



Security Council

Eightieth year

9929

th meeting

Wednesday, 4 June 2025, 4 p.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett	(Guyana)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
	China	Mr. Fu Cong
	Denmark	Ms. Lassen
	France	Mr. Bonnafont
	Greece	Mr. Sekeris
	Pakistan	Mr. Ahmad
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Ms. Swallow
	Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
	Somalia	Mr. Mohamed Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Ms. Shea

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Evangelos Sekeris, Permanent Representative of Greece, for his service as President of the Council for the month of May. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Sekeris and his team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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

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

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2025/353, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Algeria, Denmark, Greece, Guyana, Pakistan, Panama, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia and Somalia.

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

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

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I have the honour to speak to introduce this draft resolution (S/2025/353) on behalf of the 10 elected members of the Security Council, namely, Algeria, Denmark, Greece, Guyana, Pakistan, Panama, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Somalia and my own country, Slovenia.

As on previous occasions, the draft resolution before us was prompted by our deep concern about the catastrophic situation in Gaza, which deteriorated further after the resumption of hostilities in March. We have heard numerous briefings in the Council — from the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher on the broader humanitarian situation and from people working on the ground. We are also seized of the daily briefings provided by the United Nations system and the humanitarian community and follow closely the deeply disturbing reports coming from the ground, including in relation to the functioning of the newly established aid distribution centres.

We continue to fully support the ongoing diplomatic efforts by the United States, Egypt and Qatar aimed at achieving a return to the ceasefire deal. We firmly believe that the Council must also act urgently and decisively to address the humanitarian situation in Gaza, in accordance with its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The draft resolution before us is a product of consultations among all Council members. We thank delegations for their constructive engagement and flexibility, which allowed us to develop a text that responds to the catastrophic humanitarian

situation in Gaza. We believe this text reflects the consensus shared by all Council members that the war in Gaza has to come to an immediate halt, that all hostages must be immediately and unconditionally released and that civilians in Gaza must not starve and must have full and unimpeded access to aid.

It is for that reason that we prepared a concise humanitarian draft resolution expressing grave concern over the situation in Gaza, including the risk of famine, and reaffirming that all parties must comply with their obligations under international law. It further expresses support for the efforts of mediators to immediately bring the parties back to implementing the ceasefire agreement in line with resolution 2735 (2024).

Importantly, the draft resolution also demands an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, to be respected by all parties. It also recalls the demand of the Council for the immediate, dignified and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups. The draft resolution also includes an unequivocal demand for the immediate and unconditional lifting of all restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and its safe and unhindered distribution at scale, including by the United Nations and humanitarian partners, throughout the Gaza Strip, as well as the restoration of all essential services in line with international humanitarian law, the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

On behalf of 10 elected members, we ask all delegations for their support for this urgent demand, in line with the Council's responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ms. Shea (United States of America): The United States opposition to this draft resolution (S/2025/353) should come as no surprise. It is unacceptable for what it does say. It is unacceptable for what it does not say. And it is unacceptable for the manner in which it has been advanced.

The United States has been clear: we would not support any measure that fails to condemn Hamas and does not call for Hamas to disarm and leave Gaza. In recent months, Hamas has rejected numerous ceasefire proposals, including one over the weekend that would provide a pathway to end this conflict and the release of the 58 remaining hostages. We cannot allow the Security Council to reward Hamas' intransigence. After all, it was Hamas that started this brutal conflict on 7 October 2023, when Hamas perpetrated the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust. Hamas has sustained it ever since, in a manner that threatens Israel's security and prolongs Palestinian anguish. It is Hamas that continues to threaten Israelis and puts Palestinian civilians in Gaza in harm's way every day, using them as human shields. They have brutally suppressed those brave enough to challenge its despotic rule.

It is inexplicable that many members of the Council still refuse to acknowledge that Hamas could end this conflict tomorrow by surrendering and laying down its arms. It is unconscionable that the United Nations still has not labelled and sanctioned Hamas as a terrorist organization. In addition to refusing once again to condemn Hamas for the cowardly and evil acts that set this brutal conflict into motion, this draft resolution contains other serious defects.

The United States has taken the very clear position since this conflict began that Israel has a right to defend itself, which includes defeating Hamas and ensuring they are never again in a position to threaten Israel. In that regard, any product that undermines our close ally Israel's security is a non-starter.

This draft resolution would undermine diplomatic efforts to reach a ceasefire that reflects the realities on the ground and emboldens Hamas.

This draft resolution also draws a false equivalence between Israel and Hamas, which is both wrong and dangerous.

This draft resolution seeks “an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire” (S/2025/353, para. 1) that would leave Hamas in a position to carry out future 7 October attacks, as it has promised.

This draft resolution refuses to acknowledge the disastrous shortcomings of the prior method of aid delivery, which allowed Hamas to enrich itself at the expense of Palestinians and failed to get food and water to those who needed it most. No one wants to see Palestinian civilians in Gaza go hungry or thirsty. We instead urge the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to support the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation to help it to safely deliver aid without being diverted by Hamas. The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation has emphasized it will deliver aid consistent with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

We have been clear that, in order to move forward, Hamas and other terrorists must have no future in Gaza. As Secretary Rubio has said, if an ember survives, it will spark again into a fire. The Council should use its power to pressure Hamas to accept the proposal on the table. Only after the terror group’s removal can Israel be secure within its own borders and can Gaza advance toward a brighter and more prosperous future. The United States has worked tirelessly with Egypt and Qatar to bring an end to this horrific conflict for the sake of the region’s people. They want a path forward with opportunity and the prospect of a better tomorrow. Israelis yearn for a future where they are not threatened by daily rocket barrages and other acts of terrorism. Palestinians deserve an opportunity to rebuild their lives free of Iran and the influence of its insidious terrorist proxies.

Rather than push forward a draft resolution that unjustly rewards terrorism, undermines negotiations and allows Tehran to continue fomenting instability, let us instead demand that Hamas surrender, disarm and leave Gaza forever, for the sake of all the region’s people. Moreover, we need to be perfectly clear: performative actions in the Council designed to draw a veto, as evidenced by the process of formulating this draft resolution, wherein there was no true negotiation, are harmful at a time when there is delicate diplomacy going on in the region to reach a ceasefire. Furthermore, engaging in this performative process at a time when serious questions are being asked about the utility of the United Nations and its funding and use of resources is shameful. The Council should not be used in this way. The Council must hold itself to a higher standard. Meanwhile, we have had our negotiators on the ground trying to hammer out a real agreement to get hostages released, get a ceasefire and provide humanitarian assistance.

Finally, the United States will never stop working to free all the hostages, including the remains of four Americans murdered by Hamas, who have now been held in squalid conditions for 607 days. They will not be left behind.

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

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, China, Denmark, France, Greece, Guyana, Pakistan, Panama, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Somalia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Against:

United States of America

Abstaining:

None

The President: The draft resolution received 14 votes in favour, 1 against and no abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

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

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): At the outset, we express our warmest congratulations to Guyana for assuming the presidency of the Council during this month. We want to also commend the efficient Greek presidency of the Council during the last month.

During our most recent meeting on this subject (see S/PV.9923), held on 28 May, I spoke at length of Dr. Alaa Al-Najjar — remember — the mother whose name is now imprinted in the wound of every Palestinian soul. Nine of her ten children were taken, not by fate, but by the deliberate fire of the Israeli occupying army. Remember, I asked then: if her husband, Hamdy, were to awaken, what would she tell him? Today we know. He will never speak again. He will never hear again. He is gone. Doctor Hamdi succumbed to his wounds last Sunday, and that unbearable question will never cross his lips, nor will Alaa bear the agony of answering it. And now the last survivor is Adam, a 10-year-old, suspended between life and the memory of what once was a happy family. We pray that he recovers. We pray that he becomes a balm to his mother's shattered heart.

There are moments when silence is more eloquent than language. Today is one of those moments. But silence cannot defend the dead. It cannot hold the hand of the dying. It cannot confront the machinery of injustice. We must therefore speak, loudly, not for the sake of merely stating a position, but for the sake of memory, of morality and of the human spirit.

This meeting of the Security Council and this draft humanitarian resolution, even in its obstruction by a veto, are a mirror, a mirror that reflects the agony of multilateralism and the urgent need to revive it. Today the elected members of the Council have stood with clarity, with conviction and with courage. They are the proud bearers of moral legitimacy. They are the true compass of the world's conscience. The draft resolution that was vetoed today (S/2025/353) did not represent the voice of the few but the collective will of the entire world — North and South, East and West, 14 of 15 Security Council members. It was a message to the people of Palestine: you are not alone. And it was a message to the Israeli occupier: the world watched you. The shield of impunity and of immunity must fall. It reveals why the Israeli occupier continues its crime: because it has never fully feared justice and because it has always felt protected, while the victims were buried, with no names, no headlines, no reckoning, no investigation and no accountability.

For the killing of Palestinian children to not become a mere pastime, the Council should have acted to impose a ceasefire in Gaza. For the starvation not to be legitimized as a weapon, the Council should have acted to impose a ceasefire in Gaza. For the future generations to not grow up scorning international law, the Council should have acted to impose a ceasefire in Gaza.

Today's vote is not a conclusion. It is another prelude. It is another beginning. As President Abdelmadjid Tebboune has affirmed, Algeria will not abandon Palestine. We have stood with it in its pain, and we will stand with it in its resurrection. We will return to the Council again and again. We will return for the children who died before they knew what childhood meant. We will return for the women forced to give birth on roads lined with rubble and flames. We will return for the fathers who built homes with their bare hands only to watch them collapse in seconds. We will return for the starving, who refuse to trade dignity for bread under siege. We will return for the thirsty killed for looking for clean water. We will return, because the Palestinians

deserve to live in freedom, in dignity. We are not tired. We are not resigned. We will come back — and soon.

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): This week we passed yet another painful milestone: three months since Israel imposed grave restrictions on humanitarian aid entering Gaza. While the Security Council has been briefed time and time again on the cost of inaction, the risk of famine has continued to grow. As always, it is civilians who suffer the most. We have all seen the chaotic scenes at the eight distribution sites recently set up, and we deplore the killing of civilians trying to get life-saving aid. We have seen the sheer desperation, the human cost of months of severe restrictions on humanitarian aid.

Denmark voted in favour of this draft resolution (S/2025/353). We co-penned it, together with the elected members of the Council, because we believe that it is time for the Council to speak with one voice, to take decisive action to address the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza. We regret that it was not possible today. Around this table, we have been entrusted with the responsibility to maintain international peace and security. We cannot stand by while this relentless suffering continues to unfold in real time in front of our eyes. We need to act to show leadership and to deliver on that mandate.

This draft resolution contained three necessary demands: a demand for an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire; a demand for the immediate, dignified and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups; and a demand for the immediate and unconditional lifting of all restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Denmark wholeheartedly supports and reiterates these demands. International law is clear. Humanitarian aid must never be politicized and used as a political bargaining chip or as a part of a military strategy. It must flow freely and safely to all those in need, in line with international humanitarian law and the humanitarian principles.

We are under no illusions. This draft resolution was not perfect. Denmark regrets that the draft resolution did not condemn the heinous terrorist attacks by Hamas and other terrorist groups on 7 October 2023, and we reiterate our firm condemnation of Hamas' despicable acts. It does not change, however, our support for the draft resolution as a whole, which we had deeply hoped would be adopted today. We thus remain resolute in our call for an immediate and lasting ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, and an urgent lifting of all restrictions on humanitarian aid.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom voted in favour of the draft resolution (S/2025/353) today because the intolerable situation in Gaza needs to end. We are determined to see an end to this war, secure the release of the hostages held by Hamas and alleviate the catastrophic humanitarian situation for Palestinians in Gaza.

This Israeli Government's decisions to expand its military operations in Gaza and severely restrict aid are unjustifiable, disproportionate and counterproductive, and the United Kingdom completely opposes them. The Israeli Government says it has opened up aid access with its new system, but Palestinians, desperate to feed their families, have been killed as they try to reach the very few aid sites that have been permitted by Israel. This is inhumane.

We support the United Nations call for immediate and independent investigation into these events and for perpetrators to be held accountable. Israel needs to end its restrictions on aid now. Let the United Nations and humanitarians do their job to save lives, reduce suffering and maintain dignity.

We regret that the Council was unable to reach a consensus today, but we remain committed to the vision of this text. We will continue to strongly support the efforts led by the United States, Qatar and Egypt to secure an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. A ceasefire is the best way to secure the release of all remaining hostages and achieve a long-term political solution. And we repeat our condemnation of the heinous attack by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and demand that it release all the hostages immediately and unconditionally. Hamas can have no role in the future governance of Gaza. A two-State solution is the only way to bring about the long-lasting peace, stability and security that both Israelis and Palestinians deserve. We welcome France and Saudi Arabia's leadership in chairing an international conference later this month.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): It is a sad day — another low in the history of this organ, which is entrusted with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Pakistan deeply regrets the failure of the Security Council to adopt draft resolution S/2025/353 submitted by the 10 elected members, which was an effort to address one of the gravest and most sustained humanitarian catastrophes of our time. Once again, the elected members have shown that they are here, ready and willing to fully assume the responsibilities that have been entrusted to them as members of the Council by the general membership of the United Nations.

We are appalled that the Council once again stands immobilized in the face of mass suffering, atrocity and unfolding tragedy. The veto cast today sends an extremely dangerous message that the lives of more than 2 million Palestinians — besieged, starved and relentlessly bombarded — are dispensable. It will remain not only a moral stain on the conscience of the Council but also a fateful moment of political abdication that will reverberate for generations. We have heard yet again the familiar refrain that this is not the right time and that space must be given to the ongoing negotiations. But how much more space do we need? How much more space filled with rubble, graves and the anguished cries of children? How much more time do we need? What amount of evidence do we need before we say enough and put a stop to the barbarity and savagery perpetrated under a brutal occupation?

While the Council deliberated and delayed, Gaza has been decimated. This is no longer a humanitarian crisis — it is a collapse of humanity, international law and all that the Council is supposed to stand for. As the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross noted, Gaza is worse than hell on Earth. More than 54,000 civilians have been killed, among them 28,000 women and girls and 18,000 children. In the past 24 hours alone, nearly 100 Palestinians have been killed and more than 400 wounded. Entire neighbourhoods lie in ruins. Famine stalks the land. Disease and despair now spread more quickly than any aid can arrive.

While Gaza bleeds and the Council has been muzzled, the world has spoken. The International Court of Justice has issued binding provisional measures. The General Assembly has adopted numerous resolutions. The United Nations, humanitarian organizations, global civil society, people on the streets across the world — and, increasingly, voices from within Israel itself — have recognized that what is unfolding is not merely war but the systematic destruction of a people, war crimes, genocide.

In one of the most chilling developments, Palestinian civilians have been shot and killed while attempting to access food. We think that killing innocent civilians for seeking bread and water is not only a war crime — it is a tragic indictment of a system that criminalizes survival and militarizes humanitarian aid, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. Aid dropped from the sky or delivered under armed escort is not a solution — it is a spectacle. And to defend such arrangements is not pragmatism — it is a moral failure and totally unacceptable.

The draft resolution before us today was objective, balanced, principled and rooted firmly in the Charter of the United Nations and the most basic tenets of

humanitarian law. It asked for no more than what any human being deserves: food for starving children, medicine for the wounded, shelter for the displaced, the right to life — an end to the killing therefore — and the release of the hostages. It also supported the efforts that are under way to bring about a ceasefire. The fact that even such modest, urgent demands could not pass underscores the depth of the Council's dysfunction. Let us be clear: this failure will not go down in records as a mere procedural footnote — it will be remembered as complicity, a green light for continued annihilation and a moment where the entire world was expecting action but yet again the Council was blocked and prevented by one member from carrying out its responsibility.

Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering support for the Palestinian people in their just struggle for dignity, justice and self-determination. We reiterate our calls for: an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire; full, unfettered humanitarian access and an end to the inhumane blockade of Gaza; and a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine, rooted in international law and based on the establishment of a viable, contiguous and sovereign Palestinian State, on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

History will judge how every member of the Council chose to respond at this hour of moral reckoning. Together with the majority of Council members, Pakistan stands firmly on the side of humanity, legality and justice. We urge the holdouts to do the same, before Gaza becomes not only a wound on the world's conscience but a permanent scar on the credibility of the Council.

However, we will not stop here. We are not going to lie idle. We are going to continue and redouble our efforts for the cause of peace in line with our responsibility as a responsible member of the Council. We will continue to call for accountability and an end to the impunity that Israel, the occupying Power, continues to enjoy. We shall continue to recall, and remind others, that the root cause of the problem — the challenges confronting the region — is the decades-long illegal Israeli occupation of Arab land, including the occupied Palestinian territories.

The way forward, in our view, lies in addressing and tackling that root cause head on. That is, by ending the occupation. It is not by mercilessly and mindlessly killing the Palestinians, who are the oppressed people in this case, or by making them starve, or by trying to evict them from their lands, or by suppressing their voice, or by denying them their legitimate and internationally recognized right to self-determination. Because we know that that is not going to work, for the brave, dignified and resilient people of Palestine are not going to give up. They are not going to give up their rights, and they are not alone. The entire international community is on their side.

That support is going to be evident later this month in the General Assembly Hall — not the Council, but the General Assembly — where the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution is going to be held. We are certain that it will make a resounding call for Palestinian rights and set out an irreversible path towards the two-State solution and Palestinian statehood, and full membership of the United Nations.

We shall revert to the Council as and when required, as has been said by the representative of Algeria, and we expect that the Council will shoulder its responsibility towards Palestine, in the interests of maintaining peace and security in the Middle East.

Mr. Mohamed Yusuf (Somalia): At the outset allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council this month.

I also commend the leadership of the Greek presidency for the able manner in which they guided the Council's work last month.

Somalia voted in favour of the draft resolution (S/2025/353) presented today. We express our sincere appreciation to all Council members who supported that timely and important resolution. That short and concise resolution addresses the long-standing catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza. It demands an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire, and the immediate and unconditional lifting of all restrictions on humanitarian aid.

As we are all aware, the humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate rapidly. Civilians are dying, in particular women and children, from acute shortages of food, water and essential medical supplies. The risk of famine is growing day by day, and entire communities are on the brink of collapse.

We have all heard the many alarming briefings by the Secretary-General and the humanitarian community on the ground. The international community must not turn away from that unfolding human tragedy.

Somalia regrets that despite the overwhelming support for that purely humanitarian resolution, the Council was unable to reach consensus. We underscore that the resolution's aim was solely to alleviate the immense suffering of civilians in Gaza and to ensure full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, in line with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles.

Somalia remains firmly committed to continue its efforts, together with Council members and the wider United Nations membership, to help the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable right to live in dignity, and to govern their sovereign land and build the future of their children in an independent State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif at its capital, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We urge Israel, as the occupying force, to fulfil its obligation under international law to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches those in desperate need without delay or hindrance, and to end its occupation of Palestinian land. That is the only path to sustainable peace in the Middle East, enabling the future of the many children to come.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, let me congratulate Guyana on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month, and Greece on successfully completing its presidency of the Council last month.

China is deeply disappointed by the result of today's vote. The draft resolution on the humanitarian situation in Gaza (S/2025/353), sponsored by the 10 elected members of the Security Council, clearly calls for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and the lifting of the blockade on humanitarian supplies. Those are the most pressing demands of the people in Gaza, who are struggling amid death and despair, and they reflect the overwhelming voice of the international community. The United States has once again abused its veto power, extinguishing the glimmer of hope for the people in Gaza, and ruthlessly continuing to leave more than 2 million people in darkness. It must face the questions of the international community.

People cannot help but ask: where is fairness and justice? For more than 600 days, more than 54,000 people in Gaza have lost their lives. Israel continues to escalate its offensive and blockade, turning Gaza into a living hell. Innocent civilians are being killed in the conflict every day, while a large portion of the population is on the brink of famine. The United Nations has clearly pointed out that the aid delivery mechanism promoted by the United States and Israel violates the principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality. Recently, there have been repeated incidents of civilian casualties near distribution sites, and that mechanism has even become a death trap. The brutal facts have clearly shown that military means are

not the solution. That conflict has long exceeded the limits of a hostage rescue operation. Israel must immediately cease military operations and fully restore access to humanitarian supplies.

People cannot help but ask: where is the international rule of law? Since the outbreak of the conflict, we have witnessed the weaponization of humanitarian aid, the targeting of civilian infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, and the ruthless killing of journalists and humanitarian workers. Israel's actions have crossed every red line of international humanitarian law and seriously violated Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, as well as the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice. However, owing to the protection of a certain country, those violations have not been stopped or their perpetrators held accountable. Observing international humanitarian law is an obligation that all parties must fulfil. It is not optional. Any double standards or selective application will only erode the foundations of the international rule of law and must be firmly rejected.

People cannot help but ask: where is the authority of the Security Council? As the primary body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, the Council has been striving to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza, and long ago reached an overwhelming consensus on ceasefire and humanitarian issues. The result of today's vote once again exposes the fact that the root cause of the Council's inability to quell the conflict in Gaza is the repeated obstruction by the United States, which has vetoed the Council's request for a ceasefire, multiple times. Because of its protection of Israel, several resolutions adopted by the Council have not been effectively implemented. Claims that Security Council actions would interfere with diplomatic efforts are completely untenable. As long as diplomatic efforts genuinely seek peace, the actions of the Council will only provide strong support.

The international community will never cease its efforts to pursue fairness and justice, uphold the international rule of law and safeguard the authority of the Council. A veto by a single permanent member cannot stop the march towards peace. We urge the United States to live up to its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Council, abandon its political calculations and adopt a just and responsible attitude in supporting the Council's efforts to take all necessary actions. China stands ready to work with the international community to help end the conflict in Gaza, alleviate the humanitarian disaster, implement the two-State solution and, ultimately, achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the elected members of the Council for their courage in their efforts to advance the very timely and useful draft resolution S/2025/353, on which a vote was held today. We note in particular that the sponsors managed, in very little time, to prepare a truly balanced and strong document aimed at an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, the release of all hostages and the lifting of the humanitarian blockade of Gaza. In the current tragic circumstances, that is the bare minimum — a first aid kit, as it were — that the international community must provide to alleviate the suffering of peaceful Palestinians.

Unfortunately, the Council once again failed to reach a mutually acceptable outcome for all members and could not adopt a product that would have spared Gaza and the entire Middle East region from further sliding into chaos. Yet another opportunity was squandered to demonstrate, in practice, the readiness of the Security Council to assume responsibility for maintaining international peace and security in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has now lasted for eight decades. We all got another opportunity today to see who really wants peace in the Middle East and who wants to continue to play geopolitical games.

In view of the current circumstances, we place particular hope in the upcoming high-level conference on the Middle East peace process in New York this month, to be co-chaired by Saudi Arabia and France. It is important to ensure concrete results aimed at breathing new life into the idea of a two-State solution. To that end, the international community must demonstrate collective will and do its utmost to create conditions for the resumption of the peace process. We intend to participate actively in the conference.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): For more than 600 days, especially since the breakdown of the ceasefire in March, Palestinian civilians in Gaza have been struggling to survive the most unendurable hardships. Every day, on our screens, we are witnessing the agonizing killing of innocent Palestinians, including children, caused by incessant air strikes and live fire. Denial and restriction to life-saving aid, including food and medicine, are exacerbating the catastrophic situation in Gaza. We have seen the chaos and violence at the aid distribution sites since the new aid plan began its operations last week. We cannot support a scheme that does not prioritize the need of civilians and is not underpinned by the principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality.

We are also extremely concerned about the horrific conditions that Israelis hostages, still held — brutally — by Hamas, have been forced to endure since the horrific terrorist attacks by Hamas on 7 October, which we condemn in the strongest terms. But, as we have witnessed over the past three months, blocking or throttling humanitarian aid for millions of people cannot ensure the safe return of hostages.

Based on these deep concerns, the Republic of Korea participated, with other elected members of the Security Council, in submitting draft resolution S/2025/353, demanding the immediate and unconditional lifting of all restrictions on the entry and distribution of humanitarian aid in Gaza. Today's draft resolution is in keeping with the steadfast and unwavering support of the international community, including the Republic of Korea, for the persistent efforts by mediating countries — the United States, Qatar and Egypt — to secure an immediate ceasefire and release of hostages.

While it is regrettable that the draft resolution was not adopted today, we believe that wide support for the text again proved the position of the vast majority of the international community, unequivocally demanding the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians in dire need. Considering the urgency of the harrowing situation in Gaza, we desperately hope that the extreme suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza will end as soon as possible.

Mr. Bonnafont (France) (*spoke in French*): Words cannot describe the tragedy unfolding before our eyes in Gaza. France voted in favour of draft resolution S/2025/353. We thank the elected members of the Security Council for having prepared this draft resolution, and we deeply regret that it could not be adopted today and that the Council was prevented from shouldering its responsibility, despite the remarkable convergence of the majority.

We reiterate our call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire. The provision of humanitarian aid cannot be made conditional on a ceasefire, nor can it be instrumentalized for political ends. We call on the Israeli Government to respect its international obligations to ensure that large-scale humanitarian aid reaches the entire population of the Gaza Strip immediately, safely and unobstructed. To that end, France reiterates its support for the United Nations agencies and their humanitarian partners, which have proven their ability to deliver aid.

All hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally. The text of the draft resolution demanded precisely that, in the strongest possible terms. France will never cease to condemn the terrorist attacks of 7 October 2023, committed by

Hamas. The Security Council must unambiguously condemn same. Hamas must lay down its arms and cannot be a part of the solution in Gaza.

The Security Council must also work towards the concrete implementation of the two-State solution on the basis of the agreed parameters — Israel and Palestine, two peoples with an equal right to life, security and dignity. France will continue to work towards those objectives by co-chairing, with Saudi Arabia, the conference on the two-State solution from 17 to 20 June.

Mr. Sekeris (Greece): In Gaza, for several months now, we have been witnessing a humanitarian crisis of massive proportions. With each passing day, more Palestinians are at risk of dying, following thousands of deaths already. Reports clearly warn of an entire population at critical risk of famine. Hundreds face the risk of succumbing to their injuries as hospitals have either suspended operations or have been shut down.

Amid these grave conditions, the elected members of the Security Council proposed a draft resolution to address this urgent situation.

We strongly condemn the horrendous terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas and other terrorist groups on 7 October 2023. Today we echo the voices that call for the need to agree upon an immediate ceasefire and the immediate, unconditional release of all hostages. We appeal to Israel to allow the immediate, full and unhindered flow of humanitarian aid, at scale, into all parts of the Gaza Strip, as that is clearly dictated by international law. Access to electricity and water must be fully restored as well. Dialogue and coordination with the United Nations and its agencies remain critical in that regard. While we welcome the partial resumption of aid delivery into the Strip, it is hardly sufficient. At the same time, reports of the loss of life among people seeking aid are simply unthinkable.

Peace cannot be maintained by force. It can be achieved only by understanding. Both parties need to strive for a permanent and sustainable ceasefire. In view of the upcoming conference in New York, to be co-chaired by France and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, we look forward to revitalizing the political process with the ultimate goal of achieving a two-State solution, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. In that way, both Palestinians and Israelis will finally be able to live side by side in peace and security.

Ms. Swallow (Sierra Leone): Sierra Leone thanks Slovenia for coordinating the efforts of the 10 elected members of the Security Council (E10) on the draft resolution submitted for adoption before the Council today (S/2025/353). We commend their dedication in steering the negotiations. We also acknowledge the engagement and flexibility demonstrated by Council members throughout the negotiation process.

Sierra Leone voted in favour of the draft resolution out of a deep concern for the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. Our vote was also driven by the continued plight of hostages held by Hamas since the horrific attacks of 7 October 2023. The prevailing conditions — marked by suffering, hunger, insecurity and death — paint a grim picture of the daily realities faced by Palestinian civilians in Gaza. We unequivocally condemn the brutal attacks on civilians around aid distribution sites, which have led to numerous deaths and injuries, and we join the United Nations and fellow Council members in calling for an urgent, independent and impartial investigation into those killings.

Since the breach of the ceasefire by the Government of Israel in March 2025 and the subsequent failure of the parties to reach a renewed accord, it was imperative for the Security Council, as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations, to take decisive action to alleviate the suffering of civilians. In that regard, we welcome the initiative of the E10, which reflects our own conviction that the Council must

not remain silent. Submitting the draft resolution was a timely effort to allow the Council to speak with one voice in confronting the dire humanitarian crisis. It called for an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire and reiterated demands for the immediate, dignified and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other armed groups. The draft resolution further reinforced the imperative of compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law, and called for respect for the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in humanitarian action.

We deeply regret, however, that the draft resolution was not adopted. While the text may not have been comprehensive, which was an intentional expedient decision by the sponsors, it represented the bare minimum required to address the worsening catastrophic humanitarian situation. We wish to emphasize that the occupying Power, Israel, is bound by international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, to guarantee Palestinian civilians access to essential humanitarian assistance. We reiterate the binding obligations of the State of Israel under international law, including those arising from the provisional measures indicated by the International Court of Justice in the case *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*. Those measures underscore the imperative to ensure unhindered access to humanitarian assistance for civilians in the Gaza Strip.

As emphasized in the draft resolution, Sierra Leone supports the ongoing diplomatic efforts led by Qatar, Egypt and the United States and urges the parties to act in good faith and show maximum flexibility. The cost of inaction will be borne by an entire generation of Palestinian and Israeli children, whose peace, fundamental rights and future security are in jeopardy. We urge all parties to comply fully with previous Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023), 2728 (2024), and 2735 (2024).

In conclusion, Sierra Leone reaffirms its commitment to supporting genuine and credible political efforts to end this protracted conflict. A just and lasting peace grounded in the two-State solution must be earnestly pursued. The Council must remain resolute in discharging its responsibilities.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama congratulates Greece on its very skilful conduct of the Security Council's work during its presidency last month. We also congratulate Guyana on assuming the presidency of the Council in June and wish it every success in steering the Council's work. We also welcome the presence in the Chamber of the delegations of Israel, Yemen and the Observer State of Palestine.

Panama deeply regrets that it was not possible to adopt the draft resolution submitted by the elected members of the Council (S/2025/353). We are grateful to delegations for their collective leadership, which made it possible to draft a balanced text that focused primarily on alleviating the human suffering in Gaza. At the same time, we acknowledge the delegations that contributed to and supported that initiative.

Panama supported the text because it represented the lowest common denominator that we should all be willing to defend — namely, a ceasefire, safe and unhindered access to vital humanitarian aid and the immediate, dignified and unconditional release of all hostages — above all, given that the alternative mechanisms that recently have been used to distribute humanitarian aid to the civilian population, regrettably, have been ineffective, disappointing and counterproductive. Nothing contained in the draft resolution disregarded legitimate security concerns. The

entirety of its contents merely responded to the urgent need to save lives and restore hope for those who are surviving in extreme conditions.

Today the Council missed an opportunity to send an urgent message of humanity for those who are still crying out for relief and hanging on to life by a thread in the midst of devastation; to the wounded who are in agony, owing to the lack of access to basic medical treatment; to the thousands of displaced families who are living in the rubble of what used to be their homes; to the Israeli hostages who remain in captivity and to their families who live in anguish, not knowing whether they will ever embrace them again; to the humanitarian workers who, even under fire, insist on saving lives; and above all, to the children, the most innocent victims of this cruel war, as in any other war. Those children are dying with dry lips and empty stomachs in Gaza, in a world that has water and bread but that gives them only death and destruction. They do not understand resolutions or vetoes — they know only hunger and desolation. They are human beings, and it is our collective responsibility to protect them.

Our inability to arrive at consensus on a draft resolution on a humanitarian matter should lead us to think more deeply. Panama reaffirms its commitment to the principles of international humanitarian law and the collective efforts to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population in Gaza. With the same firmness, Panama once again reiterates its strong condemnation of the attacks cruelly carried out by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and the holding of hostages in conditions that go against international law. We underscore our demand for the immediate, dignified and unconditional release of all the hostages still being held by Hamas and the resumption of a permanent ceasefire making it possible to protect the civilian population and facilitate full and safe access to Gaza for vital humanitarian aid. The civilian population cannot, and must not, continue to face this level of suffering. It is our responsibility to act.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): At the outset, let me join you, Madam President, in thanking the Greek delegation for the skilful way in which it conducted the presidency of the Security Council in May. We also congratulate you on assuming the presidency and extend our full support.

In an open letter published in a Slovenian newspaper this week, a Palestinian doctor described Gaza as a place where life slipped beyond danger and hunger into ashes and sorrow. As the weeks and months have passed, the briefings we have received in the Chamber have become increasingly distressing — just ashes and sorrow. Appeals and pressure from humanitarian organizations, civil society, the United Nations membership and global public opinion for the Council to act have only intensified. With the developments on the ground, our messages became stronger and sharper. At the previous Council meeting on the Middle East (see S/PV.9923), several members spoke of the Council's responsibility.

It is the weight of our responsibility as an elected member of the Council that led us to react in response to the tragic situation in Gaza. We extend our thanks to Algeria for initiating the process with the support of the Group of Arab States. It was never our intention to provoke a veto. Anyone who has followed Slovenia's engagement in the Council will know by now that we have only one agenda: to unite, build consensus and bridge divides. Our intentions have always been sincere. We were aware of the different positions within the Council. That is why draft resolution S/2025/353 had only one focus — a humanitarian one. We the elected members thought that the Council should unite around the urgent demand for unimpeded humanitarian access and for food to be delivered to starving civilians. Starving civilians and inflicting immense suffering is inhumane and against international law. No war objective can justify such action. We hoped and expected that that was our shared understanding.

We continue to support the diplomatic efforts of the United States, Egypt and Qatar to bring the parties back to the deal as stipulated in resolution 2735 (2024). We also support 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 by the General Assembly this month. However, the role of the Council in achieving peace in the Middle East is clear — it cannot be substituted or delegated. A veto prevented the Council from taking action today. However, the draft resolution drafted by the members elected by the United Nations membership reflects the strong support of the membership for the efforts of the United Nations and its humanitarian partners to deliver aid to Gaza, in accordance with humanitarian principles. Let them work.

Faced with a choice between abandoning the rules that have guided the international community for the past 80 years and a veto, we chose humanity. As humanity has been tested by the live streams from Gaza, the draft resolution emerged from our shared sense of responsibility — responsibility towards Gaza's civilians, towards Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners alike, towards the wider United Nations membership, public opinion and humanitarian workers and towards history. The draft resolution was not adopted. However, 14 votes in favour carry a strong message — enough civilian suffering, enough of food being used as a weapon. Enough is enough is enough.

We tried. We will continue to try.

The President: The representative of the United States of America has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Ms. Shea (United States of America): I would like to respond to a disturbing comment made by a member of the Security Council. I want to reiterate that Israel has a right to defend itself, and it has taken numerous measures to limit harm to civilians and address humanitarian needs. The loss of civilian life in Gaza is tragic. We all mourn that. But the responsibility for that rests with Hamas, which could stop the fighting today by freeing the hostages and agreeing to the ceasefire terms already accepted by Israel. Blaming Israel and making spurious accusations of genocide is not only inaccurate but also dangerous, not least because doing so buoys Hamas.

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

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting at the outset of Guyana's presidency of the Security Council and reaffirm our confidence in your skilled leadership of the Council.

We thank all the elected members of the Council — the elected 10 (E10) — and their coordinator, Slovenia, which introduced draft resolution S/2025/353 on behalf of the E10. We thank them for bringing these demands forward and for their leadership over the past 20 months. We thank all 14 members who voted in favour of the draft resolution. We thank Algeria for mobilizing the Council with the full support of the Group of Arab States. We have accomplished something — 14 votes in the Security Council is very formidable. We appreciate that, and we thank those involved.

The draft resolution had a simple goal — to demand a ceasefire that would allow the beginning of the monumental work needed to end the horrific humanitarian situation, stop the genocide, release hostages and prisoners and get the Israeli occupying forces out of Gaza before they have a chance to implement their plans to destroy our people, as they press on with the mass killing and forcible displacement of Palestinian civilians and the theft of Palestinian land. The draft resolution also demanded an end to the engineered starvation that brought an entire civilian population — 2 million people, among them 1 million children — to the edge of

famine, and then used aid to lure them and confine them to an extremely limited area of the Gaza Strip, clearly to facilitate their expulsion and its annexation.

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has stated that Gaza is the “hungriest place on Earth” and “the only defined territory in the world where the entire population is at risk of famine”. And OCHA added that “the aid operation is one of the most obstructed aid operations, not only in the world today, but in recent history”.

Can the Council not say anything about that? Can the Council not act, as many of its members have been saying, as demanded by the Charter of the United Nations, which unites all of us, to respect and honour the principles reflected and contained in that Charter, our constitution, in the face of this open and ongoing threat to millions of human lives?

Those seeking life-saving aid to feed their children and themselves are being subjected to killing and degrading treatment and inhumane conditions, to a horrific degradation of life.

That has to stop.

Israel has to end its punitive illegal siege. It has to open all crossings and allow aid to reach Palestinians throughout the Gaza Strip.

The United Nations plan would allow that. United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations must be allowed to work to extend life-saving aid to all who need it. Let them do their work, as our colleagues have called for.

Israel is breaching the fundamental rules of international law and of basic humanity, the International Court of Justice orders in the case on genocide and the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Israel is committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Can the Council not say anything about that?

One would have hoped that the demands made by the 10 elected members of the Council, reflected in the resolution — minimal demands that are dictated by humanity, by legality and by morality — would have received unanimous support. But unfortunately, they were faced with a veto.

That draft resolution was long overdue. It came months after Israel broke the ceasefire and enacted a full-fledged blockade on humanitarian assistance, and not only resumed but escalated its relentless killing of Palestinian children, women and men, and its rabid campaign of destruction across Gaza. It came after months of blatant, unapologetic, brazen Israeli violations of the resolutions of the Council, including resolution 2735 (2024).

All States represented here were hoping that the efforts of the United States, Egypt and Qatar would yield an immediate ceasefire to end that horrific war. But unfortunately, until now, that has not happened.

Does that mean Israel can continue its destruction of the Gaza Strip and all life within it while the negotiations continue? Does that mean it can starve people, all 2 million of them? That is an untenable and an unacceptable position. It should be rejected. It should not be allowed to continue.

We will be heading to the General Assembly in the coming days. But let us be clear. What can stop that genocide are immediate and real measures by States to deter Israel from prolonging the aggression against the Palestinian people, and force it to stop the mad march it has embarked on across the occupied Palestinian territory. Let me repeat that we need measures by all States, the 14 here and dozens more — the almost 160 that are with us in the General Assembly.

We are grateful for States' remonstrations and tenacity in the Security Council in demanding action. We support them continuing to knock on the door of the Security Council to make it shoulder its responsibility. But they can act in their national capacity. They do not need an invitation from anyone. Members have tools available to them in their national capacity to force those who are making life miserable for the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip — killing them and starving them — to stop their crimes against humanity.

They can do so, and they must do so.

I am sure they are on the verge — some will take the lead — of taking those steps to prevent those crimes from continuing. The brave ones who take the first few steps will be followed by others.

It happened when the abhorrent system of apartheid was crushed. It started with an employee in a grocery store in Ireland. That led to a massive movement that spanned the globe to bring down that abhorrent system of apartheid.

We are not the exception to the rule. We see the marches everywhere. We see the support everywhere. We see the support of Council members and their loud, brave and principled position, in the Council and outside the Council.

But we need to make it the business of each and every one of them. They have tools. They have things available to them to pressure those who are refusing to listen to all of us, refusing to listen to international law, refusing to listen to the provisions of international humanitarian law, refusing to listen to the United Nations, to the Secretary-General, to Mr. Fletcher and all the brave leaders in the United Nations.

They need to be dealt with differently until they yield, faced with our collective position that we will not tolerate, nor we will allow, the continued killing and starving of the Palestinian people, as we see in the Gaza Strip.

That is what lies ahead of us. I am confident that Council members will rise to those responsibilities, because they have tried everything and now they are being forced to take the extra steps that we are confident they will take.

That is imperative in order to save lives and finally bring an end to this abomination, this illegal occupation in every facet.

Every country has an obligation to take decisive action now to end impunity and atrocities for the sake of humanity.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Danon (Israel): Today the Council stood at the crossroads, and most of those gathered here chose wrong. They chose appeasement and submission; they chose a road that does not lead to peace, only to more terror.

We thank the United States for standing on the right side — for standing on the side of truth, justice and moral clarity. We thank it for refusing to abandon the hostages and to legitimize the lies of draft resolution S/2025/353. We thank it for having the bravery to say what many seem too afraid to say: that Hamas is the obstacle to peace and that spoiling terrorists only deepens the crisis.

There is a real framework already on the table — with the United States-backed proposal, crafted with Egypt and Qatar. Israel has accepted multiple versions of that proposal. We have accepted compromise after compromise. We have said yes, repeatedly, because we are prepared to do whatever we can to bring our hostages back home.

Hamas has rejected every single version of that proposal. Every deal, every offer and every opportunity. It has responded with silence or with new, impossible

demands. They have shown the world time and again that they are not interested in reaching an agreement. They are interested only in surviving and delaying a deal for as long as possible.

Why does this draft resolution say nothing about that? I listened to everyone today. Only a few actually mentioned a condemnation for Hamas; the rest forgot about that. Instead of confronting the truth, some on the Council attempted to bury it. Instead of applying pressure where it belongs — on Hamas — they have applied it on the country actively working to bring its people back home. That is not diplomacy, it is surrender, and it sends a clear message to Hamas — it can reject every deal and still be rewarded by the international community; it can hold innocent civilians hostage and still be granted legitimacy by the United Nations; it can continue the war and the pressure will still fall only on Israel, not on the terrorists who started this war.

The Council knows that Hamas does not care about resolutions or about what is happening here. It does not care about innocent lives, international law or United Nations resolutions. I know all the Council members very well — they know how to read a resolution, and they know the power of the language of a resolution. But when they removed the release of the hostages as a condition for a ceasefire, Council members gave Hamas the freedom to ignore them all and to place every bit of pressure on Israel. They handed them time, leverage and political cover. They told the hostage families that their loved ones are no longer a priority.

The hostages are innocent civilians kidnapped from their homes and held in the dark tunnels of Gaza. Many have been brutally murdered. They have not seen sunlight; they have not spoken to their families; they are being denied every basic human dignity.

The Palestinian prisoners are terrorists who are protected by our legal system. Many of them are murderers with blood on their hands. They are being held in accordance with the law, with access to rights, food and medical care. Just because Israel agrees to exchanges, it does not mean that we accept a false equivalency. It means that we place unlimited value on every life, while Hamas values only death. I heard some representatives here making that comparison — suggesting that these two groups are morally equal — as this draft resolution seems to do. I note again that Council members know the meaning of words, and lumping the hostages together with the terrorists in the draft resolution is not just dishonest, it is evil; it is immoral.

Despite that absurd equivalence, the text still found time to lecture Israel on humanitarian aid. However, the draft resolution was proposed after humanitarian aid had already resumed. The new international aid mechanism, developed with the United States and in coordination with Israel, has already become operational. That mechanism is delivering aid — but, most critically, it is doing what the old system could not: stopping Hamas from stealing it. Over the past weeks, thousands of tons of aid have been distributed under the new mechanism. Alongside the new mechanism, hundreds of trucks have also been entering Gaza, carrying supplies coordinated by Israel and international partners.

I therefore ask again — what is the Council doing by proposing this draft resolution now? When there was a closure, I understood — Slovenia wanted to stop it. But now — right after we opened the gates of Gaza and the new mechanism was put into motion — is the time to adopt a resolution?

This draft resolution does not advance humanitarian relief; it undermines it. It ignores our working system in favour of political agendas. It ignores the one party still endangering civilians in Gaza — Hamas, the group that hijacks trucks and stockpiles aid to their benefit. If the Council really cares about the people of Gaza, then it should stop protecting those who started this war and continue to prolong it.

If the Council cares about aid, then it should help ensure it reaches civilians and not terrorists. If the Council cares about progress, then it should start telling the truth.

This draft resolution is not a step forward. It ignores the reality on the ground. It disregards the negotiations already under way. It betrays the very people it claims to protect.

Israel will continue to fight for the return of our hostages. We will continue to protect our citizens. We will continue to cooperate with our partners to deliver aid to civilians. Israel will not stop; we will not rest. We will not abandon our people. We have proven time and again that military pressure works. Hostages come home not because Hamas decides to be merciful, all of a sudden, but because it is forced to release them. And we will do whatever it takes to bring them back.

Council members have dedicated all of their energy and efforts in drafting this draft resolution, negotiating it, putting it to a vote. Next week, it will be considered in the General Assembly for another vote. But I must be very honest with my colleagues. They should not waste more of their energy and time because no resolution, no vote, no moral failure will stand in our way. We will bring them home — all of them.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

At the outset, we congratulate you, Mamam President, on your presidency of the Security Council this month, and we thank you for responding to the request to convene this meeting to consider the draft resolution submitted by the 10 elected members of the Security Council on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip (S/2025/353).

The Arab Group expresses its deep regret that the Security Council was unable to adopt the draft resolution submitted by the elected members of the Council, despite the urgent humanitarian demands contained therein regarding an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. The draft resolution also demands the lifting of the blockade and of all restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and its safe and unhindered distribution at scale and the restoration of essential services in line with international humanitarian law, the fundamental principles of humanitarian action — namely, humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence — and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Arab Group affirms that the Council's failure to fulfil its responsibility seriously undermines its mandate of maintaining international peace and security and perpetuates an unacceptable bias that compounds the inability of the Council and the international system to stop the grave violations committed against the Palestinian people on a daily basis. In that context, the Arab Group calls for intensified action at all levels, including in the General Assembly and in international human rights and international humanitarian law mechanisms, to ensure the provision of international protection for the Palestinian people, put an end to the heinous Israeli aggression, immediately and comprehensively lift the blockade on the Gaza Strip and hold accountable all those responsible for the grave crimes and violations committed by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Gaza Strip.

The Arab Group reiterates its full support for the mediation efforts undertaken by the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Qatar and the United States of America aimed at achieving an immediate and lasting ceasefire, alleviating human suffering, an effort that remains under way, resuming the entry of humanitarian aid and securing the exchange of prisoners and detainees. The Group supports all international and regional efforts to achieve that goal and implement resolution 2735 (2024).

The Arab Group emphasizes the need to ensure the full protection of Palestinian civilians, lift the unjust siege imposed on the Gaza Strip and allow humanitarian aid to enter without any restrictions or conditions to all parts of the Gaza Strip. The Arab Group stresses that the continued denial of access to relief supplies and the targeting of civilians and infrastructure constitute flagrant violations of international law and international humanitarian law and require the Council and the international community to take a firm stance in order to put an end to those violations and hold their perpetrators accountable.

The Arab Group condemns in the strongest terms the continuation of the brutal Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip for more than 600 days, becoming systematic in nature with its barbaric bombardment, destruction and starvation. Since a total blockade was imposed in March, the occupying State has prevented the entry of food, water, medicine and fuel into the Gaza Strip, resulting in an almost complete paralysis of all aspects of life in the Strip, where hunger levels have reached a level described by the United Nations as unprecedented in the world, and the entire population of the Strip faces the threat of famine. The Secretary-General warned that the blockade constitutes unacceptable collective punishment, requiring urgent international action to put an end to those grave violations of international humanitarian law.

Humanitarian assistance has become an agent of forced displacement, as civilians, including women and children, are repeatedly forced to displace to distribution points that are managed by the occupation regime and lack a bare minimum of safety and human dignity. International reports and television coverage have documented incidents in which civilians are shot at as they are gathering to receive aid, killing and injuring dozens of civilians, including women and children. In view of those practices, starvation is no longer just a grave violation. Rather, it has become an instrument of war that is systematically and openly used, in flagrant violation of the provisions of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions, while the perpetrators of those crimes face no deterrent measures or legal accountability.

The continuation of that catastrophic situation in the Gaza Strip amounts to an abject failure to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and an unacceptable failure to fulfil the collective obligation to protect civilians in armed conflicts. The Arab Group therefore calls for the immediate and unconditional lifting of the unjust blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip, for the facilitated entry of humanitarian aid through a United Nations mechanism and for the opening of an independent and transparent international investigation into all violations. Today the Security Council has an obligation to take firm and effective measures to end this unprecedented humanitarian tragedy. Silence is no longer an option, and continued inaction is tantamount to patent complicity with the crime.

The Arab Group affirms that achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region will not be possible without ending the Israeli occupation of all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including East Jerusalem. The Group reaffirms its commitment to the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy as the basis for resolving the conflict. In that context, it reaffirms the need for an independent, sovereign State of Palestine within the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as an indispensable condition for regional and international security and stability.

The Arab Group condemns in the strongest terms the Israeli occupation authorities' prevention of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of a number of Arab and Islamic countries from entering the occupied Palestinian territories on 30 May, in flagrant violation of diplomatic norms, the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the legal obligations of the occupying Power under international law. The Group considers that behaviour a deliberate obstruction of

diplomatic and political efforts aimed at ending the aggression against the Palestinian people and a persistent attempt to undermine any serious efforts to achieve a truce.

The Arab Group expresses its deep concern about the continued illegal settlement policies pursued by the Israeli occupation authorities, particularly the recently announced construction of 22 new settlements in the occupied West Bank, in flagrant violation of provisions of international law and Security Council resolutions, foremost among them resolution 2334 (2016). The Group emphasizes that those practices directly undermine the prospects of a two-State solution, pose a serious threat to regional and international security and stability and undermine the chances of reaching a just and comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

The Arab Group also warns of the danger of the inflammatory and provocative statements made by some senior Israeli Government officials. Those statements reflect premeditated intentions to perpetuate the occupation, expand settlements and impose a unilateral reality by force, including forcibly displacing people from their lands. The Group emphasizes that those statements and practices seriously undermine the chances of reaching a just and comprehensive political solution based on resolutions of international legitimacy.

In conclusion, the Arab Group reiterates its unwavering commitment to the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the independence of their sovereign State on their land, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Arab Group calls on the Security Council to shoulder its full responsibility, take a stand for the just Palestinian cause and take the effective measures required to address the violations and grave crimes committed against Palestinian civilians, ensure accountability and prevent impunity, in order to consolidate the principles of international law and improve the chances of achieving a just and lasting peace in the region.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.