



# Security Council

Eightieth year

## 9907

th meeting

Tuesday, 29 April 2025, 3 p.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault. . . . .	(France)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria. . . . .	Mr. Yahiaoui
	China. . . . .	Mr. Niu Xiaoqiang
	Denmark . . . . .	Mr. Bay
	Greece . . . . .	Mr. Zves
	Guyana . . . . .	Mr. Edwards
	Pakistan. . . . .	Mr. Rashid
	Panama . . . . .	Mrs. Petrocelli Rojas
	Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Kim
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Eremin
	Sierra Leone . . . . .	Ms. Baimarro
	Slovenia. . . . .	Mr. Ponikvar
	Somalia . . . . .	Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Coyle
	United States of America. . . . .	Ms. Postel

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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*The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Flashing lights on the collars of the microphones will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Libya.

**Mr. El-Sonni** (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

I would like to thank France for convening this high-level meeting at the ministerial level. The meeting comes at a time when the Middle East is witnessing a grave, unprecedented escalation. The humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip is being compounded in a horrific manner. The Israeli occupation continues to impose a suffocating blockade and collective punishment, and it is intensifying its indiscriminate bombardments of civilians and vital infrastructure — despite the repeated international calls to end the aggression and to resume the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, in line with resolution 2735 (2024), and to heed calls by the United States, Qatar and Egypt in that regard.

The Israeli occupation forces insist on violating the ceasefire agreement, targeting houses of civilians, hospitals, shelters and refugee camps, in a blatant violation of the provisions of international humanitarian law. After more than 17 months, the number of victims in Gaza now exceeds 52,000 martyrs, most of whom are women and children, with more than 120,000 injured. Gaza has been turned into a mass grave for children — the largest in our modern history. These repeated crimes — attacks against medical facilities and relief workers; the deprivation of food, water and medicine for civilians; the closure, for two months now, of all the crossing points — all of these constitute a systematic pattern of collective punishment and reveal the intention of continuing genocide against the Palestinian people in order to displace them and to confiscate their lands.

Meanwhile, the defamation campaign of the Israeli occupation forces to criminalize and restrict the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East continues, preventing the delivery of humanitarian assistance and imposing arbitrary restrictions on the work of other international organizations. Reports have stated that more than 95 per cent of non-governmental organizations were compelled to suspend or reduce their activities in Gaza. Some weeks ago, we saw the killing in cold blood of 15 relief workers, comprised of Palestinian Red Crescent Society medics and civil defence and United Nations workers. A video was recovered from one of the medics, Rifaat Radwan, whose body was found in the mass grave. That video revealed the falsity of the Israeli narrative, according to which, the ambulances did not have their sirens on or emergency signals illuminated. That is but one example of the crimes committed on a daily basis in Gaza.

The Arab Group condemns the continued forced displacement of the Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The number of displaced in Gaza alone has reached more than 1.9 million people, in the context of a systematic policy to change the demographic composition. The Arab Group calls for an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Gaza and for an end to the aggression on all the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Arab Group calls for an immediate implementation of the following points: not using humanitarian assistance as a tool of war and securing its delivery to the Gaza Strip; ending all forms of forced displacement, settlement and home demolition; ending the targeting of health, educational and religious facilities; resuming ceasefire

negotiations; holding accountable all perpetrators of crimes against the Palestinian people; reinvigorating international justice tools, including for implementing the orders of the International Court of Justice and its recommendations; supporting the Arab-Islamic plan to rebuild the Gaza Strip so as to enable the Palestinian people to remain on their land; providing international protection to the Palestinian people; establishing a Palestinian State on all the occupied Palestinian territories; immediately recognizing the State of Palestine and supporting its full membership in the United Nations; confronting the settlement policies and rejecting the plans for annexation and displacement.

The Arab Group emphasizes what was stipulated by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the illegality of the Israeli presence in the occupied Palestinian territories, the need to end that presence and the settlements as soon as possible and the need to end Israeli control over Palestinian resources. The occupation should not be receiving any kind of support. Any action taken by the occupation forces on the occupied Palestinian land should be considered illegitimate. There is a need to hold the occupying forces accountable for their violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The Arab Group reiterates the importance of the Arab-Islamic plan for the early recovery, reconstruction and development of Gaza submitted by Egypt in coordination with the State of Palestine, which was adopted by both the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and widely welcomed by the international community. The plan is a road map for a new future for the Gaza Strip — a future in which Gaza is rebuilt on a basis that reunites it with the West Bank under the rule of the Palestinian Authority. In that context, we urge the international community and regional and international partners, including international financial institutions, to provide the necessary political and financial support for the implementation of the plan and to participate actively in the conference to be hosted in Cairo on ways to rebuild the Gaza Strip.

The Arab Group also welcomes the convening of the High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, to be held on 17 June, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 79/81 and other relevant resolutions, under the co-chairmanship of France and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We also express our appreciation for the strong and supportive positions affirmed during the preparatory meeting held on 9 April. In that context, the Group calls on all States to take practical and qualitative steps at the political, legal, financial, security and diplomatic levels to achieve the objectives of the Conference, including ending the aggression, recognizing the State of Palestine and achieving its independence and refusing all attempts at annexation and deportation. The Arab Group will continue its active participation in that important process, including by supporting the efforts of the Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee. In that regard, the Arab Group commends the efforts being made by the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution headed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the European Union and Norway.

On the other hand, the Arab Group strongly condemns the continuation of the Israeli occupation of sites in southern Lebanon, most recently two days ago in the southern suburbs, in addition to the designation of two buffer zones inside Lebanese territory, which constitutes a flagrant violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). The Arab Group stresses the need for the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities to compel the Israeli occupying forces to withdraw fully, immediately and unconditionally from all occupied Lebanese territories. The Group welcomes the progress made by the Lebanese Armed Forces in deploying in southern Lebanon and, in that context, calls for full respect for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

The Arab Group also condemns the repeated military escalation of the Israeli occupation forces against Syria, which represents a dangerous escalation that threatens security and stability in the region. We recall that those attacks exacerbate the suffering of the Syrian people, who are already enduring the repercussions of the years-long crisis. Those attacks are aimed at undermining Syria's security and stability and endangering civilians and threaten to destabilize the entire region. We call on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities to pressure the Israeli occupation forces to cease their aggression and withdraw completely and unconditionally from the occupied Syrian territories, including the areas they recently infiltrated.

Before concluding, allow me, in my national capacity, to reiterate Libya's firm position on the question of Palestine. We in Libya will continue to support the struggle of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination. We see their resistance and their right to self-defence as binding under international law. All States and all people living under occupation, subject to murder, persecution, oppression, starvation or under siege have the right to resist and defend themselves. Libya believes that there can be no real peace without the declaration of an independent Palestinian State and the return of all refugees — a Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. As a result, Council members must now confront a true test facing their peoples. Silence is no longer an option. Members must now prove their credibility and their compliance with the principles of international law and human justice, about which they have been giving lectures in all instances. Where do members stand today in terms of that justice? It is high time to put an end to all kinds of double standards, which have now become a feature of this era. It is high time to take a clear stand on those violations and to put an end to this crisis, which has been going on for decades. The first step must be to stop the Holocaust of the twenty-first century. We must end the Holocaust against Gaza. History is watching and will have no mercy.

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

**Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to convey the congratulations of His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had previous commitments that prevented him from participating in the meeting today.

It weighs heavily on our hearts to repeat words of condemnation and denunciation, as there is no point in exchanging accusations or showcasing rhetorical narratives to express our anger. However, what is most scandalous is that we have all taken too easily to ostracizing the Palestinian people amid the worst humanitarian catastrophe in recent decades caused by the continuation of the unjust war on Gaza, including deliberate starvation for more than 50 days and terrorizing more than 2 million people, killing more than 51,000 people and forcibly displacing the entire population of the Strip — some for the tenth time. Those catastrophic statistics beyond all limits and considerations of rights, justice and humanity mean that we must work to save them and peace in the region. Egypt stands by the option of peace and that of looking to the future and working with all parties to overcome all the pain and hatred, put an end to the killing, bring about just and comprehensive peace based on the principled terms of reference represented in the two-State solution, with the existence of a Palestinian State established on the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with the State of Israel, so that all peoples of the region may live in peace, security and stability.

We are not just repeating hollow slogans today. Instead, the essence of Egypt's position is to bring about peace through the wisdom accumulated over the centuries and a unique experience that embraces everyone. Since the 1970s, Egypt has had to overcome the barrier of hostility and hatred. It initiated peace with Israel and broke the cycle of retribution to save future generations from the scourge of war.

That peace was achieved with an influential and pivotal American role, and that is precisely what we are asking members to do today — to use courage and wisdom to establish just and comprehensive peace that does not infringe on Palestinian rights and achieves security for all on an equal footing. For that, we must consider the following.

First, Israel must be committed to an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and to the withdrawal of its forces from the Gaza Strip. It must allow unhindered and unconditional humanitarian access and facilitate the work of all United Nations agencies, especially the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other humanitarian organizations, providing them with protection. It must stop trying to displace Gazans and cease its military operations in the West Bank and any violations of religious holy sites in Jerusalem.

Secondly, the international community must support the tireless efforts of the mediators — Egypt, Qatar and the United States — to stop the war in the Gaza Strip once and for all. Support is necessary to fund the Arab-Islamic reconstruction plan that was proposed by Egypt, in coordination with the Palestinian Authority, during the Arab summit held on 4 March. Egypt calls on all Council members to effectively participate in the conference to be hosted by Cairo to discuss funding for reconstruction.

Thirdly, the international community must remain united behind a serious process, with a specific timeline, in order to ensure a political horizon for the two-State solution, in line with international principles, by reviving negotiations between the two parties and providing international support. A starting point could be the High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, at the United Nations next June.

We stand before a long and tough road. To ensure the establishment of peace we have to get rid of imposing solutions by force, violence, terrorism and military hegemony that failed to achieve security. Israel must put an end to its illegal war against Palestine, Syria and Lebanon and return to the path of peace. Any other path will only marginalize moderates and encourage and embolden the extremists in the region, ushering in an unjust system that would ensure instability and suffering for future generations.

Egypt, which has always been a strong supporter when it comes to the Palestinian question, stresses that its call and endeavours for peace come from a position of strength and its belief in the rights of Arabs and Palestinians. All parties must have the right to live in peace — without threats to their civilians, without bombardment or starvation and without terrorism — and peace, safety and security must be guaranteed on an equal basis for all peoples of the region, to save us all and future generations, be they Arab or Israeli. We hope that that appeal will not be in vain.

In conclusion, the path to ensure the safety of Israeli children must not require the deaths of Palestinian children. The path to meet the aspirations of Palestinian children to live in decency and for independence must not come at the expense of Israeli children. The equation is clear, simple and the same for all. All that we need is the international will to safeguard the hopes of Palestinian and Israeli children to live in peace, safety, security and dignity. It is not an impossible mission if you listen to the voice of Egypt and its message.

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

**Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset we would like to congratulate your friendly country, Madam President, on presiding over the Security

Council this month. We welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Barrot, the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France this morning, and we associate ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

We meet today amid unprecedented and catastrophic humanitarian circumstances in the Gaza Strip, especially after the Israeli occupation resumed its aggression against Gaza. The State of Qatar strongly condemns the resumption of that aggression, which blatantly runs counter to international will in support of peace, particularly the ceasefire agreement that was reached owing to the efforts of the State of Qatar, Egypt and the United States in January. In that context, we reaffirm the urgent need to resume dialogue in order to implement the stages of the ceasefire agreement until the war against Gaza can finally be brought to an end.

The State of Qatar reaffirms its categorical rejection of the ongoing Israeli attacks against civilian objects, including hospitals, schools and residential compounds, in the Gaza Strip. The State of Qatar has strongly denounced the Israeli occupation bombardment of the Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital, the brutal massacre of defenceless civilians and the blatant violations of the provisions of international humanitarian law.

The State of Qatar strongly condemns the decision of the Israeli occupation Government to end the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Gaza, followed by power cuts in the Strip. That is a blatant violation of the ceasefire agreement and of international humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention. We condemn the starvation of civilians as a weapon of war. We call upon the international community to compel Israel to guarantee the safe, durable and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza.

Israeli violations continue in the occupied Palestinian territories. The State of Qatar condemns the announcement by the Israeli occupation of the creation of an agency aimed at displacing Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and its approval of the association of 13 illegal settlement neighbourhoods in the West Bank as a first step towards legitimizing them as colonial settlements. We reiterate that the displacement of Palestinians is a blatant violation of international humanitarian law. Expanding settlements constitutes disregard for international resolutions, especially resolution 2334 (2016)

The State of Qatar reiterates its rejection of Israeli moves to end or reduce the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). We strongly condemn the decision by the Israeli occupation authorities to close six schools affiliated to UNRWA in East Jerusalem, depriving children of education, which is a new crime in the series of ongoing Israeli crimes.

We also denounce the incursion by the Israeli Minister of National Security at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, with the protection of the occupation police and the expulsion of worshippers. We also condemn plans disseminated on platforms affiliated with the Israeli occupation, inciting the bombing and destruction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. In that context, we reaffirm our rejection of any undermining of the historical and legal status of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem and the holy sites. The international community must dissuade the occupation forces and compel Israel to provide protection to those holy sites and respect resolutions based on international law.

We strongly condemn the air strikes against five regions in Syria. They are a blatant violation of the unity and sovereignty of Syria and a violation of international law. We call upon the international community to immediately intervene to compel Israel to comply with international law and norms and to end their repeated aggressions against the Syrian territories.

The State of Qatar also condemns the Israeli bombardment of southern Lebanon. We call on all parties to fully implement the ceasefire agreement and we call for



the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from all Lebanese territories. We reiterate our steadfast support for the Lebanese Republic and the Lebanese people.

In conclusion, we reiterate our constant steadfast position in support of the Palestinian question, based on the resolutions of the international community and the two-State solution, to ensure the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. We call for the recognition of the State of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations. We also support the international coalition to implement the two-State solution and the active participation in the High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, which will convene in June under the co-Chairs, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and France.

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

**Mr. Hachem** (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset we congratulate you, Madam President, on presiding over the Security Council during this month. We thank the Danish delegation for presiding over the Council last month. We would also like to thank His Excellency the Secretary-General for his briefing.

It would be remiss of me not to renew our thanks to France, which has always stood by Lebanon and its people. The visit of His Excellency President Joseph Aoun to Paris last month confirmed the strength of the brotherly relations between our two nations.

The new era that Lebanon is ushering in since the beginning of this year raised hope among not only Lebanese people but also the international community and Lebanon's friends. The State that we are looking forward to and working to establish is a State that does not negotiate on its domestic sovereignty. It is also a State that retains control over decisions concerning war and peace and a State with a monopoly over weapons, the possession of which is restricted to the State, based on respect for the Constitution, reinforcing the concept of a State composed of institutions and governed by the rule of law and preserving the nation's stability and the security of its citizens.

Lebanon therefore wishes to reiterate its total commitment to implementing resolution 1701 (2006) in its entirety and to declaring a cessation of hostilities. Lebanon stresses that it is making every effort to that end. The Lebanese Armed Forces continue to carry out their duties fully in the south, including deployment and the confiscation of weapons and ammunition. The Lebanese Armed Forces dismantled several military positions outside the Palestinian camps. It also continues to work to remove enemy violations in the form of objects and engineering barriers left behind by Israel in the south, in close coordination with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the five-member cessation of hostilities monitoring mechanism. They are making a major effort to stabilize the situation, especially in the area south of the Litani River and on the eastern border. The support of friendly countries at all levels is essential to achieve that goal.

We take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude to UNIFIL for the important role that it plays in stabilizing the situation along the southern border, in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces. We also express our appreciation for the efforts of the United States of America, as head of the five-member cessation of hostilities monitoring mechanism, and those of France as a member of the mechanism.

While Lebanon is working hard to fulfil its international obligations, we see, on the other hand, continued intransigence on Israel's part. We are not occupying Israeli territory, but Israel continues to occupy our land. We are not holding Israeli prisoners, but Israel continues to hold Lebanese citizens as prisoners. In addition, in

the middle of this month the Israeli Minister of Defence stated that Israel's intention is to remain indefinitely in what he called "security zones" in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria. As a matter of fact, that constitutes a condemnable occupation that the international community and the Security Council should condemn and pressure Israel to desist from, in order to prevent the situation in the region from deteriorating further.

Therefore, Lebanon once again calls on the international community and the Security Council to assume their responsibilities to compel Israel to withdraw fully, immediately and unconditionally from all occupied Lebanese territories, including the five sites that it occupies in the south, which have no military value, and from the two buffer zones within Lebanese territory. Lebanon also calls for pressure to be exerted on Israel in order for it to immediately cease its attacks on Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity — the most recent of which was the attack on the southern suburb of Beirut on 27 April — and to release Lebanese prisoners. Lebanon reiterates its commitment to the decisions of the 2002 Arab Summit in Beirut and supports the establishment of a military and technical committee to stabilize Lebanon's internationally recognized southern border.

We meet today in the wake of a new phase in the course of Lebanese-Syrian relations, a phase based on respect for the sovereignty of the two countries and the principles of good neighbourliness and non-interference in the internal affairs of each country. The first milestone of that phase was the agreement signed this month by the Lebanese and Syrian Ministers of Defence in Jeddah, under the mediation of the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to which we extend our thanks. The agreement stresses the strategic importance of demarcating the border between Lebanon and Syria, forming specialized legal committees in various fields and operationalizing coordination mechanisms between the two countries in order to address security and military challenges, especially those related to the border.

That agreement was followed by the visit of a high-level Lebanese delegation, headed by Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, to Damascus, during which they discussed bilateral issues, foremost among them control over borders and crossings, preventing smuggling, demarcating land and sea borders, facilitating the safe and dignified return of displaced Syrians to their lands and homes, clarifying the fate of missing Lebanese nationals and detainees in Syria, requesting the assistance of the Syrian authorities with the extradition of persons wanted by the Lebanese justice system, determining the fate of the Syrian-Lebanese Higher Council and revisiting the treaties on brotherhood and cooperation between the two countries and economic cooperation in various areas.

We reaffirm Lebanon's commitment to implementing the economic, financial and administrative reforms required to place Lebanon on the path of recovery and development. Security and judicial appointments were made, and a new Governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon was appointed. Municipal and mayoral elections will be held as scheduled in May. A law amending the banking secrecy law was also enacted by Parliament, in a much-needed reform for Lebanon, its economy and its banking sector, in line with the requirements of the agreement with the International Monetary Fund. That step was preceded by several meetings in Washington between the Lebanese delegation, headed by the Minister of Finance and including the Minister of Economy and Trade, the Minister of Social Affairs, the Minister of Administrative Development, the Chair of the Finance and Budget Committee and the Governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon, with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Lebanon is sparing no effort to advance the implementation of its reform programme, establish sovereignty over all its territories, exert pressure to bring about the Israeli withdrawal from the south and extend the State's full authority over all Lebanese territories with its own forces. It looks forward to the support of the Arab and international communities in those efforts. Lebanon is relying on its friends to support it during this pivotal juncture in its history.



In conclusion, we are fully aware of the magnitude of the challenges that we face, ranging from successive economic and financial crises and sensitive reform-related issues to threats to our security and sovereignty. Nevertheless, we have a firm will and sufficient determination, and we are making the necessary efforts to traverse this delicate stage and move to safety.

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

**Mr. Chaivaivid** (Thailand): First of all, I would like to express Thailand's gratitude to France for convening this important debate, and I would like to thank the Secretary-General and all briefers for their insights.

My delegation wishes to highlight the following four points.

First, we urge all parties to exercise the utmost restraint and renew their efforts to negotiate the ceasefire agreement and the hostage agreement. That would allow for safe and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance in Gaza and contribute to regional peace and security.

Secondly, we call for the immediate and unconditional release of all remaining hostages, given that one Thai national remains in captivity. We extend our deep appreciation to Qatar, Egypt, Iran, Türkiye, the United States and the International Committee of the Red Cross and to all other countries and parties involved in the recent release of five Thai hostages and the facilitation of their safe return to Thailand.

Thirdly, it is essential to foster constructive dialogue between Israel and Palestine towards a mutually agreed peaceful solution in line with the two-State solution, whereby the States of Israel and Palestine live side by side in peace and security, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Thailand supports all efforts aimed at achieving sustainable peace in the region, including the upcoming High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution.

Fourthly, Thailand welcomes the recent constructive developments towards the reconstruction of Gaza, in line with Egypt's plan for the early recovery, reconstruction and development of Gaza. We hope to see a swift rebuilding of Gaza and restoration of people's livelihoods, and we stand ready to contribute to such efforts.

In conclusion, in the light of the worsening situation in Gaza following the expiry of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement, we are reminded of the urgent responsibility we share. It is essential that we renew our collective commitment to the de-escalation of violence, the protection of innocent civilians and the pursuit of lasting peace and stability in the region.

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

**Mr. Prabowo** (Indonesia): Allow me to start by extending a very warm welcome to His Excellency Minister Barrot and to thank France for convening this meeting. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

Indonesia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

We regret that the situation in Palestine has deteriorated since the previous open debate on this subject, held in January (see S/PV.9841). The holy occasions of Ramadan, Passover and Easter passed without respite or a ceasefire, instead marked with the increased suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. The world's repeated calls for peace and humanity fell on the deaf ears of those who could actually make a difference.

This year marks the eightieth anniversary of the United Nations. The Charter starts with the determination to save succeeding generations from war, to reaffirm human rights and the dignity and worth of the human person, to establish justice and to promote social progress. On all those counts, we have failed the Palestinian people. Instead, what we have now is a dangerous limbo — the ceasefire has collapsed, humanitarian aid is blocked, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is being defied and international law and humanitarian law have been trampled, with no clarity on what is next. That limbo will only lead to even greater humanitarian catastrophes. The Security Council must act, and Indonesia calls for three urgent steps.

First, the Council must show leadership in upholding the Charter of the United Nations and fulfilling its mandates. Restoring the human dignity, human rights and human worth of the Palestinian people should become an immediate priority. Enforcing the ceasefire and providing unhindered humanitarian access are the first steps. No human being should be forced to survive without water, food or medicine, without a future. Aid must be allowed to enter now, and UNRWA must be allowed to resume its operations.

Secondly, reviving the two-State solution is the basis for a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question, supported by international consensus. The expansion of illegal settlements and the displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank must be stopped. The upcoming High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution in June must be a watershed moment that delivers concrete and actionable outcomes, equipped with a clear follow-up mechanism.

Thirdly, there is an urgent need for accountability. Without accountability, violations will persist, international law will continue to be undermined and trust in the multilateral system will be eroded. The Council must support concrete accountability measures, including the implementation of the International Court of Justice's decisions and advisory opinions, and restore faith in the sanctity of international law.

This month marks the seventieth anniversary of the Asia-Africa Conference, when the global South made it clear that colonialism and subjugation had no place in our world. Yet today the world still witnesses the subjugation of an entire nation — Palestine. In the eyes of the global South, the promise of international law is faltering. The Council has the power to restore faith in multilateralism. Expectations are high that the Council will be capable of exercising that power.

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

**Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein): Since we last met in this format (see S/PV.9841), the situation in Gaza has again deteriorated, with today marking 58 days of a blockade of humanitarian aid. That means no food, water, fuel or medical supplies for almost two months, directly harming the civilians whom conflict parties have an obligation to protect and not offering conditions in which life can be sustained. At the same time, Israeli troops occupy ever increasing parts of territory in Gaza. Any attempt at annexation would constitute a grave violation of international law. We reiterate what many have said before, namely, that attacks on civilians in Gaza in no way make Israel or Israelis safer — not in the short or long term — and neither would permanent occupation.

Tragically, several of the hostages captured on 7 October 2023 remain captive, while, thankfully, negotiations have led to the release of a significant number of those who were detained. We reiterate our call for the immediate release of all those who remain in captivity. The return to conflict in effect places the welfare of the hostages

as secondary, when their safe and unconditional return is a central part of the need to protect civilians. We also note the worrisome levels of impunity granted to violent settlers in the West Bank, which violates resolution 2334 (2016), undermines the Oslo Accords and takes us further from peace.

Along with the vast majority of the membership of the Organization, Liechtenstein has placed on record its commitment to mutually reinforcing goals — the release of the hostages, the fulfilment of international humanitarian law, including the end of the blockade, and the resumption of a process leading to a two-State solution, as decided by the General Assembly nearly 80 years ago (see General Assembly resolution 181 (II)). We implore the parties to the conflict, as well as those with leverage over them, to do so.

As Syria emerges from the Al-Assad regime, Liechtenstein hopes that its people will be able to rebuild their country on their own terms. Resolution 2254 (2015) remains the applicable road map for doing so, including support for credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance. A sustainable peace in Syria must be achieved through a Syrian-owned, United Nations-supported process rooted in inclusivity and diversity, which includes the protection of the rights of all minorities and the meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making. The end of the Al-Assad regime calls for renewed efforts towards accountability that supports reconciliation and the rebuilding of Syrian society. We acknowledge the vital work of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 and pay tribute to the humanitarian workers, who continue to search for those disappeared, arbitrarily detained and tortured by the regime, and to the work of the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Abdelaziz.

**Mr. Abdelaziz** (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to deliver the following statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

“In March every year, the League of Arab States celebrates the anniversary of its establishment. Although this year marks the eightieth anniversary of its establishment, which has great symbolic value, we did not celebrate it as we would have liked, because the wound of Palestine is still bleeding, and with the ongoing tragic conflicts in our Arab region, the United Nations — and especially the Security Council — has failed to address that effectively. The Council’s handling of the events of 7 October 2023 and its aftermath demonstrated the severe dysfunction of the multilateral international system. It also confirmed the paralysis of the Council in dealing with Middle East issues, especially the Palestinian issue, as a result of outdated political alliances, geopolitical considerations and the reckless actions of Israeli leaders who sacrifice the fates of their own people and other peoples in the region to serve their personal and electoral interests. To that we must add the double standards applied by the Security Council, which leads us in the Arab world to be increasingly convinced of the severity of the crisis in the international collective security system of the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular. The evidence for that is clear: the understandings and ceasefire agreements reached on Lebanon and Palestine were reached only through the commendable mediation of Qatar, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the United States on Palestine and through the mediation of France to put an end to the war in Lebanon and not through the efforts of the Security Council or United Nations envoys.

“Despite the praiseworthy efforts of the 10 non-permanent members and some of the major Powers supporting legitimacy in the Security Council, and with the support of the Group of Arab States to adopt and implement Security Council resolutions for a ceasefire, the decision to agree to a ceasefire or to continue fighting today in practice is sadly in the hands of Israel, the occupying Power, and not in the hands of the Security Council. The ceasefire agreement was implemented through an agreement that was reached outside the Security Council and not through the implementation of resolutions 2735 (2024) and 1701 (2006).

“That raises many questions on the Arab street as to when the Council will intervene to impose an immediate ceasefire in Palestine in implementation of the second phase of the mediation agreement, to address the unilateral ban imposed by Israel on the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and its devastating humanitarian effects, to put an end to Israel’s frantic efforts to displace the Palestinian people from Gaza to seize the West Bank using military action and trigger humanitarian crises. When will the Council compel Israel to implement its commitment to the July 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem* (see A/78/968), the resolution of the special session of the General Assembly on the same subject (General Assembly resolution ES-10/24) and the recommendation to the General Assembly to include the State of Palestine in the full membership of the United Nations (General Assembly resolution ES-10/23), especially given that the number of countries recognizing it exceeded 148 countries? And when will the Council impose an international mechanism to protect the Palestinian people and Islamic and Christian holy sites from the aggression of the Israeli Government and Israeli settlers and when will the Security Council intervene to prevent a repetition of the events of 2008, 2014 and 2023 by reaching a peaceful settlement to the Palestinian issue on the just basis adopted by the United Nations?

“I will not talk about the efforts of the Arab League to save time, but I underscore that the League has supported and will support the convening of the United Nations conference on the implementation of the two-State solution, co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia, in June, until its goals are achieved and, in coordination with the United Nations, has supported the Egyptian and Palestinian plan for recovery and reconstruction, which was adopted at Cairo summit. We also supported, through mediation efforts, Palestinian reform efforts, including the announcement by the Palestinian President to appoint a Vice-President and other efforts to ensure national reconciliation among all the segments of the population in order to consolidate the unity of the Palestinian people and its leadership and for Gaza and the West Bank to be placed under the exclusive control of the Palestinian Authority until the announcement of the end of the Israeli occupation of the State of Palestine.

“With regard to Syria, the United Nations and the Arab League are united in supporting Syria in implementing resolution 2245 (2015) and in helping Syria overcome the nightmare it went through in the past years and to provide a decent life for the Syrian people without exclusion on the basis of race, religion or political affiliation and to apply the rules of equality, justice and transparency.

“Similarly, we support the new Lebanese Government and the Lebanese President, which represents a glimmer of hope for Lebanon’s return to peace, security and stability.

“However, our joint efforts with the Security Council must focus on stopping Israel’s military attacks on Syrian and Lebanese territories and address Israel’s colonialist dreams of occupying more territory in the two countries and its attempt to impose hegemony over the people of the Middle East under the

pretext of countering foreign interference from another regional Power, which is rejected by the Arab people and at the regional and international levels.”

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Lambrinidis.

**Mr. Lambrinidis:** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Andorra align themselves with this statement.

The European Union is gravely concerned about the situation in Gaza. An immediate return to the ceasefire is essential, leading to the release of all hostages and a permanent end to hostilities. The EU is deeply concerned about reoccurring incidents resulting in the death of humanitarian aid workers and calls for accountability. Unimpeded humanitarian aid access and distribution, as well as the supply of electricity to Gaza, must be resumed immediately.

In exercising its right to defend itself, Israel must fully comply with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, in all circumstances. The EU reiterates the importance of ensuring the protection of civilians, including humanitarian workers, as well as civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities, schools and United Nations premises. The EU also deplores the refusal of Hamas to hand over the remaining hostages. Too many Israelis and Palestinians have suffered.

In that vein, the EU reiterates its commitment to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the two-State solution. The launch of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution was an important step to demonstrate that commitment. The EU will spare no effort to help revive a political process in partnership with international partners. A credible pathway to Palestinian statehood is a crucial component of that process. The EU looks forward to the high-level conference to be co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia. The EU also reiterates its support to the normalization of relations between Israel and Arab States, which is a fundamental step for the stabilization of the region.

The Palestinian Authority is suffering from a severe economic and fiscal crisis. The European Union is playing its part to support it.

First, it is doing so through its humanitarian aid. The EU announced initial funding of €120 million for Gaza in 2025, bringing the total to over €450 million since 2023. The EU also remains committed in its support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which provides crucial support to the Palestinians.

Secondly, the European Union Border Assistance Mission for Rafah redeployed to the Rafah crossing point. The resumed hostilities led to the closure of the crossing point. The Mission is ready to return when conditions allow.

Thirdly, the EU will continue to provide robust support to the Palestinian Authority linked with reforms. Following the successful first meeting of the high-level dialogue, the EU announced €1.6 billion in support for the period 2025-2027.

The EU also welcomes the Arab recovery and reconstruction plan and stands ready to engage with all on that basis. There can be no role for Hamas in the future of Gaza, and Hamas should no longer be a threat to Israel.

The EU also strongly condemns the further escalation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The EU reiterates its strong opposition to Israel's settlement policy and activity. We will work on further restrictive measures against extremist settlers and entities and organizations that support them, as well as against Hamas.

Let me turn briefly to Syria. The fall of Al-Assad's criminal regime is a historic opportunity for all Syrians. The EU supports an inclusive, Syria-owned and Syrian-led transition, in line with the core principles of resolution 2254 (2015). We welcome the recent appointment of a new transitional Government, and we look forward to engaging with it.

The EU will continue to lead international efforts in support of the Syrian people, as recently underscored by the ninth Brussels Conference in March. The EU recalls its suspension of restrictive measures as part of a gradual, reversible approach depending on developments on the ground.

The EU strongly condemns the recent violence against civilians in Syria. All perpetrators of violence must be held accountable, and we ask the transitional authorities to continue their engagement with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We underline the need to restore justice and ensure accountability for all atrocities committed in Syria, and we continue to staunchly support relevant United Nations mechanisms, such as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism and the Commission of Inquiry. We also support the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria.

Syria's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within secure borders must be fully respected. The EU calls on Israel to uphold the terms of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. The demilitarized buffer zone must be respected. The EU remains concerned about the destabilizing role of foreign-backed armed groups across the country.

We emphasize the importance of the fight against terrorism and of the prevention of the re-emergence of terrorist groups.

The fall of the Al-Assad regime also offers the opportunity to eliminate Syria's chemical-weapons programme for good, and the EU welcomes the initial steps of cooperation of the transitional authorities with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Finally, the EU reiterates its call for the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement between Lebanon and Israel and the full and symmetrical implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The EU is fully committed to continuing to support the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting.

I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

*The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m.*