and safety.

The establishment of a Palestinian State and the return of Palestinian refugees to it is Lebanon's firm position. Lebanon is working to achieve that goal

with its Arab brethren and international partners. Any solution that does not include the establishment of the Palestinian State remains incomplete and will not achieve justice and fairness, which would make it fragile and revocable at any time.

We therefore once again call for serious efforts to be made to revive the political horizon of the two-State solution, end the Israeli occupation and recognize the independent Palestinian State along the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the terms of reference of the solution. We call for a just solution to the refugee issue in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the Beirut Arab Peace Initiative of 2002. We also call for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

Hope is born out of suffering. After all that has happened, we ask: is it not time to achieve the two-State solution? Have we not all realized that there are Palestinian people who deserve to live, eager to establish their own independent State? If that opportunity is not taken now, it will never come again. Let us give peace a chance.

**Mr. França Danese (Brazil):** I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting prior to the resumption of the tenth emergency special session. Today's meeting offers an opportunity to prepare ahead of the tenth emergency special session, in which we hope for concrete and decisive action by this General Assembly.

Brazil, like nearly every other member of this Organization, is dismayed at the failure of the Security Council to put an end to blatant violations of international law occurring in Gaza and in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. They occur in the context of decades of failure by the international community to address the root causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The unjustifiable veto cast in the Security Council on 18 April (see S/PV.9609) was cast against the position of this very General Assembly. It pertains to this Assembly, the main deliberative organ of the United Nations, to decide on any membership requests, such as that of the State of Palestine. The role of the Council on the question of admission is to recommend and defer to this organ for the decision. We therefore commend all those Council members who understood their precise part in the process, particularly those that supported a positive recommendation, even

though they still withhold bilateral recognition of the Palestinian State on political grounds.

The State of Palestine is a legal and political reality. Regardless of not yet being a formal Member of this Organization, more than 140 countries, including Brazil, have explicitly recognized it and maintain diplomatic relations with it. That reality is further demonstrated by Palestine's active and responsible membership in other international and regional organizations and United Nations agencies.

The continuous blockage, from within the Council, of the General Assembly's prerogative to decide on Palestine's membership will only embolden those that, by negating the legal reality of Palestinian statehood, would rather not afford Palestinians the rights and protections that they enjoy under international law — those that would rather expect a solution for that decades-old conflict to come about miraculously, after the tragedy in Gaza, solely by renewing a commitment to a negotiating process that has already been dragging on for ages and was deliberately stalled by one side.

The ongoing massacre in Gaza, the persistent illegal occupation and repeated attempts to annex parts of the Palestinian territory and the crystallization of a legal system that discriminates against Palestinians in their own land are all consequences of a refusal to acknowledge Palestinian statehood, denying the Palestinian people their fundamental right to self-determination on an equal footing with other nations. The admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations would be a powerful new element for change in that process.

The Security Council has not only powers but also obligations. It shall represent the interests of the wider membership of the United Nations, on whose behalf it acts. The General Assembly, for its part, not only gathers the entire membership but also has a historical responsibility in the realization of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, as it correctly had in the creation of the State of Israel. The exercise of that prerogative cannot be hindered by an unjustifiable use of the veto power in the Security Council. We therefore look forward to the resumption of the tenth emergency special session.

We are hopeful that it can be used to delineate an irreversible path towards the realization of the two-State solution, including by signalling to the Security Council that the General Assembly is ready to admit

the State of Palestine as a full-fledged Member of the United Nations.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom reiterates its commitment to making progress towards a two-State solution, in which a safe and secure Israel lives alongside a sovereign, viable Palestinian State.

The people of the West Bank and Gaza must be given the political horizon of a credible route to a Palestinian State and a new future, and it needs to be irreversible. That is not entirely in our gift, but recognition of a Palestinian State should be part of it. We believe that such recognition of Palestinian statehood should not come at the start of a new process, but it does not have to be at the very end of the process.

We must start with fixing the immediate crisis in Gaza. Gaza is occupied Palestinian territory and must be part of a future Palestinian State. However, Hamas is still in control of Gaza, and Israeli hostages remain in captivity. That shows that we are still at the start of the process. Ensuring that Hamas is no longer in charge of Gaza and removing Hamas's capacity to launch attacks against Israel are essential and unavoidable steps on the road to lasting peace, as is working together to support the new Palestinian Government as it takes much-needed steps on reform and resumes governance in Gaza, as well as the West Bank.

That is why the United Kingdom abstained in the voting on the Security Council draft resolution (S/2024/312) on 18 April (see S/PV.9609). We must keep our focus on the immediate challenge facing innocent civilians right now. That means continuing to support a deal that would secure a pause in the fighting, and then making progress towards a sustainable ceasefire without a return to destruction, fighting and loss of life.

My Foreign Secretary has spoken with the new Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority, Mohammad Mustafa, and offered the United Kingdom's support as his Government implements much-needed reforms. An effective Palestinian Authority is vital for lasting peace and progress towards a two-State solution.

We are working urgently to scale up aid into Gaza, including having trebled our support to the occupied Palestinian territories last financial year to more than £100 million.

We will continue to work urgently to help to bring about peace and galvanize a political process towards a

two-State solution, which provides justice and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

**Mr. Sowa** (Sierra Leone): I thank the President for convening this important discussion under agenda item 63, "Use of the Veto", as requested in resolution 76/262 of 2022 following the exercise of the veto by a permanent member of the Security Council (see S/PV.9609). We believe that this debate provides Member States with a valuable opportunity to consider the impact of the veto on the functioning and effectiveness of the Security Council in fulfilling its mandate and as it relates to the lives and livelihoods of persons and the relevant country situations.

At the meeting held on 18 April in the Security Council to consider the draft resolution proposed by Algeria under the agenda item "Admission of new members" (S/2024/312), Sierra Leone voted in favour of the draft resolution, in support of the aspirations of the Palestinian people and of their inalienable rights to self-determination and statehood.

During the high-level open debate on the Middle East, including the Palestine question, held on the same day (see S/PV.9608), the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone elaborated on our position on the issue, that is, in the context of the request for the admission of the State of Palestine as a Member of the United Nations 13 years after the Security Council's Committee on the Admission of New Members first considered Palestine's application. He said that Sierra Leone recognized the basis for such a request, which, in our view, is legitimate and could create the pathway to a political horizon, founded on the principles of the two-State solution, based on resolution 181 (II), which recommends an independent Arab and an independent Jewish State, and which is in line with Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the guidance provided by the International Court of Justice in its 28 May 1948 advisory opinion on conditions of admission of a State to membership in the United Nations.

We regret that the draft resolution was not adopted. We are of the firm view that Palestine's membership would have better supported the establishment of effective governance and peace and security systems and norms in Palestine, in line with the United Nations normative values of trust, coalition-building and cooperation, and would ultimately have advanced the two-State solution.

The State of Palestine's membership in the United Nations may have been delayed, but it cannot be denied. The arc of the moral universe may be long, but it bends towards justice.

In the context of the ongoing conflict, Sierra Leone acknowledges with deep concern the devastation that Palestinians and Israelis have continued to suffer since the unjustifiable heinous attack of 7 October 2023 by Hamas on Israeli civilians. We therefore urge parties to the conflict to be considerate in their engagement during this phase of negotiations to ensure that lasting peace is achieved.

There is no gainsaying that the Security Council needs to be reformed to reflect the present-day geopolitical realities. The question of the veto is one of the five clusters of the ongoing reform discussion in the informal plenary of the General Assembly, and it is our fervent hope that Member States will come to an agreement on whether to abolish the veto or to drastically curtail its use.

**Mr. Muhith** (Bangladesh): We thank the President for convening today's plenary debate, pursuant to resolution 76/262, on the use of the veto on 18 April in the Security Council by one permanent member (S/2024/312) on the draft resolution recommending the admission of the State of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations (see S/PV.9609).

Today the genocide in Gaza has been continuing unabated in broad daylight for more than six months. More than 35,000 people have been killed, 70 per cent of whom were women and children. More than 77,000 civilians have been injured, with many missing, only to be found in mass graves. While the intensity of the ongoing atrocities is incomparable with any such incidents in the past, the continued and gruesome persecution is nothing new for the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories. They have been enduring that persecution for the past 75 years as a result of the persistent denial of their statehood and the imposition of the brutal occupation on them. We all are aware how Gaza has been converted into the largest open prison in the world and how Palestinian lands in the West Bank have been continuously encroached on by illegal settlements.

The two-State solution, recognized by almost all nations as the only viable pathway for permanent peace in the region, has remained elusive for decades due to Israel's manifested non-compliance.

Therefore, it is imperative today that the international community recognize the State of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations. That would be an important stepping stone towards the realization of the two-State solution and subsequent sustained peace in the Middle East.

Indeed, today an overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations are in favour of the admission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations as a full Member. It is therefore a matter of great regret that that has been blocked by a veto in the Security Council (see S/PV.9609), with disregard for the will of the majority of the nations, global public opinion and the prospect of a peaceful Middle East.

The carte blanche that has been given to Israel by blocking efforts in the Security Council to ensure an immediate and lasting ceasefire has in reality accorded Israel the licence to continue its atrocities and occupation. The veto on the full membership of Palestine would surely further embolden it.

Today, despite the global outcry and the warning from the United Nations about a catastrophic situation, we are witnessing Israel's stubbornness with regard to invading Rafah, irrespective of a truce deal. We believe that, although it is late, there is still scope to rectify past mistakes of supporting the occupying Power politically and militarily.

Bangladesh once again joins the vast majority of the nations and peoples of the world demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza in order to save the lives of the Palestinians, which are no less precious than the lives of the people of Israel. The fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law must be respected by everyone. Countries with the veto power in the Security Council must ensure that their actions do not obstruct global efforts to combat mass atrocity crimes against civilian populations. We urge all countries, especially those that champion the protection of civilians, to take stronger and decisive actions against the mass atrocity crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our strong support for the admission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations as a full Member. We call upon all Member States, especially those that are members of the Security Council, to undertake effective collective measures to that end. Let us all be sincere in our efforts to achieve lasting peace in the Middle East,

which must include an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, as per the pre-1967 border, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We urge the Security Council to take immediate concrete measures, in line with the critical mandate bestowed on it to maintain peace and security, to implement resolution 2728 (2024) without delay in an effort to restore trust in that critical entity in particular and the United Nations in general.

**Mr. Gómez Hernández (Spain)** (*spoke in Spanish*): We regret that the use of the veto once again blocked action by the Security Council (S/2024/312), on this occasion preventing progress on the request for the admission of Palestine as a Member of the Organization.

Under the Charter of the United Nations, we have collectively entrusted the Security Council with the capacity to act on behalf of all Member States. Therefore, when the action of that organ is blocked by a veto, the consequences also concern all Member States.

Spain supports all initiatives aimed at limiting the use of the veto, such as the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group or the Franco-Mexican initiative, regarding cases of mass atrocities, among others, with a view to Security Council reform that will promote its elimination.

We are at a decisive moment in the Middle East. The situation is critical, and we cannot go back to the status quo before 7 October. We must move towards a lasting resolution of the conflict to prevent it from happening again and from our being repeatedly faced with a new and cruel war in the region.

In addition to the urgent measures that we must take — an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the release of the hostages and the arrival of substantial humanitarian aid — a political solution is paramount. We all know and recognize what that solution is: the implementation of the two-State solution, of which the recognition of the Palestinian State is an indispensable element. That is why Spain has taken the decision to recognize Palestine in the coming weeks.

As a Member State firmly committed to multilateralism, we believe that the United Nations not only cannot be a bystander to the process of implementing the two-State solution but also must take the reins. Therefore, Spain supports Palestine's membership to the United Nations as a full-fledged Member State. The acknowledgement and admission of Palestine will provide the Palestinian people with the

needed political horizon. The recognition of Palestine at and its full-fledged membership in the Organization, with all relevant rights related thereto, must moreover give impetus to the process of achieving the two-State solution, in which — when negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians take place — the two sides will be on an equal footing to conclude the long-running Middle East peace process. We are committed to the revitalization of the Palestinian National Authority, our partner for peace, which will also require the international community's strong support to assume full responsibility through a unified Government for Gaza and the West Bank and implement the needed reforms.

Lastly, Palestine's recognition firmly reinforces our commitment to the two-State solution and respect for international law, including the relevant resolutions of the Organization itself. In order to continue progress in that direction, Spain has proposed the holding of an international peace conference with the parties and the international community. More than 80 countries support such a call. Spain therefore reaffirms that now is the time to act decisively to support the admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations.

**Mr. Mao (Cambodia)**: At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the President for convening today's debate pursuant to resolution 76/262, which mandates the General Assembly to convene a meeting when, as in the present case on the admission of new members to the United Nations, the use of the veto has been exercised in the Security Council (see S/PV.9609).

The Middle East has long been plagued by conflict, instability and human suffering. The issues concerning Palestine are highly complex and continue to be a source of intense disagreement in our contemporary world. In that regard, my delegation would like to reiterate our views and make the following appeal.

First, we must reaffirm that the time for war and confrontation should be over and the time for peace should be now. Therefore, my delegation calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, as it has been more than six months since the war began, and the death toll and suffering of innocent victims are unimaginable.

Secondly, we are pleased to acknowledge the five United Nations resolutions on this matter, two of which were adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session (resolutions ES-10/21 and ES-10/22) and three by the Security Council (Security Council resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023) and 2728

(2024)), the most recent of which is Security Council resolution 2728 (2024). Getting to the latter resolution was hard work, but the most important thing is to expedite its implementation. In that regard, Cambodia calls on all parties to the conflict to strictly implement the resolution in order to save people's lives, achieve a ceasefire and prevent a spillover in the region.

Thirdly, it is high time to seek and address the root cause of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict so that the two nations can live in harmony. Cambodia fully supports all parties involved in exercising the utmost restraint, engaging in constructive dialogue and resolving the conflict through diplomacy and peaceful means to end the humanitarian crisis and achieve a permanent peace.

Fourthly, Cambodia emphasizes the significance of upholding the principle of the two-State solution. Despite the recent non-adoption of Security Council draft resolution (S/2024/312), Cambodia acknowledges its responsibility in granting full membership to the State of Palestine. That positive development would not only benefit both nations and their people, but it would also contribute to peaceful and consistent progress in the entire region.

In conclusion, my delegation urges all sides to reach a ceasefire without delay in order to allow humanitarian access for the delivery of essential aid to those in need, and we join others in calling for the unconditional release of all hostages.

**Mr. Chindawongse** (Thailand): Thailand joins today's meeting of the General Assembly to maintain the focus and attention of the international community on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. Many lives continue to be lost, and many more lives could have been saved if humanitarian supplies had been able to reach those who needed them most. To help reverse the deteriorating situation, Thailand joins the international community in calling for an immediate ceasefire, as demanded by resolutions of the Security Council and of the Assembly at its tenth emergency special session. In tandem with this call, Thailand urges the parties concerned to respect and fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law. We condemn in the strongest terms all forms of violence and attacks against civilians, medical personnel and aid workers, regardless of their nationalities. The attacks on health establishments and units are also unacceptable, and we are opposed to any action that would result in the forced displacement or transfer of civilians from Gaza.

The resolutions that I referred to earlier also call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, who include Thai nationals. Last month, Thailand joined 17 other countries from various regions in issuing a statement calling for their immediate release. Thailand appreciates the diplomatic efforts of all parties that have helped secure the release of hostages in the past, including 23 Thai nationals, and continues to welcome ongoing diplomatic efforts to ensure that all hostages return home. Pending the release of remaining hostages, Thailand calls for the continuation of their proper treatment and care.

We need more than just a humanitarian lifeline to the people of Gaza. We need to expand humanitarian assistance significantly. More access to humanitarian supplies and services must be provided, especially in view of the appeal by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East last month for \$1.2 billion to address the unprecedented humanitarian crisis. We also reiterate our plea for the continued protection of United Nations personnel and humanitarian aid workers. Thailand reaffirms once again its support for the collective efforts for diplomacy, de-escalation and peaceful means to find a mutually agreed solution to the conflict, in accordance with the two-State solution, whereby the States of Israel and Palestine live side by side in peace, within secure and recognized borders, consistent with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

Lastly, Thailand regrets that the Security Council failed to adopt the draft resolution on the issue of Palestine's application for admission to membership to the United Nations (S/2024/312) last month (see S/PV.9609). That is an issue that would have benefited greatly from the unity of the Council. The time has come for a comprehensive political settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a two-State solution. Palestine's admission as a full United Nations member could facilitate such a solution. Looking ahead, we hope that a process can be pursued that will help take forward this important application here at the United Nations. To that end, Thailand is ready to work with all countries and extend its support for the sake of the people of Palestine, especially in Gaza, and for the sake of all people in the region.

**Mr. Alwasil** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Uganda on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the

Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/78/PV.74).

The convening of this meeting under agenda item 63, entitled “Use of the veto”, means that the Security Council has failed to fill its role pursuant to resolution 76/262, which was adopted two years ago by consensus (see S/PV.9609). With continued calls and demands for reforming the Security Council and aspirations for achieving an international system that is more just, representative, effective, accountable and up to the task of meeting the needs of today, we believe that the right of the veto and its arbitrary use prevent the Security Council from assuming its mandated role and responsibilities.

Arab, Muslim and all fair-minded and peace-loving nations have always hoped that the State Palestine would be admitted as a full member of the United Nations, which is a legitimate right embodying the demand of the Palestinian people, who have suffered for decades under injustice, oppression and marginalization due to the coercive and discriminatory policies and measures imposed on them, including the deprivation of their rights to self-determination and independence, which are supported by the vast majority of Member States. The use of the veto prevented and denied the State of Palestine its legitimate right and was against the will of the international community, which supports Palestine’s full membership in the United Nations. That instance of the use of the veto has followed a series of similar ones, related to the Palestinian question, over the decades. In recent months, there has been an excessive use of such practices, which has blatantly contributed to the continuation of Israel’s brutal aggression against the Gaza Strip to this day, an aggression that has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, the majority of them women and children, injured tens of thousands, displaced millions and exacerbated the major humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls on the Security Council to implement its relevant resolutions to achieve an immediate and permanent ceasefire that guarantees the cessation of military operations and ongoing Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, provides civilians with protection and allows for the largest possible scale, and uninterrupted delivery, of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. We reaffirm the need for donors to commit to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of all forms

of support for the Palestinian refugees in order to ease their suffering. We welcome the findings of the report of the independent review on UNRWA’s adherence to the humanitarian principle of neutrality, which underscore the Agency’s primary role in meeting the humanitarian relief and development needs of our brotherly Palestinian people.

In conclusion, we regret the fact that the Security Council has failed to adopt the draft resolution to admit Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations (S/2024/312). We believe that obstructing its admission as a full Member State contributes to reinforcing the Israeli occupation’s intransigence, encouraging the latter to continue its violations of international law undeterred. That does not bring us closer to the peace we want. We call on the international community to have the Security Council shoulder its responsibility, stop the Israeli occupation’s aggression against civilians in the Gaza Strip and support the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their Palestinian State, within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital and in line with the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant international resolutions.

**Mr. Alrowaiei** (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting, pursuant to resolution 76/262, under the agenda item, “Use of the veto”, following its use at the Security Council meeting held on 18 April (see S/PV.9609) on the draft resolution to admit the State of Palestine as a full Member to the United Nations (S/2024/312).

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Uganda on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/78/PV.74).

We regret that the Security Council was unable to adopt the draft resolution at a time when the brotherly Palestinian people continue to suffer from the occupation, ongoing war and catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza. The Kingdom of Bahrain stresses that international recognition of the Palestinian State and its full membership in the United Nations are a legal and political right. It is part of the inalienable, legitimate and historic rights of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State, along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the two-State solution

and in line with the Arab Peace Initiative and other relevant international resolutions. That is a critical step towards ensuring a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

I should like to thank the delegation of sisterly Algeria, the Arab member of the Security Council, for all its efforts in submitting the draft resolution to the Council and defending shared Arab causes. We look forward to the thirty-third ordinary session of the Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level, to be held on 16 May, to promote joint work on critical issues and lay the foundations of stability and security.

The Palestinian cause represents the core of the conflict in the Middle East. The suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza is a painful tragedy that must end immediately. It threatens security, stability and prosperity in the region. We stress the urgent need for the international community, in particular the Security Council, to shoulder its responsibilities in implementing the relevant resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2728 (2024), to ensure an immediate ceasefire, protect civilians and provide the unhindered humanitarian assistance and relief required. We reaffirm that we reject any attempt to expand the war, invade Rafah or displace Palestinians from their land.

In conclusion, we once again call for supporting the Palestinian people in their quest to enjoy their legitimate national rights, making every effort to ensure an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and launching a serious, genuine political process to ensure lasting and comprehensive peace in the region, leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with the two-State solution and resolutions of international legitimacy, and Palestine's admission as a full member of the United Nations.

**Ms. Persaud** (Guyana): Guyana aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/78/PV.74). I offer the following further reflections in my national capacity.

Guyana was deeply disappointed when the veto was exercised on 18 April (see S/PV.9609) in response to the legitimate request of the Palestinian Government and people for a positive recommendation from the Security Council for full membership in the United

Nations. After more than seven decades of the deferral of the Palestinian aspiration to statehood, their quest to take a significant step in that direction was halted.

For its part, Guyana was prepared to welcome the State of Palestine as a Member of the United Nations. We therefore voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of Algeria (S/2024/312). I take this opportunity to commend Algeria for its leadership in putting forward the draft resolution. Guyana's decision to support Palestinian membership to the United Nations was premised solely on our assessment of the application in the context of Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations. Guyana's conclusion was that Palestine is a peace-loving State and it had declared its acceptance of the obligations contained in the Charter. Furthermore, our assessment concluded that Palestine is able and willing to carry out its Charter obligations.

Beyond that, more than a decade ago Guyana had taken the decisive step of establishing diplomatic relations with the State of Palestine, and our two countries have accredited ambassadors to each other.

As we consider the extremely challenging circumstances that the Palestinian people have been enduring since the Nakba of 1948, I am compelled to recall part of the first preambular paragraph of the Charter, whereby we the peoples of the United Nations were determined to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. We further determined to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international order can be maintained.

When we think of the plight of the Palestinians in the light of these commitments that all of us, as Member States, have made, it is not difficult to see how far we have fallen short. In fact, they have been unequally applied across our globe, and the Palestinian situation is an example of that unequal application. It has been 77 years since the General Assembly decided to establish an Arab and a Jewish State, but that obligation has still not been fully met. Despite the ignominies that the State of Palestine has consistently faced since 1948 until today, it has shown itself to be a responsible and constructive member of the international community and fully committed to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Guyana's appeal is that we revisit

the matter of Palestine's membership in the United Nations. Denial of membership is fundamentally opposed to the commitments that we have made as United Nations Member States and perpetuates the culture of injustice against the Palestinians. Frankly, we are poorer for that decision.

**Mr. Lagatie** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I will focus today on three points concerning the United Nations, its values and the actions we could take.

First, Belgium fully supports the veto initiative and the implementation of resolution 76/262. The use of the veto has increased considerably in recent years, preventing the Security Council from effectively fulfilling its mandate and maintaining international peace and security. That was the case for Syria. It has also been the case for Ukraine and Gaza for some time. The worrisome trend has affected other files, as well. The Security Council acts on behalf of all United Nations Member States, as set forth in Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, it is perfectly logical that the Assembly meet whenever the use of the veto by one or more permanent members of the Security Council has made rapid and effective United Nations action impossible. The absence of decisive and consequential action by the Security Council in relation to the situation in Gaza only reinforces the need for the Assembly to act.

Secondly, Belgium's places respect for international humanitarian law at the centre of its policy. Security Council resolution 2728 (2024) was a notable exception to the inaction to which I just referred. It must be urgently implemented in order to achieve an immediate ceasefire, unconditionally release all hostages and provide full, rapid, safe and unimpeded access to large-scale humanitarian aid for Palestinians in need.

My third point concerns our collective inability to revive the process to achieve a two-State solution. All ongoing peace efforts should be supported. That applies to the European efforts being made jointly with Arab countries to return to the peace process and the efforts being made on the ground by the United States, Qatar and Egypt to secure the release of hostages and a ceasefire. Belgium, for its part, is ready to contribute actively to those efforts by hosting a peace dialogue in Brussels.

A large majority of the members of the Assembly advocate the restoration of a political process leading to the two-State solution, recognized by all — a solution

that provides security guarantees for Israel and respects the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. Those elements are crucial to providing a sustainable political horizon. If some of the actors to the conflict seek to maintain instability, it is up to the Security Council to draw the necessary conclusions and ensure that measures are taken to implement its resolutions. It is also in this spirit that Belgium supports the French initiative in the Security Council.

**Ms. Oehri** (Liechtenstein): We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's meeting in accordance with resolution 76/262, in relation to the veto cast in the Security Council on the draft resolution (S/2024/312) under the item "Admission of new Members" presented by Algeria on 18 April (see S/PV.9609). Every veto in the Council falls within the scope of resolution 76/262 and is accordingly subject to discussion by United Nations members. According to paragraph 1 of that resolution, it is imperative for the Assembly to meet within 10 working days after each veto, which in this case was by 2 May. We note in addition the request for the resumption of the tenth emergency special session convened on 10 May, and we understand that the General Assembly at that meeting will also be asked to consider a product by the Assembly in response to the veto in the Council.

We thank the Security Council for producing a special report (see A/78/856) in a timely and efficient manner and note today's participation of the Member State that exercised the right of the veto concerned, demonstrating, once again, the relevance of the veto initiative. As for previous meetings under this agenda item, we request the President of the General Assembly to issue a summary of today's debate.

We note that the vetoed draft resolution discussed today enjoyed majority support from the Council. The veto has prevented the General Assembly from considering the request of the State of Palestine to become a full United Nations Member State, which we regret. Liechtenstein has followed the developments concerning the question of Palestine at the United Nations very attentively for many years and remains committed to the internationally agreed parameters of a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict, in particular the two-State solution, in accordance with resolution 181 (II), of 1947, to create two States, Israel and Palestine, and notes that the discussions in the framework of the peace process have always focused on the so-called two-State solution. We are deeply

concerned about the war in Gaza — an immense humanitarian and protection-of-civilians crisis — and escalations in the wider region, as well as the public questioning of the concept of a two-State solution, which once again illustrates the acute need for a genuine peace process based on the existing decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. While Liechtenstein has not established direct diplomatic relations with Palestine, in 2012 we voted in favour of resolution 67/19, according to Palestine the status of an observer State in the United Nations system. We are of the view that Palestine fulfils the basic criteria for statehood under international law. Liechtenstein's position on the matter reflects its support for the rule of law at the international level, as well as for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

**Ms. Havn** (Norway): The General Assembly's adoption of the veto initiative resolution 76/262 was important and represents a significant step in making the Security Council more transparent and accountable. Repeated use of the veto in the Council challenges its effectiveness. However, in our view the Assembly's increased engagement in matters of peace and security is a positive step. The maintenance of peace is fundamental for all Member States.

Norway is a staunch supporter of Palestine's right to statehood. A two-State solution is the only way to achieve peace between Palestine and Israel and to attain regional stability. Norway has made it clear that it is ready to support Palestine's application for membership in the United Nations when the issue is brought before the General Assembly. It is deeply unfortunate that a veto was cast on 18 April (see S/PV.9609) and that the Security Council was unable to support the Palestinian request for membership. Norway will continue to work closely with partners within and outside the region for the purposes of realizing Palestinian statehood as soon as possible.

Going forward, I want to repeat Norway's firm position that only a two-State solution can guarantee peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians. We will continue to work with partners and exhaust all political avenues to ensure the realization of that much-needed settlement.

**Mr. De La Gasca** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting in accordance with the provisions of resolution 76/262, owing to the use of the

veto in the Security Council on 18 April (see S/PV.9609) as it considered draft resolution S/2024/312, submitted by the delegation of Algeria, on the admission of new members. It is important that the General Assembly be made formally aware of the circumstances of Council meetings in which the undemocratic right of the veto is exercised in opposition to the majority's position on any given situation. Ecuador has regularly participated in debates such as today's, which unfortunately have become recurring and all but routine events. In just a few days, the Assembly will have to meet once again to discuss another use of the veto, on 24 April (see S/PV.9616).

Ecuador voted in favour of draft resolution S/2024/312 and explained its reasons for that, reasons that moreover are shared by 12 other Council members, including nine of the elected members. Historically, Ecuador has supported the Palestinian people in their legitimate right to a State free from foreign occupation and to processes aimed at enabling them to achieve self-determination and full independence, in accordance with the fundamental principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Through its principled positions, Ecuador has expressed a genuine and unfailing commitment to peace, which will be possible only through a negotiated and just solution with two States, Palestine and Israel, based on the 1967 borders and the relevant resolutions.

In conclusion, I reiterate Ecuador's belief that the mechanism created by resolution 76/262 contributes to transparency and accountability, reinforces the authority of the General Assembly and its relationship with the Council and therefore strengthens the United Nations system.

**Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/78/PV.74).

On 5 March (see A/78/PV.60), we met in the General Assembly to hear the explanation of the United States of its vote against a permanent ceasefire in Gaza (see S/PV.9552). Today we are meeting because the United States has once again used its veto in the Security Council (see S/PV.9609), this time to vote against the State of Palestine's application for full membership in the United Nations, thereby preventing the granting of that membership. In addition to that, the United States

recently announced the approval of millions of dollars for continuing the aggression and genocide against the Palestinian people.

The peoples of the world have not been silent. They are demonstrating. There are millions of them in the streets, schools and universities, including in the United States, protesting and demanding a ceasefire, respect for life, the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and an end to the genocide and Israel's occupation of all occupied territories. We reiterate that the Security Council must shoulder the responsibilities conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations, and it must do so urgently and without double standards. The Government and the people of Nicaragua reaffirm their unshakeable solidarity with the State of Palestine and once again condemn the genocide in Palestine, in violation of the Charter, international law, international humanitarian law and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The Palestinian people continue to heroically resist this barbarism, this unprecedented and unconscionable massacre. We are witnessing clear evidence of an attempt to exterminate Palestine and its people. The State of Palestine must be recognized as a full member of the United Nations in order to pave the way to achieving the only true and just solution. The current situation attests to that, and the urgent need to convene an international conference on Palestine is clearer than ever. We are all witnesses to the worldwide and united call to free Palestine, marked by the certainty and conviction that the Palestinian people will prevail in their heroic struggle to establish their free, sovereign, independent and self-determined State of Palestine, within the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The United States cannot continue to prevent the recognition of the State of Palestine at the United Nations. It is unjustifiable and inadmissible. The aberrantly immoral, unethical and inhumane attempt to exploit the abuse of the right of the veto against the State of Palestine's considered application for United Nations membership in no way corresponds to the aspirations and consensus of the more than two thirds of the United Nations membership that officially supports and recognizes the State of Palestine. We welcome and are grateful for Barbados and Jamaica's recent announcements of their official recognition of the State of Palestine. The number of countries recognizing Palestine has reached 142 in the past few weeks. More

than 90 per cent of States in Latin America and the Caribbean recognize Palestine, and we hope that in the very near future the three that have not yet done so will announce it. With that, the entire Latin American and Caribbean region, which is a zone of peace, will have fully recognized the State of Palestine. We also welcome several European States' recent announcements that they will officially recognize the State of Palestine in the coming weeks. We know that will help to achieve a two-State solution and peace in the Middle East. There is a universal consensus in support of a two-State solution. Simply put, there is no other possibility, and we all know that the first step towards that is full recognition of the State of Palestine.

The Security Council continues to be held hostage to the exceptionalist and obstructionist policies of the United States, thereby enabling Israel's genocide and crimes in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. For anyone who truly supports the concept of two States, even with the best of intentions, it is inconsistent and contradictory to blindly support one of those States and to continue to obstruct Palestine's application for full membership in our community of nations. It is time for the United States and European countries to come to their senses, listen to the voices of humankind crying out for peace, justice and freedom and consider ending their unjustifiable policies denying and rejecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Those countries bear the historical responsibility before past, present and future generations for the consequences of the suffering of the Palestinian people.

**Mrs. Segobin Maulloo** (Mauritius): It is with profound regret and grave concern that my delegation joins the voices that have preceded us in expressing our disappointment at the recent decision to block Palestine's admission to full membership within the United Nations (see S/PV.9609). We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the delegation of Algeria for its commendable initiative in introducing draft resolution S/2024/312, advocating for Palestine's membership in the United Nations. For the first time since 2011 (see S/PV.6624), the Security Council convened to deliberate on Palestine's application for full membership in the United Nations system, and 13 years later, history is repeating itself. Mauritius shares the profound disappointment that the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people remain unfulfilled. We stand firmly in solidarity with Palestine as it encounters yet another obstacle on its journey towards full

membership — a watershed moment for the people of Palestine, denied yet again. The admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations has never been more urgent. It signifies not only a crucial step towards peace but also a fundamental recognition of their rights and dignity.

It is evident that a substantial majority of Member States are in agreement regarding the admission of Palestine as a full Member. Palestine satisfies all the criteria for membership outlined in the Charter of the United Nations. The time has come for it to be granted an equal say and to be allowed to actively participate on an equal footing in global endeavours aimed at fostering the peaceful resolution of the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

Mauritius remains deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population, which are worsening every day. Mauritius reiterates its call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, the release of all hostages and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance. However, that is an aspiration that has yet to be realized. We encourage all the parties engaged in finding an acceptable solution to pursue their efforts. We firmly believe that the admission of Palestine as a Member of the United Nations has the potential to enhance the prospects for peace, particularly for the pursuit of a two-State solution, in line with the pertinent United Nations resolutions and international law. Mauritius is convinced that such a solution represents the only viable option for ending the conflict and paving the way for lasting peace and stability in the region. We reiterate our unwavering support for a two-State solution, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and international law, which envisages the establishment of an independent, viable and prosperous Palestinian State, within secure and recognized borders, living in peace alongside the State of Israel. It is our collective responsibility to explore the possible paths towards the realization of that goal. We remain optimistic that today's debate will generate sufficient momentum to spur the establishment of a reformed and democratic Security Council. We also hope that it will persuade Member States of the imperative for Palestine to attain membership in the United Nations.

**Mr. Beleffi** (San Marino): The international community and the United Nations must continue to work in order to end the destruction in Gaza. Too many

lives have already been lost. Protecting civilians and preventing the further loss of life have become essential if we want to avoid a full humanitarian catastrophe. San Marino reiterates its condemnation of the horrific terrorist attacks by Hamas on 7 October 2023, calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and recognizes Israel's right to defend itself in line with international human rights law. All parties must comply with their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, especially as they relate to the protection of civilians, civilian infrastructure, medical facilities, schools and United Nations facilities. There must be accountability on all sides for any violations of international law. The Palestinian population cannot be blamed for the terrorist acts of Hamas. The scale of military operations and the current humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, as well as the demolitions in the West Bank, are violations of international humanitarian law. San Marino is concerned about the intensified air strikes on Rafah, where it will be vital to avoid a ground operation, which would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences for the more than 1 million Palestinians who are currently sheltering there from the fighting. We call for the immediate implementation of Security Council resolutions 2712 (2023) and 2720 (2023). Rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access is an obligation under international law and essential to ensuring that urgent humanitarian aid can quickly reach the Palestinian population. In that respect, I want to inform the General Assembly that we recently made a financial contribution to promote the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, UNICEF and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in support of the humanitarian response in Gaza.

San Marino calls for an immediate ceasefire and a return to dialogue to address the legitimate concerns of the State of Israel and the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. We remain committed to the realization of a lasting and sustainable peace, based on a two-State solution whereby two States — Israel and Palestine — can live side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition. That is the only long-term sustainable option for peace, and that is why we believe that Palestine's admission to the United Nations as a full Member would facilitate the achievement of that solution.

The international community must break the terrible cycle of violence and recommit to a lasting peace, restoring hope and security to Israelis and Palestinians through a renewed peace process. In that regard, we support the holding of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations, which should involve all members of the international community.

**Mr. Kimani** (Kenya): I regret the necessity of this debate under the veto initiative, established by resolution 76/262. We are here owing to the negative vote cast in the Security Council on 18 April (see S/PV.9609) by a permanent member of the Council against draft resolution S/2024/312, which aimed to endorse the State of Palestine's application for full membership in the United Nations. It would have been far preferable to meet today to vote on the admission of Palestine after receiving a positive recommendation from the Council, and I am confident that the General Assembly would have cast sufficient votes in favour of the application.

Kenya's long-standing commitment to the self-determination of the Palestinian people is rooted in its own historical journey to sovereignty and independence. We believe that the State of Palestine's full membership in the United Nations is foundational to the achievement of a two-State solution, as the only path to ensuring Palestinians' full dignity, peace and equality. The lack of progress in implementing numerous Security Council resolutions on the Palestinian question is a major obstacle to achieving that noble goal. The latest example is the deadly consequences that we are seeing for innocent children and other non-combatants in Gaza, thanks to the non-implementation of Security Council resolution 2728 (2024). There is also a lack of progress in enforcing Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), which demands that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. And that lack of progress has undermined the hopes for a two-State solution.

The implementation of those resolutions has been hindered by a range of factors, including political extremism on both sides of the divide, which sidelines moderate voices and thrives on division rather than mediation, as well as the strategic interests of other nations vying for power and dominance in the region. The vetoes on this matter are the latest evidence of a gradual decline in the Security Council's standing

and relevance. It is no surprise that Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations, which establishes the binding nature of the Council's decisions, is now being openly questioned. In debates on some of the most pressing threats to international peace and security, the famous horseshoe-shaped table has become a stage for brinkmanship and spectacle rather than compromise and unified action, as required by the Council's mandate. The Charter's lack of direct and automatic enforcement mechanisms is a limitation, but it cannot be used as a credible excuse. Chapter VII grants the Security Council measures to give effect to its decisions, but they depend on the political will of members, particularly those wielding veto power. As we have warned from this rostrum in the past, a prolonged lack of implementation and enforcement, especially in situations of major armed conflict and crimes against humanity, risks the United Nations collapsing into the League of Nations, whose failure unleashed the horrors of a war unlike any before it.

On whose watch will the United Nations follow the fate of the League of Nations? If the current deadlock within the Security Council is not addressed, it will lead to further cruelties being inflicted on the Palestinians and Israelis and cast its dark shadow over every one of us in this Hall. The General Assembly cannot wait passively for such eventualities. We have the mandate and responsibility to bring about the necessary changes by utilizing every means and process, including the Pact for the Future, which we are currently negotiating. We must find in ourselves the principled defiance to stand up to the powerful who fiddle while Gaza, the Sudan and the Sahel burn and while the risks of nuclear proliferation escalate on the Korean Peninsula. Beyond shedding light on the use of the veto during these important debates, we should consider agreeing on resolutions that demonstrate our unity and resolve. We acknowledge that such matters are not easily resolved. Divisions run deep and trust is low. Yet we must summon the will to act on behalf of our shared interests in these most pressing times.

**Mr. Amorín** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to begin with a general comment on the repeated use of the veto and its consequences, which we believe to be relevant in the current circumstances. In the first four months of this year, the veto has been used by various countries on five occasions (see S/PV.9552, S/PV.9584, S/PV.9591, S/PV.9609 and S/PV.9616). That compels us to underscore our concern about the repeated

use of a mechanism that hinders the functioning and effectiveness of the Security Council and has a negative impact on international peace and security, as well as on the image of the Organization as a whole in the eyes of international public opinion.

The use of the veto that is the subject of the General Assembly's discussion today halted the admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations. There is broad support in the United Nations for Palestine's aspiration to be accepted as a Member State, and that should be duly taken into account. In 2011, Palestine was admitted to the United Nations as an observer State. Since then, the Permanent Mission of the Observer State of Palestine has done constructive work in the forums in which it participates. Our understanding today is that we would be complementing that process with the acceptance of Palestine as a full Member of the Organization. In that regard, we call on all the members of the Security Council to reconsider the decision taken

so that Palestine's request can be considered by the General Assembly.

In reiterating its historical stance, Uruguay calls on the parties concerned to engage in direct negotiations with the support of the international community, aimed at harnessing the peace process in order to end the conflict in the region. As we have said, such negotiations must focus on a solution based on two States — Israel and Palestine — coexisting peacefully within secure and internationally recognized borders.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers tomorrow afternoon, 2 May, following the consideration of the agenda items announced in *The Journal of the United Nations*.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 63.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*