



# Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

*Provisional*

## 9787<sup>th</sup> meeting

Tuesday, 19 November 2024, 4.30 p.m.

New York

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Kariuki . . . . .	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria . . . . .	Mrs. Gasmi
	China . . . . .	Mr. Niu Xiaoqiang
	Ecuador . . . . .	Mrs. Barba Bustos
	France . . . . .	Mrs. Meyer
	Guyana . . . . .	Ms. Benn
	Japan . . . . .	Mr. Kitada
	Malta . . . . .	Mr. Azzopardi
	Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Buanahagi
	Republic of Korea . . . . .	Ms. Jieun Lee
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Eremin
	Sierra Leone . . . . .	Ms. Spencer-Coker
	Slovenia . . . . .	Ms. Carli Sitar
	Switzerland . . . . .	Mr. Carpenter
	United States of America . . . . .	Ms. Postel

### Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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*The meeting was suspended at 1.40 p.m. on Monday, 18 November and resumed on Tuesday, 19 November at 5.10 p.m.*

**The President:** I would like to encourage all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes. Flashing lights on the collars of the microphones will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

**Mr. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia) (spoke in Arabic):** At the outset, I would like to congratulate your country, Mr. President, on its efforts during its presidency of the Council this month. We are very grateful for the convening of this ministerial meeting on the Middle East. I also thank Mr. Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing.

We are meeting today as we enter the second year of Israel's war on the Gaza Strip. We have continued to see an escalation of violence and Israeli military operations against our brother Palestinian people and even an expansion of those operations into our sister country of Lebanon. The occupying forces could not have pursued their heinous crimes had it not been for the impunity they have enjoyed and for the Security Council's inability to assume its responsibilities. My country has warned against Israel's continued aggression and its repercussions for regional and international security. There must be an end to the aggression, which is an obstacle to the achievement of peace. My country has been demanding an immediate ceasefire, the delivery of unhindered humanitarian aid, the release of hostages and a serious commitment to sustained peace since the crisis began. The failure to end those flagrant violations is a grave concern and raises legitimate questions about the inability of the international community to stop such massacres of innocent people. In that regard, Saudi Arabia reiterates its categorical condemnation and rejection of Israel's genocide against our brother Palestinian people, which has resulted in more than 150,000 martyrs and people injured or unaccounted for, most of them women and children. We also condemn the ban on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, preventing it from continuing its relief activities in the Palestinian territories and other humanitarian organizations from providing assistance to the Palestinian people.

We firmly condemn Israel's military operations targeting Lebanese territory and reject its threats to Lebanon's security, stability and territorial integrity and its displacement of its citizens. We stand together with our brothers in Palestine and Lebanon in overcoming the catastrophic impact of Israel's continued aggression, and we call on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities with regard to maintaining international peace and ending the aggression and massacres against our brothers in Palestine and Lebanon. We reaffirm that Israel's pursuit of its crimes against innocent people, its violations of the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque and its efforts to undermine the Palestinian Authority's primary role in all Palestinian territory will undermine the efforts of the Palestinian people to enjoy their legitimate rights and restore peace in the region.

Saudi Arabia has been aware of the danger posed by the situation since the beginning of the crisis. We have taken significant steps through joint actions at the international level to condemn Israel's brutal aggression and reaffirm the centrality of the Palestinian question, and we have demanded an end to Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory. Last week, my country hosted the joint Arab-Islamic Summit under the auspices of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We also presided over the ministerial committee held under the auspices of the Arab-Islamic Summit in Riyadh in November 2023, which conducted visits to several States to call on the international community to take on their responsibility for stopping the aggression and protecting civilians. Our joint efforts have borne fruit. We succeeded in urging a number of peace-loving States to recognize the State of Palestine and uphold the General Assembly resolutions that consider Palestine eligible for full membership to the United Nations. In partnership with the European Union and Norway, we launched the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, and we call on all States that have not done so to join the Alliance.

In conclusion, my country will continue to support Palestinians' rights to self-determination and the establishment of a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and to work to bring about a just and comprehensive peace, in line with the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy. We reaffirm that the theme of today's meeting, entitled "Ending the

war and securing durable peace in the Middle East”, represents a goal for us all. We must spare no effort to achieve it, in particular through the Council, which must fulfil its responsibility to maintain peace and security.

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

**Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt)** (*spoke in Arabic*): For the past year the Middle East has been living through an extremely dangerous period as a result of Israel’s war on the Gaza Strip, which has expanded into Lebanon and a number of other countries in the region, thereby threatening international peace and security and requiring urgent action by the Security Council to end the fighting and prevent any further spillover of the war.

Egypt’s position has been clear from the beginning of the crisis. We condemn Israel’s war on Gaza, its systematic attacks on civilians, its complete destruction of the Gaza Strip and its unjustified prevention of access for the delivery of humanitarian aid. We categorically reject its attempts to render the Strip uninhabitable in order to forcibly displace Palestinians from the land of their ancestors. Egypt stands firmly against such practices, which are in violation of international law. We also reject killing, kidnapping and terrifying civilians, along with all terrorist practices, and we call for accountability for all who commit crimes against the Palestinian people and United Nations personnel.

Together with Qatar and the United States, and based on Egypt’s responsibilities at the regional level and our moral and humanitarian duty, we have pursued a ceasefire and the release of hostages and prisoners. We facilitated lifting all barriers so that aid could be delivered via the Rafah crossing into the Gaza Strip, until it was closed by the Israeli army. Unfortunately, all those intensive efforts have come to a standstill. The war has not ended. On the contrary, Israel has escalated its aggression by imposing an inhumane, suffocating siege on the northern Gaza Strip and targeting civilian facilities, especially schools and hospitals. We are witnessing horrors similar to those of the Dark Ages.

For more than a year, the Security Council has been unable to confront Israel’s policies, which include the deliberate killing and starvation of civilians. Such shameful horrors are a disgrace that will not end without an immediate halt to the war. There have been many promises in the Council that have not been fulfilled. Many investigations have reached a dead end, and many resolutions have been adopted but not

implemented. It is high time to end this horrific war. How many civilians have been killed? How many innocent lives have been lost? All blood is inviolable. There is no difference between the blood of any human being and another. Let us first work together to stop the bloodshed, after which effective and sincere mediation can address the situation. Because we believe in peace, dialogue and non-violence, and because blaming others and exchanging accusations cannot end the war, Egypt calls on the Council to consider the following steps.

First, the Security Council must adopt a resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations demanding an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, opening all crossing points so as to ensure unhindered aid and allowing humanitarian and United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to play their irreplaceable role in emergency and life-saving relief, pursuant to the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the prohibition of forced displacement or any change in the demographic or geographic character of the Gaza Strip. The supply of weapons and ammunition to Israel must stop so that we can bring an end to the war machine. Israel’s war on Lebanon must come to an end, and the Israeli army must withdraw from Lebanese territories and fully implement resolution 1701 (2006).

Secondly, negotiations must be undertaken to ensure that any ceasefire becomes a sustainable truce that ends the aggression against Gaza permanently.

Thirdly, we must ensure that the Palestinian Authority can take on its responsibility for governing the Gaza Strip, begin the work of recovery from the destructive effects of the war and restore normal life there, while beginning the implementation of early-recovery projects and reconstruction in cooperation with the United Nations and with financial and political support from the international community.

Fourthly, the peace process must be resumed to bring the two parties, the Israelis and the Palestinians, back to the negotiating table, end the occupation and implement the two-State solution so that the independent State of Palestine can live side by side with Israel.

Fifthly, the international community must not recognize any unilateral Israeli measures that seek to impose a fait accompli, in particular Israel’s drive to annex Palestinian land in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. General Assembly

resolution ES-10/24 must be implemented, and any assistance that maintains the situation that resulted from the occupation must not be supported.

All crises contain the seeds of a solution. Out of this terrible suffering, hope must come forth. The only alternative is a just peace, the restoration of rights to the people, the provision of security for all without exception, the return of all people to their homes, the healing of all wounds, an end to starvation and an end to terrorism by any party against any human being. The time has come for the occupation to end and for a Palestinian State to be established within the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

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

**Mr. Hmoud** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your delegation's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to wish you every success in the Council's work. We welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom, who presides over this special meeting on the situation in the Middle East, and I thank Mr. Tor Wennesland for his briefing.

I express Jordan's support for the statement made on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The region is witnessing a dangerous and catastrophic escalation caused by Israel's continued aggression against the occupied Palestinian territories and Lebanon, which has killed more than 44,000 Palestinians and thousands of Lebanese. The Israeli occupation army has destroyed the infrastructure of the Gaza Strip, including schools, hospitals, homes, United Nations facilities and places of worship, and has used starvation as a weapon against millions of people of Gaza. That was confirmed by the recent report (A/79/363) of the United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, which concluded that Israel's war in Gaza is consistent with the characteristics of genocide in view of the dangerous conditions deliberately imposed on the Palestinians living there.

Israel's continued aggression stems from a lack of accountability and a policy of impunity. The Israeli Government believes that it is above international law, international humanitarian law, the decisions of

the International Court of Justice and the resolutions of the Security Council. We must underscore the need for the Council to shoulder its responsibilities and impose an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon, in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. It is imperative to immediately put measures in place for the delivery of humanitarian aid in a sustainable manner so as to spare the lives of unarmed civilians, who are dying of starvation as a result of Israel's deliberate siege of Gaza and its policy of collective punishment against millions of Palestinians.

Jordan will continue to provide humanitarian aid to Gaza, in cooperation with our brothers and international partners. It has provided to date nearly 51,000 tons of aid in 117 convoys of more than 4,000 trucks, amounting to \$133 million, in cooperation with partner countries and the relevant international organizations. Jordan also dispatched 53 aircraft to deliver aid, including 13 aircraft of the Royal Jordanian Air Force, in cooperation with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization, and 40 aircraft in cooperation with international and United Nations organizations. Jordan made its first airdrop on 5 November 2023, and since then has carried out 389 airdrops during the war in different areas in the north and south of the Gaza Strip and in areas near Jordanian field hospitals and surgical centres in Tel Al-Hawa, Khan Younis and St. Porphyrius Church. In that regard, we call for all crossings to be opened so as to allow the entry of aid, and we underline the need to implement the conclusions of the conference on the theme "Call for action: urgent humanitarian response for Gaza", which was hosted by Jordan and co-organized by Jordan, the Arab Republic of Egypt and the United Nations.

As the Israeli Government continues to commit war crimes, we call on the Council and countries that abide by international humanitarian law to press for the application of that law, the protection of civilians, an end to double standards, an immediate end to weapons supplies for Israel and the imposition of sanctions on the Israeli Government and its extremist officials, who are spreading a culture of hatred, inciting murder, justifying the killing of innocent people and driving the region towards full-scale escalation. That is particularly important given that the Israeli Government and its President disregard Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, the rulings of the International Court of Justice and the international community's calls for an end to the war.

The Israeli extremist Government's escalatory measures are also targeting the West Bank and occupied Jerusalem. The most egregious measures of that type are the violence and terrorism being inflicted by settlers on Palestinian civilians and their property, sponsored by the Israeli Government. That unprecedented escalation has been under way since the beginning of the aggression against the Gaza Strip. We condemn those attacks in the strongest terms and hold Israel, the occupying Power, responsible for ensuring the protection of the Palestinian people and humanitarian aid workers operating in the occupied Palestinian territory. We call on the international community to impose national and international sanctions against those settlers.

In that regard, we condemn the recent racist and inflammatory statements of by the Israeli Minister of Finance, which called for the imposition of Israeli sovereignty over the occupied West Bank and the construction and expansion of settlements. We underscore that Israel has no sovereignty over the occupied Palestinian territory and that those illegal Israeli statements and measures are in flagrant violation of international law and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2334 (2016), as well as the International Court of Justice's finding that Israel's occupation, settlements and annexation of occupied Palestinian territory are unlawful. We stress that Israel must respect the existing historical status of the holy sites in Jerusalem. Jordan will continue to safeguard them and provide them with protection as part of the historic Hashemite custodianship over Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, and it reaffirms the invalidity and illegality of the measures taken by Israel in Jerusalem aimed at obliterating its identity and changing its demography, in violation of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and relevant United Nations resolutions.

We also call on international partners to provide financial, political and legal support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in order to ensure that it continues to provide its vital services to the approximately 6 million Palestinian refugees in all five of its areas of operations, in accordance with its United Nations mandate, at a time when the Agency is being subjected to Israel's illegal attempts to liquidate it. Most recently, the Knesset adopted two laws that prohibit the Agency's activities and revoke the immunities afforded

to its staff and facilities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Those measures constitute grave violations of Israel's obligations under international law, as well as of the inviolability of the Agency, its facilities and its staff under the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we call on the Council to take effective measures to stop the dangerous Israeli escalation in Gaza and Lebanon, which will inevitably continue unless the Israeli Government faces the consequences of its actions, thereby destroying the present and future of the region. We also call upon the Council to make a real effort to establish an independent and viable Palestinian State, in accordance with the two-State solution and on the basis of 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant United Nations resolutions. That is the only way to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

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

**Mr. Yıldız (Türkiye):** The situation in the Middle East, particularly in Gaza, remains a profound concern. Without decisive action from the Security Council, the crisis will only deepen. What we have been witnessing in Gaza is an unprecedented humanitarian tragedy in its scope and severity. It is a man-made catastrophe. Nearly the entire population is displaced, with the latest reports indicating a death toll exceeding 43,000, predominantly women and children, and more remain under the rubble. Just last week, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs warned that the conditions of life across Gaza are unfit for human survival. Hospitals, schools and humanitarian aid convoys have been targeted, and aid access remains obstructed.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the backbone of humanitarian operations in Gaza, is facing severe challenges that hinder its operations. Legislative actions threaten its existence, undermining the prospects for the return of Palestinian refugees, as well as for the two-State vision.

Israeli actions in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon are the consequences of prolonged impunity. The United Nations, formed in the aftermath of the Second World War, was designed to prevent such violations. Today we see its principles being

challenged. The Council cannot stand by as United Nations personnel are targeted — almost 300 of them have been killed — and key humanitarian mechanisms jeopardized. The violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law are undeniable. It is time for action.

Türkiye calls for immediate measures: first and foremost, securing a ceasefire, ensuring unhindered humanitarian access and protecting civilians. Secondly, we call for the implementation of General Assembly resolution ES-10/24 with a view to ending Israel's illegal occupation within the established time frame. In line with that resolution, 52 countries and two international organizations have conveyed a joint letter to the Security Council calling for a halt to arms transfers to Israel. Thirdly, the recognition of Palestine as a sovereign State must be seriously considered by all Member States, particularly by Security Council members, to support the two-State solution. Fourthly, safeguarding and protecting UNRWA is our shared responsibility until the two-State solution is realized.

The Security Council must fulfil its mandate to uphold international peace and security by acting now. A just and lasting peace is unattainable without addressing the core issues of the Palestinian question. Türkiye remains committed to supporting any effort for a two-State solution, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent, sovereign and geographically contiguous State of Palestine.

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

**Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (spoke in Arabic):** We congratulate you, Mr. President, and your friendly country on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We welcome the participation of Mr. David Lammy, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom.

Today's meeting is convened while the Gaza Strip continues to suffer an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe as a result of the ongoing Israeli aggression against the Strip for more than a year, which has also spread to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Furthermore, the repeated Israeli attacks against the Palestinians have escalated, including violations against holy sites and the expansion of settlements. The aggression has now reached Lebanon, violating its sovereignty and territorial integrity and leading to

significant numbers of victims. The attacks have also targeted the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

Since the beginning of the war, the State of Qatar has warned of its repercussions and has worked to avoid such repercussions, stop the bloodshed and alleviate the human suffering of all parties through sincere mediation efforts in partnership with the Arab Republic of Egypt and the United States of America. Those diplomatic efforts succeeded in convincing Israel and Hamas to announce a humanitarian truce and a ceasefire in November 2023. During that period, an exchange of prisoners and detainees took place whereby more than 100 Israeli hostages held in the Gaza Strip and hundreds of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons were released. Truckloads of humanitarian aid were also granted access to the Gaza Strip. Those efforts were welcomed and supported by the Security Council and the international community.

The State of Qatar has always opted for transparency and credibility in its mediation efforts and notified the parties, during its most recent attempts to arrive at an agreement, of the suspension of those mediation efforts between Israel and Hamas if an agreement is not reached at the end of that round of talks. We will resume our efforts with the partners once the parties demonstrate the necessary good faith to end the war and the human suffering of civilians in Gaza. The State of Qatar will then spare no effort to end the war and ensure the return of prisoners and detainees.

Over the past few days, the Security Council has heard briefings on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. International reports have warned of imminent famine. In the face of that situation, the Council must impose an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire and enforce the implementation of the relevant resolutions, including resolutions 2720 (2023) and 2735 (2024).

The backbone of ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. We reaffirm our support for the Agency pursuant to General Assembly resolution 302 (IV). We also stress the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland — a right enshrined in General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and Security Council resolution 237 (1967).

The State of Qatar once again stresses the need to mobilize regional and international efforts to stop the

Israeli aggression against Lebanon and to demonstrate solidarity in order to prevent the spillover of the conflict into a general regional war. We reiterate the importance of the comprehensive implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

The only path to stability and prosperity in the region is a comprehensive and just political solution to the Palestinian question on the basis of international law and the resolutions of international legitimacy. There must be an end to the Israeli occupation, settlement activities must cease, and we must reaffirm our vision of a two-State solution based on the 1967 borders in accordance with resolution 2334 (2016).

In conclusion, we underline the unwavering commitment of the State of Qatar to support the brotherly Palestinian people until they enjoy all their legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination and to their independent, fully sovereign and viable State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We reiterate our call on the Council to shoulder its responsibilities in that regard.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

**Mr. Abushahab** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. David Lammy for presiding over yesterday's meeting and congratulate the United Kingdom on its assumption of the Security Council presidency for this month. I would also like to thank Mr. Wennesland for his briefing.

We support what was said yesterday and today — that the priority is now to achieve an immediate and rapid ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon and to remove all obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian aid at scale. Moreover, the protection of civilians and humanitarian workers and the release of detainees and hostages must be ensured, and all parties must respect their commitments in accordance with international law and the relevant resolutions, including resolution 1701 (2006). At the same time, there is a dire need to arrive at a clear vision with lasting solutions to stop the war in Gaza and to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict in its entirety. We cannot remain in the cycle of construction and destruction, nor can we agree to return to the status quo prior to 7 October 2023, especially given the enormous loss of life because of this war. Reconstruction is expected to take several decades, not to mention the recovery from the major trauma endured

by the people, especially those who have lost loved ones and all their property.

We have followed those dangerous developments closely, and it is clear that we now have a historic responsibility: either we make this tragedy a turning point for the region and move on from conflicts and wars to peace and prosperity, or we allow the region to plunge further into the abyss of violence and instability.

Bringing an end to the conflict requires a global vision that goes beyond swift measures. My country has already outlined its vision in that regard. It consists of establishing a temporary international mission, formally requested by the Palestinian Authority, to deal effectively with the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, consolidate the rule of law and undertake comprehensive reform of the Palestinian Authority. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip must be united under the Palestinian Authority. All of that will require the constructive and effective involvement of Israel and the most important regional and international partners, foremost among them the United States. In order to achieve that vision, the occupation must end and a clear political process must be established with a transparent and binding road map that cannot be undone, based on a two-State solution, leading to an independent sovereign Palestinian State living side by side with the State of Israel. We welcome the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, whose first meeting was held in Riyadh.

We underscore the importance of granting Palestine full membership in the United Nations as an essential step towards an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. That solution cannot come from external efforts alone. Peace needs the people at home to work diligently for it and to respond to the initiatives proposed by the international community. That also demands rejecting hate speech and refraining from any unilateral measures such as escalation in the West Bank and increased settlement activities.

The role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East remains pivotal and will be essential as long as the current plight of Palestinian refugees continues. The recent Israeli legislation targeting the Agency is a threat not just to the humanitarian response but to stability in the region as well.

My country appreciates the efforts that Council members have made since the crisis began. But the

Council needs to restore its credibility and its role. While it has many tools at its disposal, these grave crises demand extraordinary measures. If the Security Council is to succeed it will need genuine cooperation among its members and the firm commitment of all the parties involved to bring an end to the war and ensure the realization of a two-State solution.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates will continue its diplomatic and humanitarian efforts to support our brother Palestinian people and their right to self-determination. We will pursue peace and security for all the peoples of the region.

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

**Mr. Aldahhak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*) Despite Israel's decades of occupation, systematic hostilities and savage crimes, the Palestinian cause still enjoys the broad support of all countries that believe in international law and the principles of justice and human rights. Every time the Israeli occupation entity takes another hostile step to eliminate that just cause, erase history and change geography, the support for the Palestinian people around the world only increases. The fact is that anyone who thinks that murder, genocide and forced displacement will help eliminate the Palestinian question is deluded, and those who believe that might makes right are wrong. Israel's crimes and massacres can succeed only in committing the people living under occupation in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon to continuing to fight for their legitimate rights and in bolstering their determination to restore their occupied lands based on international law.

The occupation entity has continued its killing of civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure alongside forced displacement and the targeting of humanitarian teams, including 243 employees of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Journalists have been deliberately targeted, the United Nations and the Secretary-General defied and UNRWA has been banned. All of those constitute flagrant violations of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and exemplify the occupation authorities' criminal, exclusionary approach and long-standing policies. The crimes of the occupation authorities today echo those committed decades ago by Haganah, the Stern Gang and Irgun. Israel's murders of international teams and United Nations staff are an echo of the assassination of

the first United Nations international mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden. His killer was later elected Prime Minister of the occupation entity.

The crimes of the occupation could not continue without the multifaceted support that the United States and a number of its allies give Israel, ensuring that its war criminals enjoy impunity. Israel's arrogance and aggression have fanned the flames of war in the Gaza Strip, bringing the whole region to the brink of a wider conflict. It is high time that the Security Council upheld its responsibilities and saved lives by ending the genocide and the ethnic cleansing in Palestine. It is high time for Israel's shelling and ground invasion of Lebanon and repeated barbaric attacks on Syria to end. That is the priority right now. It is unacceptable that the Security Council is being held hostage by a political decision of a single State, which that wants to prioritize and prolong the Israeli occupation over the security, safety and lives of the people of the entire region. In its effort to inflame the region, the Israeli entity is waging attacks on Syrian territory on an almost daily basis, targeting peaceful civilians, including women and children, in their homes, as well as residential areas where the premises of diplomatic missions and United Nations offices are located. It is also targeting economic infrastructure and service facilities, including roads, bridges and the border crossing points used by people from our brother country of Lebanon trying to flee the Israeli war machine.

The Arab-Islamic Summit, which our sister nation of Saudi Arabia graciously hosted a few days ago, reaffirmed its strong condemnation of Israel's aggression against Syria and urged the Security Council to take responsibility, adopt the necessary and decisive measures needed to stop the crimes of the occupation and implement its relevant resolutions in order to bring an end to the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, including the Syrian Arab Golan.

We are warning the world about the potential effects of Israel's ongoing escalation of conflict in our region, which could bring widespread chaos and destabilization, and which in turn would be a threat to regional and international peace and security. We urge the Security Council to prevent that and to immediately implement its relevant resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981), in order to put an end to the Israeli occupation of Arab territories in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon and ensure the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian State with



Jerusalem as its capital, so that it can become a fully fledged Member of the United Nations.

Syria reiterates its categorical rejection of the Israeli occupation authorities' dangerous and unprecedented unilateral measures to undermine UNRWA and ban its work in the Palestinian territory, even including the false designation of the Agency as a terrorist organization. My country stresses that UNRWA must be able to carry out its mandate in the occupied Palestine and the host countries, including Syria, and sufficient financing for it must be guaranteed.

Finally, Syria condemns Israel's deliberate attacks on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and stresses the importance of ensuring the safety and security of the personnel not just of UNIFIL but of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, without jeopardizing their mandates.

**The President:** I now give the floor to Mr. Lambrinidis.

**Mr. Lambrinidis:** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

The full text of my statement will be uploaded online.

The European Union, like others, is deeply alarmed by the dramatic military escalation and the risk that represents for the entire region. We once again reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the unconditional release of all hostages, an enduring end to the hostilities and the urgent improvement of access and sustained distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale throughout Gaza, in line with resolution 2735 (2024).

The EU deplors the unacceptable number of civilian casualties, especially among women and children, in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as the catastrophic levels of hunger and the imminent risk of famine, caused by the insufficient entry of aid into Gaza. We also again condemn, in the strongest possible

terms, Hamas's brutal terrorist attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023.

We reiterate our unwavering commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace based on the two-State solution, the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and our commitment to implementing resolution 2334 (2016). To that end, the second follow-up meeting of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution — following the first official meeting which was hosted by Saudi Arabia — will be organized by the European Union, together with Belgium, in Brussels.

We stress the essential role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The third instalment of the EU 2024 funding to UNRWA was disbursed in October, bringing our financial support for the Agency this year to €82 million. The European Union and its member States are by far the biggest funders of UNRWA, over the years and now. A similar payment is earmarked for next year. We condemn any attempt to abrogate the 1967 agreement between Israel and UNRWA or to otherwise attempt to obstruct its capacity to implement its mandate.

The EU condemns the further escalation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, following increased settler violence, the expansion of illegal settlements and Israel's military operation. The EU is considering possible further restrictive measures against extremist settlers and entities and organizations that support them, as well as against Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

We express our utmost concern regarding the military escalation in Lebanon. We call for an immediate ceasefire across the Blue Line and for the full and symmetrical implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). We fully support the fundamental stabilization role of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and condemn the attacks against it.

Finally, the EU remains committed to ending impunity and ensuring accountability for violations of international law and international humanitarian law, and we recall the importance of supporting and implementing the decisions of international courts.

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*