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Provisional

President: Mr. Žbogar. (Slovenia)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
China	Mr. Fu Cong
Ecuador	Mr. De La Gasca
France	Mr. De Rivière
Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan	Mrs. Shino
Malta	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
Russian Federation.	Mr. Nebenzia
Sierra Leone	Mr. Kanu
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America.	Mr. Wood

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

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 the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdallah Bouhabib, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; and Mr. Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

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

I give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Council on the situation in Lebanon and the region, including the most recent alarming developments.

For nearly a year, Hizbullah and other non-State armed groups in Lebanon and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have exchanged fire across the Blue Line on an almost daily basis. Those exchanges have been in repeated breach of the cessation of hostilities and in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Strikes and exchanges of fire have expanded in scope and intensity, and in some instances reached much deeper into Lebanese and Israeli territory. Over 100,000 people have been displaced from southern Lebanon. At least 60,000 have been displaced from northern Israel. The exchanges of fire have caused numerous casualties, including among civilians, and significant damage to homes, civilian infrastructure and agricultural land on both sides of the Blue Line. The risk of further expansion of this cycle of violence is extremely serious and poses a grave threat to the stability of Lebanon, Israel and the whole region.

On the afternoon of 17 September, many communication devices, or "pagers", primarily used by members of Hizbullah, exploded simultaneously across Lebanon. Similar explosions were also reported in Syria. The following day, a second wave of explosions, smaller in scale but more lethal, was reported throughout the same areas of Lebanon. This time, the devices involved were two-way handheld radios reportedly used by Hizbullah. Devices exploded in homes, cars, supermarkets and streets. Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health stated that 37 people were killed, including two children, and more than 3,400 people were injured in the successive explosions. Medical professionals and hospitals are working around the clock to help the wounded. The members of Lebanese society, old and young, have been in profound shock and panic.

The Lebanese Government has strongly denounced the attack, which it attributed to Israel. Caretaker Prime Minister Mikati said it "represented a serious violation of Lebanese sovereignty and a crime". In a speech on 19 September, the Hizbullah Secretary-General, Hassan Nasrallah, said in response to the attacks that "Israel exceeded all limits, laws and red lines" and vowed "to exact a heavy price and a fair punishment." He reiterated that the Lebanon front would stop only once the aggression on Gaza ended.

In a letter to the President of the Security Council on 18 September, the Islamic Republic of Iran blamed Israel for the explosions. Noting that its Ambassador to Lebanon was among those wounded, Iran stated that it

"reserves its rights under international law to take required measures deemed necessary to respond to such a heinous crime and violation".

To date, the Government of Israel has made no official comment on those developments.

Since the explosions on 17 and 18 September, exchanges of fire across the Blue Line have continued, showing worrisome signs of escalation. The exchanges include some of the heaviest bombardment of southern Lebanon since 8 October 2023. Israeli aircraft have conducted a high number of air strikes and overflights, including breaking the sound barrier over Beirut on several occasions. In addition, we are receiving initial reports about an Israeli air strike in the southern suburbs of Beirut hours ago, which Israel said targeted and killed a number of senior Hizbullah leaders. The Lebanese Ministry of Health said that at least 12 people were killed and over 60 injured in the strike.

Meanwhile, heavy barrages of rocket, drone, artillery and anti-tank missile fire from Lebanon have killed two IDF soldiers and wounded 10 Israelis. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon is monitoring the situation closely.

On 16 September, Israel's Minister of Defense, Yoav Gallant, suggested that the centre of gravity was moving north, including the transfer of military forces. Speaking of the onset of a "new phase of war", he suggested the only way left to ensure the return of Israel's northern communities to their homes was through military action. Reports from Israeli media indicate that the Israel Defense Forces 98th Division was transferred from Gaza to the Northern Command, adding to concerns about the risk of further escalation on the horizon.

From Lebanon, Special Coordinator Hennis-Plasschaert has been in constant contact with all the actors concerned, including Prime Minister Mikati, Foreign Minister Bouhabib, Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri and their offices and other authorities. In her meetings, she has continued to push for a diplomatic solution and warned against further escalation. She continues to underscore that military advances would not restore stability or enable displaced civilians on both sides of the Blue Line to return home safely. She will travel to Israel early next week for consultations with the relevant counterparts.

In the current fragile regional context, the devastating war in Gaza continues. Nearly a year after the horrific atrocities committed by Hamas on 7 October 2023, Israeli military operations, including bombardment from the air and land and armed exchanges with Hamas and other militants, continue across the Strip. The number of fatalities, tragically, keeps increasing. More than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health, many of them children.

At the same time, the indiscriminate launching of rockets by Hamas and other armed groups towards population centres in Israel also continues.

I once again echo the words of the Secretary-General — we need an immediate ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all remaining hostages and a massive scale-up of humanitarian aid to Gaza. The risk to security and stability, not only in Lebanon but also in the region, could not be clearer or graver. The Secretary-General has already expressed

his deep alarm over those events. I echo his sentiments and strongly urge all actors to exercise maximum restraint to avert any further escalation. They must abide by their obligations under international law concerning the protection of civilians. I also strongly urge Member States with influence over the parties to leverage it now.

As we approach a full year of near-daily exchanges of fire across the Blue Line and bloodshed in Gaza, too many lives have been lost, too many people have been displaced, and too many livelihoods have been destroyed. However, if things continue as they are, we risk seeing a conflagration that could dwarf even the devastation and suffering witnessed thus far. It is not too late to avoid such folly. There is still room for diplomacy, which must be used without delay. The Secretary-General continues to urgently call on the parties to recommit to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and immediately return to a cessation of hostilities.

The President: I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Türk.

Mr. Türk: I am appalled by the breadth and impact of the attacks on 17 and 18 September in Lebanon on civilians, in which the explosion of pagers, two-way radios and other electronic devices have reportedly killed at least 37 people, including two children, and injured more than 3,400 people in Lebanon alone, leaving many with permanent disabilities and health-care facilities struggling to cope with the magnitude of the impact on people.

Those attacks represent a new development in warfare, whereby communication tools become weapons, simultaneously exploding across marketplaces, on street corners and in homes, as daily life unfolds. Authorities have reportedly dismantled unexploded devices in universities, banks and hospitals. That has unleashed widespread fear, panic and horror among people in Lebanon, which is already suffering in an increasingly volatile situation since October 2023 and crumbling under a severe and long-standing economic crisis.

This cannot be the new normal. War has rules, for each and every party to this and any other armed conflict. Armed force — that is, violence against other human beings — can only be used where necessary to achieve a valid military objective. In doing so, the

fundamental distinction between civilian and military targets must be front and centre. All feasible precautions must be taken to spare civilians. Attacks must remain proportional to the wider damage they inflict. Persons not exercising a continuous combat function in an armed group can only be targeted when taking a direct part in hostilities. At their core, those rules have the paramount aim of effectively protecting civilians.

International human rights law exists to protect the equality and dignity of every human being, even in times of war. Law exists to defend values central to our societies and to our world. The simultaneous targeting of thousands of individuals, whether civilians or members of armed groups, without knowledge as to who was in possession of the targeted devices, their location and their surroundings at the time of the attack, violates international human rights law and, as applicable, international humanitarian law.

It is difficult to conceive how, in those circumstances, such attacks could possibly conform with the key principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack, under international humanitarian law. If the attacker is unable to assess the compliance of the attack with binding rules of international law, notably the likely impact on civilians, then the attack should not be carried out. International humanitarian law prohibits the use of booby-trapped devices in the form of apparently harmless portable objects that are specifically designed and constructed to contain explosive material. It is a war crime to commit violence intended to spread terror among civilians.

I call, again, for an independent, thorough and transparent investigation into the circumstances of the explosions. Those who ordered and carried out those attacks must be held to account. Let me be clear — that method of warfare may be new and unfamiliar, but international humanitarian and human rights law apply regardless and must be upheld.

The attacks occurred amid hostilities between Israel and Hizbullah, which since 8 October 2023 have caused civilian casualties on both sides. According to the Lebanese Ministry of Health figures released in August, more than 500 people have been killed and more than 2,400 injured, and, according to the International Organization for Migration, more than 110,000 displaced in Lebanon. The Government of Israel reported 48 people killed in Israel and more than 63,000 displaced in the context of those hostilities.

The last 24 hours have seen intensified cross-border military action in Lebanon and Israel.

That tragic situation cannot be seen in isolation. It is bound up with the war in Gaza, the spiralling violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian territory. The heightened risk of further atrocity crimes remains. As repeatedly stated, the humanitarian situation for 2.2 million Palestinians in Gaza is catastrophic. More than 1,200 people were killed on 7 October 2023 in Israel. In Gaza, more than 100 hostages are still held by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups. More than 41,200 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have been killed as a result of the intensive Israeli offensives, and more than 95,500 injured in Gaza, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health. I am outraged by that inconceivable toll of human suffering.

For the United Nations and other humanitarian responders, ongoing hostilities, access constraints, attacks on staff and facilities and damaged infrastructure, along with the deteriorating security situation, including looting and frequent Israeli-issued evacuation orders, are key factors obstructing the delivery of sufficient life-saving aid across the Gaza Strip.

Ending the war in Gaza and averting a full-blown regional conflict is an absolute and urgent priority. I call for an immediate ceasefire and for continuous humanitarian access to be ensured throughout the Strip. I urge the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held in Gaza. The arbitrary detention by Israel of thousands of Palestinians must end. The wider situation of illegality across the occupied Palestinian territory deriving from Israel's policies and practices, as so clearly spelled out by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion in July, must be comprehensively addressed.

Disrespect for international law is a matter of international peace and security — the core obligation of the Council — with implications beyond these countries and this region. States have built international human rights and humanitarian law precisely for moments like these, when life, dignity and our very humanity are at risk. As such, States must not — cannot — accept blatant disregard for international law, including binding decisions of the Security Council and orders of the International Court of Justice. They must not — cannot — allow the hollowing out of

international law and its protective core, neither in this nor in any other situation around the world. All States, particularly those with influence, must do everything they can to ensure full respect for international law.

Just over 10 days ago in my address to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, I urged the rejection of a new normal of endless, vicious military escalation and increasingly alarming technologically advanced methods of warfare. The warnings from multiple actors against an all-out war in the region have been clear and consistent. It would benefit no one. Continuing on that path of inflamed war rhetoric on all sides and reckless military escalation leads only to further devastation. I urge Israel and Hizbullah to cease hostilities immediately.

The spectre of this region's past — the unending cycles of conflict and the human rights grievances whose causes have been ignored and trampled on — is palpable and omnipresent. The complexity of this moment — and the stakes for people everywhere — demand much more from the international community to achieve an enduring peace. This crisis requires political courage and leadership.

The President: I thank Mr. Türk for his briefing.

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

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): I thank Ms. DiCarlo and Mr. Türk for their briefings, and I acknowledge and welcome the presence of His Excellency Minister Abdallah Bouhabib among us in this meeting.

My country called for this urgent meeting in the light of the alarming escalation in Lebanon on 17 and 18 September. Those tragic events have resulted in dozens of deaths and thousands of injuries, following the remote detonation of small communication devices across the country. The perpetrator is well known. We strongly condemn those Israeli attacks. Such actions represent a blatant violation of Lebanon's sovereignty, of the Charter of the United Nations, of international law and of resolutions 1701 (2006) and 2749 (2024).

Algeria stands in full solidarity with Lebanon during these difficult times, and we extend our deepest condolences to the Government and to the resilient people of Lebanon. We also commend the Lebanese authorities for their measured and responsible handling of this grave crisis, preventing further escalation.

Those acts of aggression amount to war crimes. The deliberate and indiscriminate nature of those Israeli strikes has caused terror among civilians, with densely populated areas being targeted. That dangerous precedent turns civilian devices into bombs, threatening the safety of all and posing a significant threat. That precedent has opened a dangerous Pandora's box. What will happen if such unfamiliar tactics are replicated by terrorist groups?

While the international community calls for de-escalation, Israel pulls the region towards war, expanding hostilities from the Blue Line into the entire Lebanese territory. Israeli officials have openly threatened to launch a large-scale war on Lebanon. Those attacks were followed by official statements praising the so-called "positive" results.

The air strikes against Beirut this morning provide additional proof that the Israeli occupying Power is not at all interested in peace. Therefore, do Israeli occupying authorities truly seek peace with their neighbours? Are they genuinely committed to implementing resolution 2735 (2024)? Are they really committed to a ceasefire in Gaza?

The Security Council bears the solemn responsibility of upholding the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council must enforce its resolutions. Resolution 1701 (2006) must be fully implemented, without bias. The Israeli occupier's aggressions must cease, and it must withdraw from all occupied Lebanese territories. Only by ending the occupation can we pave the way for lasting peace and stability in the region.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We welcome the convening of this meeting in response to the extremely worrisome developments in Lebanon and beyond. I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and High Commissioner Türk for their briefings, which provided a highly detailed account of the events of the past few days. I welcome the presence of the Minister and, of course, that of all our colleagues.

Switzerland expresses its deep concern about the explosions of pagers and other communication equipment that occurred on Tuesday and Wednesday. We condemn the fact that those explosions have caused numerous casualties among civilians, including children. The circumstances and responsibility must be clarified.

I would like to extend our sincere condolences to all the families of the civilian victims who have been injured or killed in recent days. We are concerned about the wider consequences of those explosions for the civilian population. They have sown widespread panic and fear and overwhelmed hospitals. In that respect, I would like to pay tribute to the Lebanese hospital staff and rescue workers for their dedication.

The blasts and the intensification of hostilities on both sides of the Blue Line, including the strike in the southern suburbs of Beirut today, risk further jeopardizing the stability of Lebanon and the entire region. We also deplore the killing and injuring of civilians in those incidents. Switzerland urges all parties and those who have influence on them to show the utmost restraint in order to avoid a major regional escalation. We issue a strong call for the resumption of a full cessation of hostilities and demand the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The Council unanimously reaffirmed those demands just three weeks ago.

Switzerland calls on all parties to abide by international humanitarian law, specifically the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, under all circumstances. War has rules, as the High Commissioner just said. The protection of civilians is a legal obligation that must be fulfilled. We also point out that human rights are applicable at all times.

The only desire of the tens of thousands of displaced people on both sides of the Blue Line is to return to their homes and live there in peace. Their children want nothing more than to be able to go to school and play with their friends. One thing is, however, absolutely clear: dialogue and de-escalation are the only ways to achieve that. Military escalation is not the solution. It would drag the region into the abyss of a regional war. That is why Switzerland supports all the ongoing mediation efforts. Voices of peace and reason must prevail, in the interests of the people of the entire region.

Lastly — and we will not stop insisting on this point — a ceasefire in Gaza, the release of the hostages and swift, unimpeded humanitarian access are urgently needed to alleviate the suffering of civilians and avoid further regional escalation. Negotiations must continue as a matter of urgency, and the parties must take part in them in good faith. The Council must assume its responsibilities and be united in contributing to a

peaceful solution. Switzerland stands ready to play its part.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and High Commissioner for Human Rights Türk for their grim briefings today. I also welcome the participation of Foreign Minister Bouhabib and the representatives of Syria, Iran and Israel in this meeting.

The Republic of Korea was shocked to witness the bloody and devastating attacks in Lebanon involving communication devices that caused thousands of casualties, including among children. That unprecedented action signifies a deeply worrisome escalation in an already extremely volatile context. I would like to make the following points in that regard.

First, we stress that under no circumstances can violations of international humanitarian law be tolerated. The indiscriminate attacks remotely targeted and seriously injured thousands of individuals, in the absence of specific knowledge of who possessed the devices or their exact locations or surroundings at the time of the attacks, which took place in grocery stores, hospitals and funerals. Such attacks raise serious concerns about whether the core principles of international humanitarian law — distinction, proportionality and precaution — were upheld during those operations. Reports also indicate that the exploded devices, predominantly pagers and walkie-talkies, were harmless portable products, the use of which as booby traps is prohibited under Article 7, paragraph 2, of Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. That further calls into question the legality of the operations, as highlighted by High Commissioner Türk in his briefing. We call on all stakeholders to immediately cease all violations of international humanitarian law.

Secondly, the international community must come together in urgent and serious discussions to address the emerging risks posed by the unprecedented form of warfare witnessed this week. The attacks weaponized thousands of personal communication devices through remote-detonated destruction, highlighting the alarming potential for any consumer electronics to be exploited and transformed into lethal weapons that transcend our imagination. These incidents underscore the urgent need to review whether existing

international frameworks are adequately equipped to prevent such abuses.

Thirdly, we call on all parties to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon, to accelerate diplomatic efforts to fully implement resolution 1701 (2006) and to pursue a long-term solution for durable peace. While the situation is undoubtedly hazardous, the resolution remains a cornerstone of regional stability and is essential for preventing further deterioration. We urge all parties to return to the fundamentals of the resolution, including full respect for the Blue Line and the establishment of an area free of any armed entities other than the Lebanese Armed Forces.

Fourthly, my delegation strongly urges all parties to exercise maximum restraint and prioritize de-escalation during this highly perilous period. Israel has recently added the safe return of displaced northern residents as a new objective of its military action, stating that operations will continue until they can return home. It also conducted air strikes today in a densely populated area of Beirut, which reportedly killed at least 12 people and injured more than 60, including civilians, with others buried under the rubble.

Further escalation would probably result in far greater civilian casualties, increased threats to peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and unparalleled regional security risks. Indeed, from the Blue Line to Gaza and the West Bank, Yemen and Syria, the region is on the brink of widespread and massive war. Even a single misstep or miscalculation could trigger a catastrophic situation with grave consequences for the lives of millions that could even extend far beyond the region. As we now truly stand at an inflection point, we once again call on all parties to return to the negotiating table with particular urgency for a ceasefire in Gaza, which lies at the very heart of de-escalation.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and High Commissioner Türk for their briefings.

The United States remains of the view that a broader conflict in the Middle East is neither desirable nor inevitable. But the actions various actors take in the coming days will, once again, determine how the situation evolves. It is imperative that even as facts emerge about the most recent incidents, in which, I reiterate, the United States played no role, all parties

refrain from any actions that could plunge the region into a devastating war.

The Security Council cannot ignore the origins of this particular conflict between Israel and Hizbullah. Prior to Hamas's brutal terrorist attack, quiet had largely been maintained along the Blue Line for 18 years, since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006). That stability was shattered on 7 and 8 October 2023, when Israel was attacked, without provocation, by non-State armed groups in Lebanon. And for the past 11 months, the people of Lebanon have suffered the devastating consequences of that conflict, which is not their own. More than 100,000 Lebanese civilians and more than 65,000 Israeli civilians have been displaced. Civilians on both sides of the Blue Line have seen their homes destroyed and their fields and orchards burned.

Hizbullah, which receives extensive training, arms and financing from Iran, took those actions in solidarity with Hamas, not for Lebanon or the Lebanese people. And, for the past 11 months, Hizbullah has continued to bombard communities in northern Israel on a near daily basis — again, in support of Hamas and Iran's broader campaign to threaten Israel. Hizbullah's sustained attacks, presence along the Blue Line and entrenchment in southern Lebanon also put Israeli and Lebanese civilians at risk.

Israel has a right to defend itself against Hizbullah's attacks. No member of the Council, facing a terrorist organization on its border, would tolerate daily rocket attacks on its territory and the displacement of tens of thousands of its people. We expect all parties to comply with international humanitarian law and take all reasonable steps to minimize harm to civilians, especially those in densely populated areas. The continued escalation of the violence across the Blue Line will not create the conditions for displaced Israeli and Lebanese civilians to return to their homes in northern Israel and southern Lebanon. Rather, the United States continues to believe that a diplomatic resolution is the only way to create the conditions for the displaced Lebanese and Israeli civilians to return to their homes in safety and security, and we will continue to pursue that goal.

Iran, through its sustained supply of weapons and personnel to Hizbullah, in blatant disregard and defiance of the call for disarmament in resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006) and in violation of the latter's legally binding arms embargo, appears to have

a different agenda. Over many years, the United States has committed substantial resources to humanitarian efforts in Lebanon and supported independent institutions, such as the Lebanese Armed Forces and the internal security forces.

Equally significant, the Security Council has clearly and repeatedly expressed its desire to see the full authority of the Lebanese Government extended throughout Lebanon's territory, and it has emphasized its strong support for the aspirations of the Lebanese people to live in peace, free from foreign meddling. Every member of the Council has a responsibility to help Lebanon's people avoid further tragedy, to support diplomatic efforts that would help restore calm along the Blue Line, which, again, would enable civilians in southern Lebanon and northern Israel to return to their homes, and also to press Iran to cease its destabilizing and dangerous use of Hizbullah to undermine regional security in a way that puts the Lebanese people in danger.

That is the path towards greater regional stability, and the United States will continue to do everything possible to support de-escalation and an enduring diplomatic solution.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Algeria for requesting this meeting and welcome the presence of Mr. Abdallah Bouhabib, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon. I listened carefully to the briefings by Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and High Commissioner Türk.

Thousands of communication devices in Lebanon, including pagers and two-way radios, were detonated remotely and simultaneously. The explosions caused thousands of civilian casualties. China hereby registers its profound shock and grave concern over that development. Children playing in the streets lost their eyes, mothers shopping in supermarkets had their limbs maimed and doctors on their way to work were critically injured. Those and other harrowing scenes are distressing beyond imagination.

Remotely detonating communication devices in indiscriminate attacks causing mass civilian casualties and panic in society is unheard of in history. This act is, without a doubt, a gross violation of a country's sovereignty and security and a blatant breach of international law, particularly international humanitarian law. It is an act that tramples on human lives with unconscionable callousness. The attacks

were so outrageously brutal and atrocious that they deserve nothing less than condemnation in the strongest terms. So far, no one has claimed responsibility for the attacks, but numerous parties have come to more or less the same conclusion as to who was behind them. We call for a prompt and full investigation in order to hold the orchestrators and implementers to account.

Right now, the situation in the Middle East is hanging by a thread. Israel's military operations in Gaza, which have already claimed more than 40,000 Palestinian lives, are still ongoing. Meanwhile, Israel is also heightening the tensions around its border with Lebanon. We note that some analysts have pointed out that the recent remotely executed attacks are a precursor to large-scale military operations. We have also taken note of the most recent statement from the Hizbullah leadership. We are deeply concerned about the possibility of further escalation of the tensions between Lebanon and Israel. We call on the parties to exercise maximum restraint and call on Israel in particular to forego its obsession with the use of force and to halt without delay its military operations in Gaza, its violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and security and its adventurism, which risks dragging the region into yet another devastating catastrophe. We strongly urge those countries with influence over Israel to take tangible steps to stop it from going further down the wrong path. We support the Security Council in taking all necessary actions and doing all it can to ease the situation between Lebanon and Israel and to maintain peace and stability in the Middle East.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and High Commissioner Türk for their briefings today.

The past year has seen continuous and devastating violence across the region. Civilians have suffered on a dreadful scale on both sides of the Blue Line. The explosions in Lebanon this week and Israel's strike in southern Beirut today are the latest attacks in a deadly cycle of violence, and we are deeply concerned about the civilian casualties resulting from those incidents. The fact that children were among them is particularly distressing. Our condolences go to the families of the civilians killed. My Foreign Secretary made our view clear last night: we need an immediate ceasefire on both sides. We are working in lockstep with our allies to de-escalate tensions and end the destructive cycle. We want to see the implementation of a political plan, based on resolution 1701 (2006), allowing both Israeli

and Lebanese civilians to return to their homes and live in peace and security. We are ready to play our role in a diplomatic process to achieve that.

Let us be clear: Hizbullah launched an unprovoked attack on Israel on 8 October 2023. Since then, Israel has faced a near-daily barrage of Hizbullah rockets. We are resolute in our support for Israel's right to defend its citizens against such threats. However, in doing so, international humanitarian law must be fully respected, and all possible steps must be taken to avoid civilian casualties. Lebanese Hizbullah's aggression has been fuelled by Iran and its continued destabilization of the Middle East, including through its support to partners and proxies. Iran supplies advanced weaponry in contravention of multiple Security Council resolutions, only prolonging the suffering of the Lebanese people. While Hizbullah and Iran continue to undermine Lebanon's future, the United Kingdom is providing practical support to bolster its stability and security. That includes funding and training to both the Lebanese Armed Forces and the internal security forces, as well as humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities, including in the south of Lebanon.

Now is the time for calm heads and an urgent focus on an immediate ceasefire to create the space for negotiations.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. DiCarlo and Mr. Türk for their briefings, and I welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon at today's meeting.

France is concerned following the explosions of telecommunication devices on 17 and 18 September in Lebanon. Indeed, the risk of open war and potentially tragic consequences increases every day. Such a prospect must be avoided. It is urgent that all parties work towards de-escalation. Resolution 2749 (2024), adopted on 28 August to renew the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, clearly calls for same — it calls on all parties concerned to take immediate steps towards de-escalation and demands the full implementation of the framework recognized by all, namely resolution 1701 (2006), including a return to a complete cessation of hostilities.

These Council resolutions must be respected by all. We therefore call on the Israeli authorities to show the utmost restraint, following their recent statements on their military operations in Lebanon. We also reiterate

our demand that Hizbullah immediately cease its attacks on Israeli territory.

Lastly, it is essential that all parties fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law, particularly with regard to the protection of civilians. France is continuing its efforts to identify the conditions for an agreement to return to a cessation of hostilities along the Blue Line, in line with resolution 1701 (2006), and to ensure the safety of civilian populations in both Israel and Lebanon.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): I wish to thank Slovenia's presidency for convening this urgent meeting requested by Algeria. We are also grateful to Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and High Commissioner Volker Türk for their insights on this deeply concerning matter. We also acknowledge the presence of His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon and the representatives of Iran and Israel.

Mozambique views the current situation in Lebanon with deep concern. The escalating cross-border hostilities between Hizbullah and Israel have significantly heightened regional tensions.

We are particularly alarmed by the recent cyberattack in Beirut and other parts of the country, which resulted in the detonation of pagers and other electronic devices. This unprecedented incident, which occurred on 17 and 18 September, has led to a tragic loss of lives and numerous injuries. We deeply deplore the deaths of civilians. The targeting of populated areas, including homes, vehicles, commercial establishments and public spaces, is a clear violation of international humanitarian law.

Mozambique strongly condemns these attacks, which have resulted in at least 12 civilian fatalities and have left thousands wounded. We note with grave concern that many of the casualties were not combatants, but civilians — members of Lebanon's Shia community engaged in non-military activities. The weaponization of civilian objects is strictly prohibited under international law.

The incident highlights the evolving nature of modern warfare, where cybercapabilities can be employed to inflict physical harm. The sophistication and audacity of this operation mark a dangerous escalation in the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hizbullah.

We are deeply troubled by the potential ramifications of this attack, which may herald a new phase of conflict in Lebanon and the broader Middle East region. The unprecedented nature of this incident raises serious concerns about the future stability of the area. We strongly condemn these attacks, as they represent a notable escalation in the region after months of a mostly low-intensity conflict between the two contenders.

Mozambique calls upon all parties to immediately cease all military and subversive activities. We also strongly emphasize the critical need for de-escalation in order to prevent further instability and retaliatory actions. We urge all parties involved to strictly adhere to international law and Security Council resolutions. It is imperative to ensure the protection of civilians and the maintenance of peace and security in the region.

In conclusion, Mozambique reiterates its commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and stands ready to support all efforts towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the protection of civilian lives.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I thank Algeria for requesting this urgent meeting. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and High Commissioner Türk for the updates provided and welcome the participation of His Excellency Mr. Abdallah Bouhabib, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon in today's meeting. I also acknowledge the participation of the Permanent Representatives of Israel, Iran and Syria in our meeting.

Guyana is alarmed by the reports of well-coordinated, widespread, lethal attacks earlier this week across Lebanon and Syria in which pagers and other communication devices were transformed into deadly weapons. Those attacks were apparently aimed at specific targets, but ultimately were indiscriminate in their effect, as many of the detonations occurred in crowded areas. According to the Minister of Health of Lebanon, the result is that 37 persons have died, including two children, and more than 3,000 were injured.

We are also deeply concerned about the strike carried out this morning by Israel in a densely populated area in Beirut, which also resulted in the deaths of at least 14 people and more than 50 wounded. Any attack causing harm to civilians must be thoroughly investigated so as to establish the circumstances,

attribute responsibility for the harm caused and hold to account the perpetrators.

The ongoing and intensifying attacks on Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity will serve only to escalate the already tense situation in Lebanon and further heighten the risk of widening the violence in the Middle East region.

The situation in the Middle East has become untenable. Too many parties are poised for war. We have heard, on many occasions, of the diplomatic efforts under way and the need for the Council to support them. We commend those efforts and believe some are operating in good faith. However, given the time that has elapsed since resolution 2735 (2024), without a deal for a ceasefire in Gaza and the increasing horrific events that continue to occur, we do not believe that all parties in this conflict are operating in good faith.

The plain and simple truth is that there is a common thread running across the region, in the chaos and destruction that has upended the lives of civilians. There is one party that has chosen, over and over again, to take escalatory action at every opportunity, to abandon diplomatic negotiations while breaching the rule of international law and humanitarian law.

Guyana again calls on the countries of the region to fully comply with their international obligations and to uphold the principle of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. We demand that all parties adhere to international law, including international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations.

It is imperative that there be a return to maximum restraint and an abandonment of rhetoric that serves only to inflame. We call on those with considerable influence to do more. They can and must exert maximum pressure to direct us away from this path, which can lead to unimaginable agony in Lebanon and the wider region. A ceasefire in Gaza to end the immense suffering in the Strip is at the heart of de-escalating the increasing tensions in the region.

The reality that we must confront is that lasting peace will not come through war; violence will only doom us all to a cycle of escalating attacks, death and destruction. The people of the Middle East are no less deserving of stability and security. The leaders of the region must recommit to dialogue and to a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Volker Türk, for their briefings.

Japan is extremely concerned about the situation in the Middle East and is monitoring the escalation of tensions with grave concern, especially the incidents this week where a large number of communication devices exploded across Lebanon and Syria, reportedly killing dozens of people and injuring thousands. We are concerned that children were among the victims, including those reportedly killed.

Japan urges all concerned actors to refrain from any further action or retaliation to avoid a further catastrophe in the region. The ongoing Gaza conflict has already inflamed regional tensions. No one desires another full-scale conflict between Israel and Hizbullah, and civilians always pay the highest price if such a situation arises. All parties must once again recall their commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and return to a cessation of hostilities.

The fact that those incidents happened in multiple places, including densely populated areas, and caused civilian casualties is appalling. Civilians must be protected at all times, in accordance with international law. We call for an urgent, thorough and transparent investigation into the blasts.

The exchange of fire across the Blue Line has expanded dramatically since October last year. In that regard, Japan reiterates its strong support for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the release of the hostages based on the outlines of resolution 2735 (2024).

We stress the need for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. We remain committed to making every diplomatic effort to end the violence and restore stability in the region.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I thank Ms. DiCarlo and Mr. Türk for their briefings. I welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon and acknowledge the participation of the Permanent Representatives of Syria, Iran and Israel.

The Council is meeting today against the backdrop of what it has warned about for months: the growing prospect of regional escalation.

Earlier this week, widespread simultaneous explosions across Lebanon killed at least 40 people and

injured thousands of others, including children. The images we have witnessed are distressing.

We echo the sentiments outlined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk. The simultaneous targeting of thousands of individuals, whether civilians or members of armed groups, without knowledge as to who was in possession of the targeted devices, their location or their surroundings, violates international human rights law and, to the extent applicable, international humanitarian law.

The large-scale consequences of such a widespread attack, including the large number of civilian casualties, were foreseeable. Such actions also reflect a worrisome disregard for established norms and international humanitarian law.

There now must be an independent and transparent investigation as to how those consumer electronic devices were turned into bombs which were detonated in populated areas, impacting civilians and overwhelming Lebanon's health services.

Recent Israeli air strikes in Lebanon serve as another escalation that exacerbates tensions, which we denounce. That is taking place while the military wing of Hizbullah is persisting with its indiscriminate firing of rockets into Israel. We also continue to condemn those actions.

The lasting psychological impact of that violence on the local population on both sides of the Blue Line must not be underestimated.

The people of the region cannot afford another war. We must do everything in our power to prevent further conflict.

The protection of civilians is paramount. The devastating impact of the war in Gaza on the situation across the Blue Line and the risk of it spiralling into a wider conflict is greater than ever before.

What should come next is clear: the Council must focus on prioritizing de-escalation and restraint across the region. That behaviour must also be implemented by the relevant actors, whose aggressive rhetoric and apparent inclination to further escalation only begets further hostilities.

The Council must act in a decisive manner to ensure the full implementation of resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023) and 2735 (2024). A ceasefire agreement

must be reached without further delay. We call on all Member States in the region and those with influence over the parties to redouble their efforts to that end. The fate of the region depends on it.

For Lebanon, a political and diplomatic solution remains essential to de-escalate the situation and ensure long-term stability. The parties must immediately return to a cessation of hostilities and recommit to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). A dramatic escalation in Lebanon only moves us further away from that goal.

In conclusion, the region is on the precipice of all-out war. Cool heads must prevail. Peace must prevail. The only way that can be achieved is for all parties to exercise restraint, de-escalate and pursue peaceful solutions to all disputes.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the delegation of Algeria for convening this meeting, acknowledging the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon and the delegations of Israel, Syria and Iran in this Chamber. The extremely violent events that have taken place in Lebanon in recent days are a cause for alarm and concern. Ecuador appreciates and takes note of the information provided by Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Mr. Volker Türk.

The explosion of communication devices in Lebanon has caused dozens of deaths and hundreds of wounded, and it has plunged the civilian population into fear. International humanitarian law must be respected by all parties. The protection of civilians is an inexorable responsibility of the international community. In that regard, the bombings and the launching of missiles and armed drones are to be condemned, as well as the indiscriminate use of explosives placed in communication devices in populated areas. Those acts are a flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law and must be the subject of an independent investigation to determine who was responsible.

It is pertinent to mention resolution 1701 (2006), considered under another agenda item, as it calls for a definitive cessation of hostilities in the Blue Line sector. Ecuador echoes the Secretary-General's call for the parties to exercise maximum restraint to avoid an escalation of tensions in the region. The unleashed spiral of violence could have unpredictable consequences, the

effects of which would fall, as always, mainly on the civilian population.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We support the initiative of the delegation of Algeria to convene today's meeting in connection with the most recent and dangerous wave of escalation in the Middle East region. We have thoroughly examined the concerns of both Lebanon and Iran, which were set out in the letters circulated yesterday. We are alarmed by the briefings by Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and Mr. Volker Türk. We welcome the participation in today's meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon.

Unfortunately, for almost a year now, devastating bombardments, airstrikes and brutal ground clearances have become a grim daily routine for the Middle East. Despite the protests of the international community, the abhorrent practice of targeted assassinations is expanding. It appears that in that cauldron of violence, there is hardly anything left that we have not condemned in this Chamber already.

However, the recent events in Lebanon and Syria have brought a new, high-tech dimension to the escalation in the Middle East, and that is an extremely dangerous shift. In recent days, a horrible provocation involving a series of detonations of two-way, handheld communication devices, left more than 4,000 people injured and 37 dead, including two children. The perpetrators of that barbaric crime spared no one. The explosions occurred in hospitals, markets, streets, stores and pharmacies. We know that it was a coordinated and remotely-guided operation, for which no one has taken responsibility, but the countries of the region have analysed the facts and drawn their own conclusions.

We regard those events as a terrorist attack that jeopardizes regional peace and security and could have unpredictable ramifications for the entire Middle East. We strongly condemn the unprecedented attack on friendly Lebanon and its citizens, which is a flagrant violation of its sovereignty and a serious challenge to international law. We extend our sincere condolences to the bereaved families and wish a speedy recovery to the injured.

The perpetrators of that crime are certainly aware that such attempts to drag Lebanon into a regional confrontation are fuelling an already volatile situation in the region. It is clear that the organizers of the attack, which has no precedent in terms of the malicious use

of personal communication devices, have deliberately sought to incite a large-scale armed confrontation in order to spark a new major war in the Middle East. It is not the first attempt of that kind and adds to the spate of political attacks and assassinations in Lebanon, Syria and Iran, and the authorities in West Jerusalem have claimed responsibility for some of them. They include the largest bombardment by Israel of southern Lebanon over the past year, which lasted for more than two hours and was followed by another strike on southern Beirut which, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health, killed eight people and injured another 59. The world was flooded with images showing the horrific scale of the destruction caused by the Israeli airstrike.

We strongly condemn such actions by West Jerusalem and call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint, to immediately cease fire and fully comply with resolution 1701 (2006). A major war in the Middle East is in no one's interests.

It is also noteworthy that the spiralling violence is clearly undermining the Biden Administration's widely touted efforts to bring about a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and to stabilize the situation across the Blue Line in Lebanon. The results of such pseudo-diplomacy are at best dubious. Instead of peace, we have witnessed the same ongoing bloodshed in the occupied Palestinian territories, the assassination of the leader of the Hamas Political Bureau, Ismail Haniyeh, who was the main negotiator of the deal with Israel, and finally the first-ever large-scale terrorist attack with the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) that has resulted in fatalities.

In the light of the policy followed by Washington and its allies to use ICTs to achieve their offensive, military and political objectives, it is clear that their actions have brought us to a stage at which we may face a terrorist threat involving domestic appliances. According to incoming reports, electronic devices were remotely manipulated from within a foreign jurisdiction. In our view that sets an extremely dangerous precedent. We have repeatedly warned of such risks, including at specialized United Nations forums in which the issue of international information security is discussed. Having foreseen that ICTs could be used for destructive purposes, Russia has for many years been proposing the establishment of a special international legal regime to regulate the digital environment that would take into account technical vulnerabilities and cover aspects of anonymity, cross-border features and other hidden

functions. Unfortunately, the United States and its allies have consistently opposed making any commitments in that area in order to maintain free access to ICTs. The terrorist attack in Lebanon clearly demonstrates what that can lead to.

In terms of the impact on the information and telecommunications sector, such incidents may further exacerbate the distrust of information and communications technology devices manufactured in other countries. That, in turn, could reinforce the self-isolation of national infrastructure, which will result in a fragmented information space, weakened international standards, disrupted supply chains and a greater digital divide between developed and developing countries.

The most important aspect of the terrorist attack in Lebanon is the origin of the booby-trapped electronic devices. The commercial structures involved must provide detailed assurances regarding the safety of their products. Let us recall that under relevant General Assembly resolutions, States have the obligation to ensure the integrity of supply chains.

However heinous this misuse of ICTs for terrorist purposes may be, the international community is not powerless in the face of that threat. Recently, at Russia's initiative, the global points of contact directory for ICT security was established, which aims to prevent and resolve serious incidents in the information environment, as well as to reduce tensions in crisis situations. The tool is specifically designed to prevent escalation in the digital world, which is liable to spill over into the real world.

We call on all parties concerned, first and foremost Lebanon, to make use of the directory. We expect recipients of requests from Beirut to immediately examine them and respond to their Lebanese counterparts. That will certainly help to establish all the circumstances of what happened in Lebanon.

It is clear to everyone that the key to addressing the current unprecedented escalation in the Middle East lies in ending the bloodshed in the Gaza Strip, where the number of deaths has now exceeded 42,000. The only way out is to promptly establish a ceasefire, exchange hostages and prisoners and organize unimpeded humanitarian access to the Strip. Only then will it be possible to restart efforts towards the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question, on an internationally recognized basis and founded on the principle of two States for two peoples, which we

steadfastly support. For our part, we stand ready to engage with all who share those objectives.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): I also thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and High Commissioner Volker Türk for their important briefings. We acknowledge the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon and the representatives of Iran, Syria and Israel in this meeting.

Sierra Leone is deeply concerned about the significant deterioration of the security situation in Lebanon and northern Israel. Instability and violence have increased across Lebanon over the past three days after a series of explosion of communication devices meant to be in the possession of members of Hizbullah. It has been reported that at least 37 have been killed, with at least 2,931 people suffering injuries, some of whom are in intensive care.

Similar communication device attacks occurred in Syria, resulting in deaths and injuries. Those attacks have been followed by intense strikes on southern Lebanon by Israeli warplanes, reportedly the heaviest aerial strikes since October 2023.

We further note reports of Hizbullah's retaliatory missile and drone strikes into northern Israel on Thursday, killing two soldiers and injuring nine. We note with concern that those actions have definitely led to a further escalation in the cycle of violent attacks between the two parties and to an exacerbation of tensions in an already volatile region, with dire security and humanitarian consequences for civilians.

There are reports that the explosions of communication devices in Lebanon occurred in populated areas, including at a funeral, and that there are civilians, including children, among the dead and injured. Sierra Leone condemns the killing of civilians in those attacks, which when carried out without taking into consideration the principle of distinction, constitute a clear violation of international humanitarian law.

As we join the Secretary-General in urging the parties to exercise restraint, we remind the conflicting parties and those that enable them with complicity, to comply with their obligations under international law to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. Without accountability, the ongoing blatant violations of international law can only embolden the perpetrators and engender the apparent spectre of impunity that seems to characterize the Middle East conflicts.

Just yesterday (see S/PV.9728) a member of The Elders, former Prime Minister Helen Clark, asked whether the Security Council is interested in implementing its own resolutions. Several reports from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) this year have informed the Council that Hizbullah and the Israel Defense Forces have been engaged in tit-for-tat exchanges of fire beyond the Blue Line since the 7 October 2023 attacks, exchanges that were not initially provoked by Hizbullah.

The breach of resolution 1701 (2006), the escalation of attacks on the back of inflammatory rhetoric and the movement of troops are all deeply alarming as they continue to foment tensions, which risks bringing the parties very close to all-out war. Separate from the war in Gaza, the security and safety of Israeli civilians in northern Israel must be of concern. Resolution 1701 (2006) must be respected by all, and the Council must be in a position to implement all of its resolutions.

As the region grapples with the war in Gaza and the dire humanitarian crisis, we reject actions that may jeopardize the ongoing peace negotiations between Israel and Hamas and threaten regional and global peace and security. We call on countries in the region and elsewhere with influence to prevail upon both parties to desist from further attacks over the Blue Line and elsewhere. The impact of a full-blown conflict on the Lebanese people and economy would be completely devastating. The people of Lebanon have already gone through a lengthy and destructive war and periods of fragility, and the Council should do all it can to prevent a reoccurrence.

As Lebanon seeks to stabilize its economy, we note efforts taken to pass a budget earlier this year, and we urge lawmakers to undertake the governance and macroeconomic reforms needed to improve State authority and resource mobilization. We therefore call on the parties to use diplomatic channels, including the good offices of the United Nations, in order to avoid further escalation and the risk of all-out war or a wider, devastating regional conflagration. In that regard, Sierra Leone commends UNIFIL for its relentless efforts to maintain channels of communication and the physical intervention of peacekeepers. Events since 7 October 2023 have only underscored the importance of the mission's liaison and coordination mechanisms.

We remain concerned about the impact of missile strikes on UNIFIL positions and injury to

peacekeepers. We condemn all acts that endanger the lives of peacekeepers. We urge all parties to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and to respect the inviolability of United Nations premises.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone continues to call for de-escalation and to stress the need for the parties to consider the regional implications of their actions and to recommit to a cessation of hostilities. That includes a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, a holistic approach to the release of hostages and prisoners and the implementation of a two-State solution for Israel and Palestine.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Slovenia.

I would first like to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and High Commissioner Türk for their briefings. I welcome Minister Bouhabib to the Chamber, and I also welcome the representatives of Iran, Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic to the Chamber.

I would like to express our profound concern over the latest developments in the Middle East. Let me make three points in that regard.

First, we condemn the recent series of explosions across Lebanon and in Syria. That unprecedented attack caused civilian deaths and injuries, instilling fear and further destabilizing the region. Those explosions were devastatingly coordinated, leaving hundreds of people, among them children, injured or dead. It has created a climate of terror. We are stepping into dangerous new territory, and as new technology is being used and developed, we underline the need to respect the existing legal obligations.

Civilian objects should not be weaponized. International law is clear: the use of booby traps is prohibited. As underlined by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the simultaneous targeting of thousands of individuals, whether civilians or members of armed groups, without knowledge as to who was in possession of the targeted devices, their location and their surroundings at the time of the attack, violates international human rights law and, to the extent applicable, international humanitarian law. We call on all parties to respect international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law. We support an independent and transparent investigation.

Secondly, tensions between Lebanon and Israel, especially along the Blue Line, are alarming. That includes heavy exchanges in recent days and today's

strike in Beirut and the subsequent retaliation. We deplore the loss of civilian lives. We once again call for the cessation of hostilities to be restored and for the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). We are appalled by the heavy impact on civilian infrastructure and civilians, many of whom have been displaced. It was violence that drove them from their homes in the first place. Additional violence will not bring them back — if anything, it will make their safe return an even harder task.

Thirdly, we are in this situation because our resolutions have not been complied with. We call for the conclusion of an agreement on a ceasefire and for the release of hostages. We continue to call for maximum restraint by all actors in the region. The cycle of violence is accelerating, and it risks escalating into a wider conflict. We call on all parties, both State and non-State actors, to de-escalate and refrain from any further retaliatory actions. We repeat our call on States with influence on those actors to use that influence to encourage the utmost restraint and to prevent any further deterioration of the situation on the ground. That includes the troubling escalatory rhetoric of different countries and actors.

The Security Council must be united in upholding international law and maintaining peace and security. The situation between Lebanon and Israel and the war in Gaza threaten to spark a wider conflict, especially with Israel's stated intention to expand military action beyond its northern border. We have to be clear: such action would be an attack on a sovereign State. We must prevent that by promoting diplomatic solutions that offer long-term stability. The region cannot endure another war, and we must act before the situation spirals beyond control.

For almost a year, we have been cautioning against provocations and escalations further aggravating the situation in the Middle East. We have said it before: any of those escalations can become a conflict with a life of its own or engulf the whole region in a complex war. It is for that reason that we believe diplomacy must be the only path forward. Slovenia therefore particularly welcomes the participation of the Lebanese Foreign Minister in this meeting today.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon.

Mr. Bouhabib (Lebanon): First, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and High Commissioner Türk for their briefings. I also thank all members of the Council for acknowledging the severity and devastating consequences of the electronic attacks on peace, security and faith in humanity.

(spoke in Arabic)

Around the world, no one is safe anymore, in the aftermath of the recent and unimaginable cyberattacks carried out against Lebanon and their toll of innocent civilian victims, including women, children and the elderly, as well as thousands of injured.

The Security Council has a responsibility not only to the innocent Lebanese people who were unjustly killed, but also to humanity as a whole. If there is no accountability through the Council for that terrorist act and the perpetrator remains unknown, undeterred, not condemned and not forced to stop such attacks, the credibility of the Council, international law and the human rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations will be in grave jeopardy.

By acquiescing to the events, Council members are agreeing to open Pandora's box, and countries and extremist groups will follow Israel's lead and target civilians everywhere with that lethal technology. There will be nobody to prevent it from being used in the future to target civilian aircraft, trains and the like in order to kill and terrorize civilians randomly and indiscriminately. Is it not terrorism when an entire people is targeted in its cities, streets, marketplaces, shops and homes, while they are going about their daily tasks and not fighting on the front line?

To understand what happened, it suffices to look at the identity of the victims. Is there a need, now, to exterminate and disable the Lebanese people, as collective punishment? We have the right to ask: does not that scenario correspond to what senior Israeli officials have stated? Look at the monstrosity of what happened in these images, for which I apologize.

On Tuesday, 17 September, Israel carried out a large-scale cyberattack, targeting thousands of mobile devices known as pagers, causing them to explode. The following day, it again blew up hundreds of wireless devices of another type and, on 19 September, Israel terrorized the population in the capital, Beirut, and in all other areas with low-flying fighter jets that repeatedly broke the sound barrier, unleashing panic,

especially among children. Today Israel carried out a missile attack on the most densely populated area of the southern suburbs of Beirut, destroying a residential building and giving rise to a toll thus far of 14 killed, including children, and 66 wounded.

Those attacks have so far claimed the lives of dozens of people, including women and children, and left thousands wounded, hundreds of whom are in a critical condition and hundreds more disfigured or deprived of limbs or eyes. The attack has left hospitals and medical staff in Lebanon in an unprecedented state of emergency and fully overwhelmed. The attack has also triggered widespread horror and panic among civilians throughout Lebanon.

Those attacks, which mark a dangerous and new precedent in the history of warfare, come in the wake of a series of statements by Israeli statements about launching a large-scale war on Lebanon and returning it to the Stone Age. Not content with the attacks, Israel followed them with official statements and a tweet by the adviser to its Prime Minister — which was promptly deleted — confirming Israel's involvement and the successful outcome achieved by that aggression, thereby deliberately undermining the mission of the international mediators who are working on a ceasefire in Gaza and southern Lebanon and all attempts by the Lebanese Government to de-escalate and exercise restraint.

In that connection, we underscore that detonating thousands of communication devices remotely and treacherously, with no regard for those carrying them or those in their vicinity, constitutes an unprecedented method of warfare both in terms of its brutality and terror. The targeting of thousands of people of all ages and in large and densely populated areas in all regions of Lebanon as they went about their daily lives in their homes, in the streets, at their places of work and in shopping centres amounts to terrorism, constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian and human rights laws, and undoubtedly qualifies as a war crime.

The Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts, states, in its article 35, that the parties to a conflict have no absolute right to choose the means and methods of combat. Accordingly, the use of electronic detonation of communication devices as a method of warfare,

which is an unconventional method, must be subject to international law, including humanitarian law, in particular the principle of protection under article 48, which requires ensuring the protection of the civilian population, and the principle of precaution under article 57, which requires that each party to the conflict take every precaution in the conduct of military operations to avoid causing loss of civilian life and damage to civilian objects.

Article 51 of Additional Protocol I also prohibits acts of violence or threats of violence aimed at spreading panic among civilians. Article 37 prohibits the killing, injuring or capturing of an adversary by resorting to perfidy, and article 85 prohibits attacking non-defended localities. Through that terrorist aggression, Israel violated the basic principles of international humanitarian law in terms of failing to discriminate between civilians and military personnel while it indiscriminately targeted civilians. Its action was unjustified and disproportionate.

It has become clear that Israel does not abide by international law, including humanitarian law, or by the resolutions of United Nations organs, including the Security Council. It has always ignored and disregarded international legitimacy and human rights because it is accustomed to States not holding it accountable for its actions. Israel's crimes prompt only timid positions, which do not go beyond expressing regret, thus encouraging Israel to flout the resolutions of international legitimacy. None of such resolutions concerning Israel have been implemented since 1948, making it a rogue State.

However, this state of affairs cannot be accepted as a *fait accompli*. Israel cannot be allowed to continue to act with impunity and without accountability. Israel did not draw any lessons from its repeated invasions of Lebanon over the decades. It only reaped disappointments and defeats. It fled Lebanon in 2000, leaving behind its weapons and equipment. This new adventure on which Israel is embarking will only be another ugly version of the previous ones. It will repeat what the senseless war has achieved against Gaza and its children, namely, misery, extremism and destruction. It might also lead to an all-out devastating regional war, different from the previous ones in that it would engulf the entire Middle East, involve the use of lethal precise weapons and result in large-scale devastation and a significant number of victims.

The Government and people of Lebanon have always stated that we are not lovers of war, and we do not seek revenge. We are only seeking justice, a diplomatic settlement and the return of the displaced persons to their villages. No matter how mighty and strong it is in terms of military and technology, Israel should understand that it cannot return its displaced people to their villages with the force of weapons. Israel will be displacing those who have not yet been displaced if it expands its attacks. Israel cannot remain in the region unless it makes peace with the peoples of the region — not only with the rulers — and that will happen by granting the Palestinians their legitimate rights and their State, which was promised to them by the Organization itself more than 75 years ago. Rights will be returned to their owners no matter how long it takes or how many sacrifices are made.

We came to the Security Council today not only to defend Lebanon and its innocent victims but to protect our common humanity and to ask members to condemn the Israeli terrorist attacks clearly and unequivocally and to hold Israel fully accountable for planning and implementing those attacks, for its flagrant aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and for its clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and resolution 1701 (2006). Lebanon also calls upon the Council to compel Israel to stop its war machine, to avert a destructive regional war and to preserve the credibility of the United Nations and its role in maintaining international peace and security. Lebanon still believes in the relevance of that role despite what has been happening. We are not looking for new resolutions that remain dead letters, as is unfortunately the case with every resolution pertaining to Israel and its interests.

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank sisterly Algeria, the representative of the Group of Arab States in the Security Council, which has always stood by Lebanon and supported us under all circumstances. I call on the members of the Council to stand on the right side of history, to defend justice and peace and to support Lebanon in its efforts to achieve security and stability. Today is the moment of truth, and we are here to seek justice from the United Nations and count on its credibility before the entire world. Either the Council compels Israel to stop its aggression and implement resolutions 1701 (2006) and 2735 (2024) and end its war on all fronts, allowing the return of the displaced

people to their villages, or we will be silent witnesses to the great explosion that is looming on the horizon.

Today, and before it is too late, members must understand that the explosion will spare neither east nor west, and regret will be of no use when we all go back to the dark ages. War is before the Council, and resolutions 1701 (2006) and 2735 (2024) are in its repository. Members must make the choice: will the Council intervene swiftly and decisively to silence the drums of war threatening the entire Middle East, or will we stand idly by, watching the fireball roll? Council members have the choice, and they must choose between peace and fire. I repeat my call from this Chamber for the third time. We are in the midst of a conflict, so give peace a chance before it is too late. Has Israel not had enough wars, killings and destruction? Is it not time to end suffering for all of us, to sow the seeds of a better future for our peoples and to spare future generations from this conflict?

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

Mr. Danon (Israel): Once again, I sit here in the Security Council, as I did on Monday (see S/PV.9725) and Thursday (see S/PV.9728) and now Friday, defending Israel's right to exist and to defend ourselves. Also, on Tuesday and Wednesday, we sat in the General Assembly for two days watching the Israel-bashing circus led by the Palestinian Authority as part of their diplomatic terrorism. Are there no other conflicts in the world? Are there no other pressing matters that require the Council's attention? Is the United Nations obsession with condemning Israel so consuming that it blinds the Organization to everything else?

We did not seek this war. We did not. On 8 October 2023, while Israeli civilians were still being slaughtered in the south by Hamas, Hizbullah — I did not hear Mr. Bouhabib mention Hizbullah even once in his speech — unleashed hundreds of rockets on our civilians in the north. That was not provoked. It was a calculated assault to show support for Hamas — a declaration made by Hassan Nasrallah himself. Since that day, more than 8,000 rockets have rained down, 46 of our people have been murdered, 294 injured and more than 60,000 remain displaced, unable to return to their homes in the north as Hizbullah attempts to burn them to the ground. Every day, Hizbullah's rockets deliberately target our civilians, attempting to destroy homes and force entire communities to flee

in fear. Families have been torn apart. Twelve Israeli Druze children who were playing soccer one moment were dead the next. And still the terror continues every day. Where were the international community and human rights? Nowhere. Every day, rockets, missiles, drones — Hizbullah's relentless attacks have forced innocent civilians — parents, children, the elderly — to abandon everything. They are now refugees within their own country, living in temporary shelters, unsure of when or if they will ever return to the places that they once called home. That is not just the displacement of individuals, but of entire lives, memories and futures. It has been nearly a year since they were forced to flee, and still they wait for the day when it will be safe to return.

Israel will not allow that to continue. Our objective is very clear: we will restore security to our northern border, and we will bring our people home. It is our responsibility. The goal of returning our displaced citizens has been formally included in the objectives of the war. We will do whatever it takes to achieve that, and we will not allow Hizbullah's terror to dictate the future of our nation. If Hizbullah does not retreat from our border and back to the north of the Litani River through diplomatic efforts, Israel will be left with no choice but to use any means within our rights to defend our citizens and enable the evacuees of the north to return to their homes. Hizbullah has turned southern Lebanon into a war zone, using civilian homes as weapons depots and United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon bases as launch points, digging tunnels beneath them and using innocent civilians and United Nations peacekeepers as human shields.

This is not just an attack on Israel, it is a crime against Lebanon itself. Hizbullah has brought untold suffering not just to Israelis but to the Lebanese people, who are also trapped in the grip of this terrorist organization. If that modus operandi sounds familiar, it is because the same is used by another terror organization, Hamas, which also uses civilians. Yet, the Lebanese Foreign Minister, who sits here today, could not find the courage to even mention Hizbullah. We know that is a problem.

If we sit together, we can achieve very quick agreements about everything. I am not familiar with the occupation of Israel in Lebanon. I am not familiar with these major disputes. We can sit, with the Council's help, and achieve some kind of a compromise. But we know that the real problem is not Lebanon. The real

problem is Hizbullah. It is his Government, after all, that bears responsibility. It is incapable of implementing Security Council resolutions or preventing a terrorist organization from dragging the entire country into war.

His Excellency Mr. Abdallah Bouhabib has allowed a terrorist organization to create a State within his State, bringing ruin to his own people. Instead of blaming us, his peaceful neighbours, he should take action now to restrain Hizbullah and avoid greater escalation. If he continues to ignore Hizbullah's aggression, the pain and the suffering of the Lebanese people will be on his shoulders.

While Israel is not seeking a wider conflict, I will be clear — we will not allow Hizbullah to continue its provocations. Its actions violate international law, and Israel will defend itself. We will not allow our people to live under constant threat, nor will we allow Hizbullah to use Lebanese territory as a launchpad for violence. For too long we have called on the Council to enforce resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004). For too long, our calls have been ignored. For years, Israel has supplied data on Hizbullah's build-up, in clear violation of the relevant Council resolutions, to no avail. Hizbullah and its Iranian puppet masters must face real consequences for their actions. Hizbullah must be disarmed, and Iran must be held accountable for destabilizing the region. The world cannot afford to let Hizbullah's terror continue unchecked. We call on the Council to condemn Hizbullah and Iran and to designate Hizbullah and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as terrorist organizations. Words are no longer enough; the Council must act.

For nearly a year, we have exercised restraint, waiting for a diplomatic solution, which is what we would prefer. We urge all to follow that path, and we thank those who are trying to help advance that process. It is what we want. We have no desire for war, but we cannot continue to allow our people to bleed, nor can we abandon the 60,000 Israelis who have fled their homes.

The outcome of this situation is clear: Hizbullah will be pushed back from the border, exactly as stated in resolution 1701 (2006). The question that remains before us is how that will be achieved and at what cost. The devastation caused by Hizbullah actions goes beyond harm to human lives. Over 800 fires have been ignited by Hizbullah's rockets, burning more than 50,000 acres of forests, nature reserves and agricultural

land. Entire ecosystems have been destroyed. This is not just an environmental disaster, but it is an act of war against the land itself. And yet where is the United Nations? Where are the voices of condemnation for those who claim to care so deeply about the environment? The United Nations is about to convene its Summit of the Future. We know that climate and the environment are central themes. But where is the concern for the fires that Hizbullah have set? Where is the outrage for the destruction of our forest and the forest in Lebanon? United Nations officials cannot even mention Hizbullah in their statements. This hypocrisy cannot go unchallenged.

As I stated just 24 hours ago, Iran is the real instigator behind all of this. Hizbullah does not act alone. It is a puppet, and Iran is pulling the strings. Iran arms it, funds it and directs its operations. Iran's influence stretches far beyond our borders, from Lebanon to Syria, from Yemen to Iraq. If Gaza could have been the Singapore of the Middle East, Beirut should have been the Paris of the Middle East. But we see that whenever Iran is involved, chaos and destruction inevitably follow.

Israel will do whatever is necessary in order to protect its citizens. We will bring our displaced people back to their homes in the north. We will restore security, and we will bring calm to our nation. That is our right, and we will exercise it fully. The Security Council should stand by Israel as we seek to accomplish that, because this is not just Israel's fight. It is a fight against terrorism, against instability and against the forces that seek to destroy peace in the region. When the time comes, do not look to us for blame in protecting our people. Now is the time for others to speak up and act, before we have to.

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

Mr. Irvani (Iran): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this emergency meeting. We thank Lebanon and Algeria for requesting this meeting. We also thank Ms. DiCarlo and Mr. Türk for their briefings. We welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Abdallah Bouhabib, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon, in this meeting.

This meeting was requested in order to address the systematic and provocative acts of terror committed by the occupying regime of Israel on 17 and 18 September

in Beirut, as well as in a part of Syria, in which innocent civilians, including children, were deliberately targeted.

The method of this barbaric attack was as unprecedented as it was cowardly — handheld communication devices were deliberately detonated, resulting in the loss of at least 37 civilian lives and injuring thousands more, a majority suffering from eye injuries, including Iran's Ambassador.

Despite the concerns of the international community, this regime continues its aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and Syria. Just this morning, an air strike targeted the residential areas in Dahiyah, a densely populated suburb of Beirut, causing civilian casualties and loss of life.

Targeting thousands of people across various age groups in densely populated areas of Beirut — whether in their homes, streets, workplaces or shopping centres — is a clear act of terrorism and a flagrant violation of international law, in particular international humanitarian law, international human rights law and numerous resolutions of this organ, especially its resolutions on the protection of civilians. These widespread and systematic crimes seeking to inflict mass killings, severe suffering and serious injury to civilians constitute crimes against humanity. Reports suggest that Israel intended to kill at least 5,000 civilians, as some devices were either undistributed or deactivated.

The barbaric Israeli attack has left Lebanon hospitals and medical staff in an unprecedented state of emergency, and attacks have sparked widespread fear and panic across Lebanon. Undoubtedly, Israel bears full responsibility for the perpetration of such horrific crimes. The repercussions of this attack extend far beyond Lebanon's borders. The targeting of communication devices in the heart of Beirut sends a clear message to the international community: Israel is willing to commit any crime, no matter how extreme, to violate and attack the sovereignty and security of countries in the region and threaten regional and international peace and security. The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns in the strongest terms those horrible and barbaric attacks. We extend our deepest condolences and sympathies to the people and the Government of Lebanon and the families of the victims of those heinous terrorist attacks. We wish a swift and full recovery to

the injured and reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with our Lebanese brothers and sisters.

The attack on our Ambassador is a blatant violation of international law and diplomatic norms. The protection of diplomatic personnel is a fundamental principle of international relations. The Israeli terrorist attack flagrantly violated the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the 1973 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents. We will rigorously pursue accountability for the attack on our Ambassador in Lebanon. We reserve our right under international law to take all necessary measures to respond to that egregious violation.

Unfortunately, the Council has remained silent in the face of Israel's ongoing aggression and illegal actions, including the attack on Iran's diplomatic mission in Syria on 1 April. Now the regime has crossed a red line again by targeting our Ambassador.

Let us not forget that the atrocity crimes against the people of Lebanon are part of a broader pattern of aggressive policies by the Israeli regime. The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly warned about the serious repercussions of the malicious activities of the Israeli regime in the region.

For the sake of regional peace, security and the so-called ceasefire talks, the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently shown maximum restraint. However, Israel's atrocities, from the ongoing genocidal war against the Palestinian people and the occupation of Palestinian territories to the illegal strikes in Syria and Lebanon and the attack on Iran's diplomatic mission in Syria and the cowardly assassination of Palestine's former Prime Minister and the political leader of Hamas in Tehran, demonstrate Israel's relentless commitment to destabilizing the region and threatening international peace and security. The gravity of Israel's atrocities against the people of Lebanon must be recognized not just as an attack on Lebanon, but as a threat to peace and security across the region. We must ask ourselves, how much longer will the international community allow such atrocity crimes to go unchecked?

For decades, Israel has engaged in a pattern of aggressive actions aimed at destabilizing the region, whether through military operations, sabotage or direct attacks on civilians. That continuous aggression endangers the peace and security of the

Middle East, fuelling cycles of violence and further entrenching conflict.

Regrettably, the Security Council has failed in its duty to maintain international peace and security. Israel's malevolent activities are often overlooked or supported outright by certain Western nations. The unwavering political, military and economic support provided to Israel by the United States and its allies emboldens the regime to continue its violations without fear of accountability. That unconditional support, coupled with the deliberate blocking of any international effort to hold Israel responsible, has created an environment of impunity. The international community must not ignore the role that the Western countries, in particular the United States and the United Kingdom, play in enabling Israel's aggression.

Those heinous crimes once again show that Israel's leadership has no intention of adhering to international norms or the so-called ceasefire negotiations, frequently referenced by the United States in the Council as being near resolution.

The international community and particularly the Council, has a duty to confront not only the direct perpetrators of such crimes but also those who provide them with the means and political cover to commit them. The failure of this organ to hold Israel accountable has only emboldened the regime, allowing it to continue its aggressive and unlawful behaviour.

The Islamic Republic of Iran stands firmly with the people and the Government of Lebanon. And we will not rest until those responsible for those atrocities are held accountable. We reaffirm our commitment to upholding the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. However, it is incumbent upon the Security Council to take action to stand up for justice, peace and the protection of innocent civilians.

In conclusion, I categorically reject the baseless accusations made by the representative of the Israeli regime against my country. The representative of that terrorist regime, led by a notorious Prime Minister, for whom an arrest warrant has been issued by the International Criminal Court for the commission of war crimes in Gaza, consistently relies on lies and disinformation to evade responsibility and to shift blame onto others. The very foundation of that regime is rooted in aggression, occupation, terror and genocide. Therefore, nobody will take seriously those unfounded claims.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Aldahhak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States at the United Nations in New York.

I thank you, Mr. President, for having responded to the request by the delegation of sisterly Algeria, the Arab member of the Security Council, to convene this emergency meeting to address the most recent escalation in the ongoing Israeli aggression against fraternal Lebanon for nearly one year. I welcome the presence of Mr. Abdallah Bouhabib, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon, at this meeting.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, 17 and 18 September, Lebanon came under an Israeli cyberattack, which targeted thousands of Lebanese civilians throughout the country at the same time by exploding thousands of pagers and walkie-talkies, leading to the martyrdom of 37 people and wounding 3,250 others, of whom hundreds remain in critical condition. By committing that heinous crime, the Israeli occupation entity has continued to escalate its terror against Lebanese civilians by targeting them and their families inside their homes and in public places without any regard for the principles of international law, international humanitarian law, human rights law and the basic principles of humanity and civilization.

The brutality of the Israeli occupation entity is not new. Since its inception, it has perpetrated killings, acts of terror, massacres and atrocities. What is new is that, in the recent aggression, modern civilian technologies that exist for the service and well-being of people were manipulated to commit the mass murder of civilians. The occupation entity turned ordinary devices used for civilian purposes in various sectors into ticking time bombs that kill some of those who hold them without discrimination and cause serious injuries to others and those around them. That attack has created a worldwide state of mistrust with regard to the reliability and security of different kinds of communication devices.

The Israeli occupation authorities launched cyberattacks over the past few months to disrupt civilian air traffic, endangering international civil aviation and the safety of passengers in Lebanese airspace. Moreover, they were disrupting civilian operations systems and hacking communications networks and electronic devices in vital facilities. All

those crimes reflect Israel's disregard for civilian life, international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law.

The Arab Group condemns in the strongest terms the Israeli terrorist aggression against the brotherly Lebanese people and calls for the perpetrators to be held accountable. We extend our deepest condolences to the Lebanese Government and people and to the families of the victims and we wish a speedy recovery to the injured. The Arab Group expresses its full solidarity with Lebanon and its support for Lebanon's resistance while dealing with the continued Israeli aggression, which threatens its security and stability and causes additional burdens for Lebanon at a time when it is tackling significant challenges in many sectors, including the health sector.

The Arab Group calls upon the Security Council to condemn Israeli cyberterrorism and the ongoing aggression against brotherly Lebanon. That constitutes part and parcel of the acts of genocide, ethnic cleansing and systematic violations of international law being perpetrated by the Israeli occupying entity against the brotherly Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. We also condemn its repeated acts of aggression against countries in the region, including my country, Syria.

The Arab Group reiterates that Israeli acts of aggression will not diminish the commitment of Arab peoples to upholding their legitimate rights pursuant to international law and to liberating their occupied territories. The Arab Group also calls upon the Security Council to meet its responsibility to maintain international peace and security and immediately stop the aggression by implementing its relevant resolutions to bring an end to the Israeli occupation of Arab territories in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. The Arab Group holds the Israeli occupying entity fully accountable for any further escalation in the region that threatens to lead to a regional war.

I now wish to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

The Syrian delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Arab Group. Syria condemns the aggression and the ongoing Israeli terrorism against brotherly Lebanon, including cyberterrorism, which caused the martyrdom of dozens and injured thousands, including the Iranian ambassador to Lebanon. My country also condemns the brutal aggression that targeted the southern suburbs of Beirut today, resulting in the martyrdom of 14 people, including children, and injuring 66 people.

Syria reaffirms its full solidarity and support with the brotherly Lebanese people, and we call upon all countries and peoples of the world to condemn the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, to take action to stop it and to demand accountability for the crimes perpetrated by the Israeli occupation authorities. Furthermore, Syria believes that States supporting Israel, foremost among which is the United States, must shoulder responsibility for the occupation entity's ongoing acts of aggression and barbaric crimes and for preventing the Security Council from upholding its responsibilities to maintain international peace and security and address the threat posed by the occupation entity.

In conclusion, there is only one radical reason for the instability in the Arab region: the continued Israeli occupation of Arab lands in Palestine, in the Syrian Golan and in southern Lebanon. The children of Majdal Shams, whose blood the occupation representative is trying to trade in, are Syrian children of the Syrian Arab occupied Golan. They and their families look forward to ending the occupation and its withdrawal from the Golan so that they can return to their homeland, Syria. The only solution to the situation in the region is to put an end to the Israeli occupation, its criminal acts and its systematic violations of international law.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.