



# Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

**9790**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Wednesday, 20 November 2024, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Dame Barbara Woodward . . . . .	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria . . . . .	Mr. Bendjama
	China . . . . .	Mr. Fu Cong
	Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
	France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
	Guyana . . . . .	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
	Japan . . . . .	Mr. Yamazaki
	Malta . . . . .	Mrs. Frazier
	Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Afonso
	Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone . . . . .	Mr. Sowa
	Slovenia . . . . .	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
	Switzerland . . . . .	Mrs. Baeriswyl
	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 10.05 a.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 representative of Israel to participate in this meeting.

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

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2024/835, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Algeria, Ecuador, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia and Switzerland.

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

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

**Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett** (Guyana): I thank you, Madam President, for so swiftly facilitating the request to convene this meeting.

I have the honour to introduce this draft resolution (S/2024/835) on behalf of the 10 elected Member States of the Security Council (E10), namely, Algeria, Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Switzerland and my own country, Guyana.

The draft resolution before the Council is the product of several weeks of consultations among all Council members. It was prompted by the Council's deep concern over the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza, including what was unfolding in north Gaza, and the need for an urgent response to that situation. I take this opportunity to thank all delegations for their very constructive stance throughout the negotiations.

Their flexibility allowed us to develop a text that we feel responds to many critical elements of the conflict.

The text before us recalls the Security Council's primary responsibility to uphold international peace and security, demands an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire to be respected by all parties and reiterates the Council's demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. That is one of the most important provisions of the text, since it addresses some of the most fundamental concerns regarding the ongoing hostilities. The text also demands that the parties comply with their obligations on international law, including international humanitarian law.

Emphasis is also placed on the last four resolutions adopted by the Council in relation to this conflict, reaffirming the provisions of those resolutions and demanding, in particular, the full and unconditional implementation of resolution 2735 (2024), adopted in June.

Critically, the draft resolution also demands immediate access by the civilian population in the Gaza Strip to basic services and humanitarian assistance indispensable to its survival. While rejecting any effort to starve Palestinians, it also demands the facilitation of the full, rapid, safe and unhindered entry of humanitarian assistance at scale, to and throughout the Gaza Strip, and the delivery of that assistance to all Palestinian civilians who need it, including to civilians in besieged north Gaza. The draft resolution acknowledges the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East as the backbone of the humanitarian response in Gaza and calls on all parties to enable the Agency to carry out its mandate in all areas of operation.

The text represents the broad consensus achieved on the basis of careful, inclusive and transparent negotiations. While several divergent positions have found a balance in the text, the dominant concern has been to provide a legally binding obligation to end the hostilities in Gaza. The E10 sincerely hopes that all delegations will support the text, since it aligns with our Charter of the United Nations responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

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

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour:*

Algeria, China, Ecuador, France, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

*Against:*

United States of America

*Abstaining:*

None

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

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

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): The United States deeply regrets that the Security Council finds itself here again. The United States worked for weeks in good faith to avoid this outcome. We made clear throughout the negotiations that we could not support an unconditional ceasefire that failed to release the hostages because, as the Council has previously called for, a durable end to the war must come with the release of the hostages. Those two urgent goals are inextricably linked. This draft resolution (S/2024/835) abandoned that necessity, and for that reason the United States could not support it. Simply put, this draft resolution would have sent a dangerous message to Hamas: that there is no need to come back to the negotiating table. Hamas would have seen it as a vindication of its cynical strategy to hope and pray that the international community forgets about the fate of more than 100 hostages from more than 20 Member States who have been held for 410 days. We must not let that happen, ever.

Let me say it clearly, there are still seven American citizens in the hands of Hamas — we will not forget them. For our part, we will continue to pursue a diplomatic solution that brings peace, security and freedom to Palestinians in Gaza. The United States, along with partners in the region, has worked tirelessly to achieve such a deal, but we are not there yet. Why? Because Hamas has rejected deal after deal after deal. And yet some members of the Council, in their public statements, ignore the callous intransigence of Hamas and indeed refuse to condemn Hamas, which, I note,

this draft resolution failed to do, again. Some members of the Council do not seem to want to confront the reality that, today, it is not Israel standing in the way of a ceasefire and a hostage deal, it is Hamas. Israel has said that it is prepared to have a temporary ceasefire in exchange for the release of a few hostages and then build on that to bring each and every hostage home.

The messages we send to the world through these resolutions matter, and this draft resolution had several other problems. Among the most glaring, as I have already mentioned, is the failure to condemn Hamas for its terrorist attack of 7 October 2023. It is inexplicable that, more than 13 months since that day, some members of the Council are missing the plot, refusing to acknowledge that it is Hamas that instigated this conflict and that it is Hamas that has put millions of Palestinian civilians in harm's way and has brought the region to the precipice of a broader war.

We have been clear that it is time for this war to end, for the hostages to be released and for Palestinian civilians to begin to rebuild their lives. More immediately, the United States has been explicitly clear to Israel that it has a responsibility to facilitate humanitarian access and the delivery of aid at scale. We believe that the process of laying out the terms of what we expect from Israel in a very detailed way has generated a change in Israel's approach. American diplomacy will continue to press for more aid in and throughout Gaza, which requires a sustained, expanded implementation of urgent steps to improve conditions on the ground.

We regret that the Council could have incorporated compromised language put forward by the United Kingdom to bridge the existing gaps and support those humanitarian steps. With that language, this draft resolution should have been adopted, and the Council would have reinforced ongoing diplomatic efforts on the ground. Indeed, we have also put forward many formulations over the past few weeks that could have bridged the gaps and seen the Council speak with one voice. Despite those proposals from the United States throughout the process, many on the Council did not engage seriously on their merits and rather continued to seek a path of discord. In fact, we heard that some desired a United States veto rather than a consensus product. That is cynical and unfortunate.

This is not how the process should work. Despite the failure of the Council to reach consensus — and again,

I think there was a path available to do so — the United States will keep working to improve the humanitarian situation on the ground, which, as we have said before, requires unhindered access and sustained humanitarian aid flowing into Gaza and reaching all those in need.

In conclusion, let me just note that the United States has taken a very clear position since this war began, which is that Israel had a right to defend itself after the worst slaughter of Jews since the Holocaust. The United States has also, over the course of the past year, done more than any other country to take tangible steps to improve the humanitarian conditions in Gaza, even as the situation remains dire. We have also done more than anyone to work with the Government of Israel in an effort to minimize civilian harm over the course of the conflict, and we continue to emphasize to Israel that more must be done to save lives. The United States also continued to work with partners in the region to support a revitalized Palestinian Authority that can assume responsibility for governing Gaza and the West Bank. We have encouraged regional integration efforts that would strengthen regional stability and marginalize sources of instability, and we have never wavered in our support for a two-State solution. It is vital that we end this war in a way that charts a path forward in the post-conflict period that provides governance, security and reconstruction in Gaza and restores dignity for civilians caught in the middle of a war they did not want. We must work towards a future in which Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side, within two democratic States, and enjoy equal measures of security, dignity and freedom, and in which Israel is secure within its own borders.

An unconditional ceasefire with Hamas means the Council accepts Hamas retaining power in Gaza. The United States will never accept that. Rather than adopting a draft resolution that emboldens Hamas, let us instead demand that Hamas implement resolution 2735 (2024) without further condition or delay. Let us continue to ensure that Israel facilitates additional humanitarian aid into Gaza, and let us work to bring a durable end to the suffering and misery of Hamas's many victims since 7 October 2023. The draft resolution sent the wrong message to the parties, but our actions and diplomacy on the ground will continue to push them in a more positive direction. We invite others on the Council to join us.

**Mrs. Frazier** (Malta): The draft resolution that we had in front of us today (S/2024/835) is the result of a common conviction by the 10 elected members of the

Security Council that the Council can no longer stand idle in the face of such uncontrolled violence, disregard for international law, including international humanitarian law, and a human-made humanitarian catastrophe. We sincerely thank Guyana for diligently coordinating the initiative. Let us be clear: the text we had in front of us today was by no means a maximalist one. It represented the bare minimum of what is needed to begin to address the desperate situation on the ground. It was a genuine effort to bring the Council to speak with one voice on a conflict that risks dragging the entire region over the precipice. It is deeply regrettable that, owing to the use of the veto, the Council has once again failed to uphold its responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

As the region continues to descend into further violence, civilians across all sides continue to endure unimaginable suffering. In north Gaza, hungry Palestinian mothers trudge through a destroyed landscape, seeking food and medicine for their malnourished children, while air strikes and hostilities continue to decimate their land and people. Innocent civilians have been held hostage in squalor by Hamas and other armed groups for more than a year. Lebanese and Israeli families along both sides of the Blue Line and beyond have been forcibly displaced from their homes and communities in an effort to seek safety. Those are the consequences of the ongoing failure to secure a peaceful solution to this conflict.

The draft resolution would have finally made a clear demand for an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. It would have demanded that the humanitarian needs of Palestinians in Gaza be urgently met, including for civilians in besieged northern Gaza. It would have demanded the immediate and unconditional release of hostages. It would also have sought to call on all parties to enable the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to carry out its mandate, as adopted by the General Assembly, in the face of grave threats emanating from the recently adopted legislation in Israel.

Faced with the Council's failure to adopt a resolution that clearly speaks to those demands, Malta stresses that the parties to the conflict are fully obligated to comply with and immediately and effectively implement the relevant existing Council resolutions and the orders of the International Court of Justice. We unequivocally stress that international law, including

international humanitarian law and international human rights law, must be respected by all parties. Despite our disappointment with the result of today's vote, we must not give up. On the contrary, we must redouble our efforts to keep pushing for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. The time has come to bring an end to this extraordinary suffering, to restore hope and to give peace a chance — a peace based on a two-State solution, in accordance with Security Council resolutions and the internationally agreed parameters.

**Mr. Bendjama** (Algeria): At the outset, I extend my gratitude to those who voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the 10 elected members of the Security Council (S/2024/835), which are the representatives of the collective will of the international community.

It is a sad day for the Security Council, for the United Nations and for the international community as a whole. The draft resolution that the Council failed to adopt today sought only to break its deafening silence of five months after the adoption of resolution 2735 (2024) — five months during which the Security Council remained idle, its hands tied.

This text was far from ideal, but it represented the bare minimum that should have united us. Algeria, my country, has consistently called for enforcing Security Council decisions and imposing sanctions on those who defy the collective will of the international community. For that reason, our position was to adopt a draft resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. There were significant concessions during negotiations. Yet one member chose to block any action by the Council.

Today's message is clear: first, the message sent to the Israeli occupying Power is that it may continue its genocide and its collective punishment of the Palestinian people with complete impunity. In this Chamber, it enjoys immunity. To the Palestinian people, another clear message is being sent: while the overwhelming majority of the world stands in solidarity with their plight, tragically, others remain indifferent to their suffering.

We must ask ourselves today, as human beings: is it not enough that 44,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, 70 per cent of whom are women and children? How many more must perish before the Council imposes a ceasefire? Is it not enough that the number of orphans in Gaza now ranges from 17,000 to 18,000,

many of whom have no surviving family members to care for them? Gaza, once known as a city of children, has tragically become a city of orphans. How many more children must be orphaned before the Council takes action? Is it not enough that more than 170 journalists have been killed in Gaza? And how many more journalists must die before the Council acts?

Israel, the occupying Power, has killed more journalists in one year than those lost in the Second World War and the Viet Nam War combined. Where are those who proclaim to be defenders of human rights and freedom of expression? Why are they silent in the face of such atrocities? Is it not enough that at least 326 aid workers — the highest number ever recorded in history — have been killed? How many more must sacrifice their lives before the Council decides to impose sanctions? Is it not enough that more than 1,000 health workers have been killed? How many more must fall before the Council takes decisive action? Is it not enough that almost the entire population of Gaza has been forcibly displaced and now faces famine, with some already succumbing to starvation? How many more must starve to death before the Council responds?

Over the past year, the Council has adopted four resolutions. Negotiations were conducted. Calls from every corner of the globe were made. Yet nothing has stopped the Israeli killing machine in Gaza, and the reason is painfully clear: Israeli leaders operate with full knowledge that they enjoy impunity. They enjoy immunity. They are certain that the Security Council, tasked with maintaining international peace and security under the Charter of the United Nations, will be prevented from acting to halt the genocide. Today we have missed an opportunity. This failure will have devastating consequences for the international order. But rest assured that this will not be the last time. The Security Council will be forced to adopt a draft resolution on Palestine. As we have said before — and as we have delivered — we will soon return to the Security Council to demand an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, with even firmer language, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. And our efforts will not cease until the Council takes decisive action.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is very disappointed with the result of today's voting. Guyana, Algeria and the other elected members of the Council demonstrated a maximum amount of sincerity and constructiveness during the consultations on the



draft resolution (S/2024/835). The United States veto alone has dashed the hopes of the people of Gaza for survival, pushing them further into darkness and desperation. I said during the Council's debate on Monday (see S/PV.9787) that every moment will be recorded and will be judged by history. We cannot imagine how the voting today, as well as the Security Council's failure to respond to the Gaza conflict over the past 13 months, will escape the harsh judgment of history.

In the future, when looking back, people will find it hard to believe what happened. When the United States cast its first veto, on 18 October 2023 (see S/PV.9442), almost 3,000 civilians had been killed in Gaza. By the time the United States cast its second veto (see S/PV.9499), 17,000 people had been killed as a result of Israel's bombing. With each veto, the death toll in Gaza has continued to rise. When the United States exercised its right to the veto for the fifth time, on 18 April 2024 (see S/PV.9609), the death toll in Gaza stood at 34,000 people. Now that nearly 44,000 people have been killed in Gaza, the United States nevertheless did not hesitate in its use of the veto; 44,000 is not some cold statistic. It could include a child, a nursing mother or the breadwinner of a family. The loss of each one of them means visceral pain for the surviving relatives.

People cannot help but ask: do Palestinian lives mean nothing? With the death count at 44,000 people, is there even a little bit of sympathy from the United States? How many more people must die before they wake up from their feigned slumber. In the future, when looking back, people will find it hard to understand what happened. The Security Council is mandated under the Charter of the United Nations to shoulder the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It is incomprehensible why, for the past year, the United States has been so insistent on rendering the Council unable to play its role, leading to its paralysis. The United States claims to be conducting parallel diplomatic efforts and has repeatedly promised that progress would soon be made in the negotiations. It is incomprehensible, then, why to date the so-called diplomatic negotiations have seen no progress. Why is Israel allowed to continue its military operations while consistently setting new conditions for negotiations? In the future, when looking back, people will inevitably feel indignant. Israel has flagrantly breached every red line of international humanitarian law, with its actions causing an unprecedented humanitarian disaster.

But even as famine is imminent in Gaza, the United States always seems to be able to find a justification to defend Israel. That represents a distortion and selective application of international humanitarian law. People continue to learn how extreme double standards can be and how low one can stoop. It is no wonder that people feel angry. People's indignation also stems from the fact that the continued supply of weapons from the United States has become a decisive factor in the war's protraction, causing many casualties and much destruction.

The United States representative called earlier in his statement for the release of hostages. Our position has been very clear from the beginning: all hostages must be released, and an immediate and unconditional ceasefire must be established. Both are important factors. There should be no conditions. They cannot be linked to one another. Facts have shown that Israel's military operations in Gaza have long exceeded the mission of rescuing the hostages. Any insistence on setting a precondition for a ceasefire is tantamount to giving a green light to continue the war and condoning the continued killing.

The repeated use of the veto by the United States has reduced the authority of the Security Council and international law to an all-time low, but it is never too late to recognize the mistakes made and take corrective actions. We call on the United States to take seriously its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Council. The United States should stop being passive and evasive and deliberately procrastinating. The United States should show a sense of responsibility and support the Council in taking all the necessary actions to achieve a ceasefire, save lives and restore peace.

**Mrs. Blokar Drobič** (Slovenia): Slovenia voted in favour of the draft resolution (S/2024/835), focusing on the demand for an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire.

We thank Guyana, the coordinator, for its able steering of the efforts of the 10 elected members of the Security Council (E10), and we thank the other E10 members for their excellent cooperation in presenting the draft resolution.

Since the start of the war in Gaza more than a year ago, Slovenia has been continuously calling for a strong, united voice from the Council on this issue. We have been supportive of every effort to find that unified response. It is indisputable that the Council is

the primary body entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. It is the responsibility of every Member State to contribute. As an elected member, our sense of responsibility has been growing.

The war has brought pain and destruction, confrontations and shockwaves, restrictions and attacks on the United Nations and violations of international law. From the terrorist attack of Hamas on 7 October 2023 to the relentless attacks on civilians and restrictions on humanitarian assistance in Gaza, including the siege of northern Gaza and unprecedented obstructions of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East operations, the war represents everything that the Charter of the United Nations stands against. We regret that the veto was cast, all the more so since the war, with its humanitarian impact and spillover effect, amounts to a serious threat to international peace and security.

We deeply appreciate the work done by Egypt, Qatar and the United States aimed at reaching a ceasefire deal on the ground. As we clearly stated at the adoption of resolution 2735 (2024) (see S/PV.9650), we believe that calls by the international community and efforts by mediators and those of a bilateral nature are intertwined and should be mutually reinforcing.

The suffering in Gaza must end. The suffering of people in Palestine, Israel, Lebanon and in the wider region must end. There must be an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire. Hostages must be released. Humanitarian aid must be scaled up. We have heard countless briefings making it crystal clear: we must act now. It is the Council's responsibility to react to threats to international peace and security. There is an entire generation of children in Gaza whom we are failing. They lost their families, communities, schools, friends and childhood. This is a war the Council can and must stop with a united and unequivocal demand for a ceasefire. That is the first step towards achieving a comprehensive solution to the conflict, a first step towards giving those children a future.

Slovenia will support further steps to peace, including an international peace conference and a commitment to a global alliance for the implementation of the two-State solution, so that future generations in Israel and Palestine can live side by side in peace, security and prosperity.

**Mr. De Rivi re** (France) (*spoke in French*): France thanks the elected members of the Security Council for

preparing the draft resolution (S/2024/835). It finds it deeply regrettable that the draft resolution could not be adopted today.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is catastrophic and continues to deteriorate. International humanitarian law is being trampled upon. Under the circumstances, the only response would have been, and remains, an immediate and permanent ceasefire. The delivery of humanitarian aid must be commensurate with needs, particularly in the north of the enclave, where famine looms.

All the hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally. The draft resolution made that specific demand in no uncertain terms. France, which still has two hostages in Gaza, deplores the fact that the Security Council was incapable of making that demand. France has not stopped, and nor will it stop, condemning the terrorist attacks of 7 October 2023. The Security Council must follow suit and do so unequivocally. The Council must also work towards the concrete implementation of the two-State solution on the basis of the agreed parameters. There must be security guarantees for the Israelis. We must also work towards the establishment of an independent, viable and contiguous State for the Palestinians. France will continue to strive towards those goals.

**Mr. Montalvo Sosa** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to explain that Ecuador voted in favour of the draft resolution that we have just considered (S/2024/835), a resolution of which Ecuador is a co-drafter, along with the other elected members, because it shares the sense of urgency for the Security Council to act, once again, to stop the war, free the hostages still being held by Hamas and address the catastrophic humanitarian situation of the civilian population in Gaza, which is on the brink of famine.

For the second time this year, the 10 elected members of the Security Council (E10) took on the challenge of drafting a text that would be agreeable to all Council members and would allow the Council to fulfil its responsibility in the face of a pressing situation. The draft resolution is the fruit of a long negotiation process, in which all Council members took part and which Guyana coordinated with skill and tact. I am grateful to their delegation.

The text we have considered in the Council calls for an immediate ceasefire, the release of the hostages and urgent humanitarian access for the civilian population.

Those demands are shared by an overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations. Other requirements of great urgency and importance were also included in the draft resolution, such as the need to implement existing resolutions adopted in recent months and to abide by the rules of international humanitarian law. The text also contains a condemnation of all terrorist acts, which implicitly includes those committed by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and the taking of hostages. My country, once again, deplors those unconscionable acts, which are the direct cause of the war that has ravaged Gaza ever since.

In such a complex situation, a text that is perfect in everyone's eyes is impossible. Ecuador, for example, would prefer to adopt a draft resolution containing an explicit condemnation of the 7 October 2023 terrorist attacks. That notwithstanding, the 14 votes in favour of the draft resolution make it clear that the draft that the E10 put before the Council for consideration is balanced and timely. It is regrettable that it was not adopted because one permanent member voted against it.

**Mr. Sowa** (Sierra Leone): We thank Guyana, the coordinator of the 10 elected members of the Security Council (E10) in relation to the draft resolution on the situation in Gaza (S/2024/835), for its commendable and tireless efforts in facilitating the negotiations. We thank all Council members for their engagement and flexibility in the negotiations.

Sierra Leone voted in favour of the E10 draft resolution on the situation in Gaza in order to have a ceasefire and, more importantly, to save lives. We therefore deeply regret that the draft resolution was not adopted, even though 14 members of the Council, an overwhelming majority, voted for its adoption.

Thirteen months into the conflict in the Gaza Strip, with more than 43,500 deaths, hundreds of thousands injured, approximately 1.7 million internally displaced persons and women, children and young people bearing the brunt of the conflict, it is long overdue for the Security Council, as guided by the Charter of the United Nations, to take an appropriate step to end the carnage in the Gaza Strip.

While we recognize the tireless efforts displayed by the Council in adopting four resolutions thus far — namely, resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023), 2728 (2024) and 2735 (2024) — it is regrettable that the parties to the conflict have failed to fully comply with their respective provisions.

The adoption of resolution 2735 (2024) on 10 June had ushered in renewed optimism that, through diplomatic efforts, a deal could be agreed upon that would achieve a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, ensure the release of hostages, guarantee the effective distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale throughout the Gaza Strip, establish the framework for the reconstruction of Gaza and commence the process for the actualization of the two-State solution. Unfortunately, that process has been slow, without any tangible progress, and every day that elapses, we witness more deaths and suffering.

For that reason and in the light of the many horrific humanitarian and security reports and briefings on the situation in the Gaza Strip, Sierra Leone joined the E10 initiative to have a text that clearly demands an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

The text further called for compliance with obligations under international law and for access by the civilian population in the Gaza Strip to basic services and humanitarian assistance indispensable for their survival, while acknowledging the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in facilitating and distributing aids to civilians. The adoption of this text could have compelled the parties to the conflict to fulfil their legal, political, moral and humanitarian obligations to civilians in the Gaza Strip and the hostages held by Hamas since 7 October 2023. It could have been the path to justice and an enforcement of accountability. It would have allowed the Council the opportunity to affirm its role and unite in strength to save humankind from destruction.

Nevertheless, we will not despair: Sierra Leone remains committed to supporting any credible and serious political and diplomatic efforts that will finally address the protracted conflict.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Guyana and the other elected members of the Council for the courage they have demonstrated and their efforts in promoting the draft resolution that was put to the vote today (S/2024/835). We supported the document, and we commend those responsible members of the Council who, like us, understand the need for an early and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza as a key to overall stabilization in the region.



I would now ask my colleagues to listen carefully to the following part of my statement. Once I have concluded, I shall explain why.

We are shocked that the United States has vetoed an effort to save Palestinian and Israeli lives. However, we should perhaps not be surprised. For months, the United States has obstructed and obfuscated, standing in the way of Council action aimed at addressing the catastrophic situation in Gaza and pandering to one side of the conflict to advance its own political objectives at the expense of Palestinian lives. Today the Council would have come together to call for a comprehensive ceasefire, the protection of civilians and a solution to the whole complex of humanitarian problems facing the Palestinians. The United States claims that it stands with and for the Palestinian people, yet it vetoed a draft resolution supported by the vast majority of countries in the region and in the region's interests. We would have demanded today that there be an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, as well as the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. It is unconscionable that the United States would cynically stand in the way of demands for those actions, which could save lives in the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

We do not need to be lectured by the United States on hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is what the United States exhibits on a daily basis in the context of multiple conflicts, trampling on the sovereignty of States, brazenly interfering in their internal affairs and imposing its own rules. As a result, tens of thousands of civilians have been killed. We are closely monitoring the situation and will continue to call out abuses and those responsible, in particular the United States. We have an obligation to continue to amplify the voices of the Palestinian people, who are calling for peace, prosperity and justice. The United States cannot stand in the way of that.

I hope members have realized that the above was an almost a verbatim quoting of yesterday's statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States (see S/PV.9786) in explanation of vote on the draft resolution on the Sudan (S/2024/826). In our view, the quote is very appropriate. We wish to thank our American colleagues for sparing us from having to prepare most of our statement in explanation of vote thanks to their statement yesterday.

I shall now turn to address my American colleagues.

Today the United States has definitively shown that it is fully responsible for the death of tens of thousands of innocent civilians, the deprivation of refugees and the suffering of hostages and illegally detained Palestinians. It was interesting to listen to the American representative's statement today following the vote. He argued, for example, that the draft resolution did not contain a provision on the release of hostages, yet it does contain such a provision. Perhaps the American representative should have read the draft resolution before voting against it. He also claimed that the draft resolution did not contain a condemnation of the attacks of 7 October. I would like to remind our American colleagues that it was the United States that vetoed a Security Council draft resolution condemning the 7 October 2023 attacks (S/2023/773) on 18 October 2023 (see S/PV.9442).

The United States presents itself as a key partner, not only of Israel but also of the States of the Arab world, yet it voted against a draft resolution that is in the interests of all Arabs and supported by the Arabs themselves. By adopting the draft document, we could have demanded that Israel cease its deadly attacks in Gaza and the West Bank and curb its continued aggression against Lebanon and Syria. We could have sent a clear message to the parties to put an end to the violence and move towards a political and diplomatic settlement of the Palestinian question.

The callous and cynical obstruction by the United States of a simple demand by the Security Council to save human lives is an unconscionable and inhumane act. We have no doubt that the Israelis themselves have an interest in ending the spiral of violence. We categorically reject attempts to present the events of 7 October 2023 as the starting point for the current bloody events in the region. The reasons for that run much deeper and are linked to long-standing historical injustices in which one side was given the opportunity to establish its own State and the other was consistently denied the very same right.

We will remain resolute in our demand to end the violence against the Palestinians. Without a shadow of a doubt, we will continue to highlight the abuses and hypocrisy with which the United States approaches the situation. We will not allow the United States to muzzle the entire Council with its own hands in an effort to further embolden Israel in its merciless operation. It is our common duty to ensure that the voices of the overwhelming majority of the people on Earth — who

are calling for an end to the spiral of violence, a just solution to the Palestinian question on the basis of the internationally agreed legal parameters and Palestine's full membership of the United Nations — are heard.

We must bring peace, stability and prosperity to the Middle East. No one, including the United States and other Western States that indulge them, has the right to obstruct those legitimate aspirations.

**Mr. Hwang** (Republic of Korea): Since the adoption of resolution 2735 (2024) in June, the Security Council has been hoping for and expecting the finalization of a deal to achieve an immediate ceasefire and the release of all hostages in Gaza. As the President of the Council in June, I remember how desperately all Council members aspired for the swift implementation of this draft resolution (S/2024/835), which urges both parties, notably Hamas, to accept the proposed agreement. Since then, five months have passed, and the conflict has brought even more death, misery and destruction to Palestinian civilians and Israeli hostages. And it is deeply disappointing that, in spite of the efforts by the mediators — the United States, Egypt and Qatar — resolution 2735 (2024) has yet to be implemented. The Republic of Korea still hopes that those diplomatic efforts will lead to a fruitful outcome that accomplishes an immediate ceasefire, along with the release of all hostages.

As repeatedly pointed out, under this ceaseless armed conflict in Gaza, humanitarian efforts cannot deliver substantive results. An immediate ceasefire is not only an option; it is the only way to save lives in Gaza. That is why the 10 elected members of the Council, including the Republic of Korea, commenced a new initiative demanding an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and, in parallel, demanding an immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

It is regrettable that the draft resolution could not garner the support needed to be adopted today. However, we do believe that all members of the Council agree on the imperative of an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, although members may have different views on how to arrive at that goal. Therefore, the Republic of Korea will not lose hope for a ceasefire and the release of all hostages at the earliest possible juncture.

**Mr. Yamazaki** (Japan): At the outset, let me express appreciation to Guyana for its important role in pushing forward this important initiative for a resolution.

It has been more than 400 days since Hamas and others killed more than 1,200 Israelis and took more than 200 hostages, which Japan firmly condemns. Until now, the devastation in Gaza has shown no signs of abating, with tens of thousands of civilian casualties, an appalling death toll among United Nations personnel and humanitarian aid workers and massive displacement. Given the ever-worsening situation, this draft resolution (S/2024/835), had it been adopted, would have been a much-needed pronouncement by the Security Council, demanding an immediate ceasefire as well as an immediate release of all hostages. Its adoption could also have sent a strong message calling for a dramatic expansion of humanitarian aid throughout the Strip, in particular to the most vulnerable Palestinians in the north. Therefore, Japan joined all the other elected members as co-penholders of this draft resolution and voted in favour of its adoption.

It is deeply regrettable that we could not arrive at a text that all Council members could accept. However, now is not the moment to trade accusations concerning the continuation of this nightmare. The Council member that could not support the draft resolution is working tirelessly to end the agony in Gaza, and Japan continues to support its diplomatic efforts.

Despite today's setback, we should not stop working to improve the catastrophic situation on the ground. Today is World Children's Day. But, without our collective actions, the children in Gaza — the future of Gaza — will continue to pay the high price of this conflict. The Council must keep their plight in mind as we work to immediately bring about the long-awaited ceasefire. Japan remains steadfastly committed to that end, both here at the Council and through multilateral and bilateral channels as well.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank all the elected members, and especially our coordinator, Guyana, for their unwavering efforts in favour of urgent and necessary action by the Council. I thank all members that supported our draft resolution (S/2024/835). As co-penholder, Switzerland voted in favour of the adoption of this draft resolution and regrets that it was not adopted owing to the veto of a permanent member.

More than five months after the adoption of resolution 2735 (2024), this draft resolution reaffirmed our commitment to an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire, to the immediate and

unconditional release of all hostages and to the safe, rapid and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to the civilian population.

Switzerland reiterates that the obligations of the parties in this matter continue regardless of whether or not resolutions are adopted by the Council. It is high time that the parties respect those obligations and protect civilians and civilian infrastructure in accordance with international humanitarian law. The violence and dehumanization in this conflict must end.

I would like to underline the strong commitment of the group of elected members to unified action by the Council. It can continue to count on us for future action to promote peace and security among Israelis and Palestinians and in the region as a whole.

The situation is urgent. In Gaza, civilians are exposed to hostilities, incessant displacement, epidemics and the risk of imminent famine, while the hospital system has been almost completely destroyed. As the occupying Power, Israel has a duty to ensure that the basic needs of the population in the occupied Palestinian territory are met.

The Council must also act, in accordance with its mandate, to bring about a ceasefire, release all hostages and protect civilians, including humanitarian personnel, particularly those of the United Nations. There must be an end to human suffering, a halt to the escalation of violence in the region and the laying of foundations for the solution of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace, within secure and recognized borders. Switzerland will continue to support all efforts in that direction.

**Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett** (Guyana): After five weeks of intense negotiations and a vote in favour of adoption by 14 members of the Council, Guyana deeply regrets that we were unable today to adopt the draft resolution (S/2024/835) submitted by the elected States members of the Council to pronounce on the apocalyptic situation in Gaza. The main objective of the draft resolution was to address some of the most critical issues that currently feature in Israel's more than year-long war on Gaza. Those critical issues include the ongoing atrocities of a scale and intensity that cause the death toll to climb on a daily basis, and which has now surpassed 43,000, the continued captivity of persons taken from Israel in the brutal attack of 7 October 2023, and the humanitarian situation that appears to have

reached its nadir, but then still worsens in unimaginable ways.

The draft resolution just considered responded to those critical issues, building on the legally binding framework that the Council had established through the four previous resolutions adopted since 7 October 2023. Importantly, the draft resolution would have gone further by adding several critical dimensions to that framework. Those include, for the first time, an unequivocal call for an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, an affirmation of the centrality of the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in the humanitarian response in Gaza, as well as an affirmation that respect for the International Court of Justice and its functions is essential to international law and justice and to an international order based on the rule of law.

Contemplating the end of the war and the mammoth investments that would be required for reconstruction, the draft resolution sought to make a contribution to day-after planning by requesting the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive report that would include a needs assessment for Gaza in the short, medium and long term. It is therefore deeply disappointing that those constructive contributions could not be added to the legally binding framework already in place on the war in Gaza.

Many have said that the ongoing annihilation of the Palestinian people is a major stain on our collective human conscience. Today the Council had the opportunity to begin erasing that stain by demanding an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire. But despite our best efforts and the almost universal support to go in that direction, the Council was again hamstrung by a veto. Guyana hopes that the inability of the Council to adopt the draft resolution will not be seen by those who want to continue this war as a licence to continue killing, starving and maiming innocent civilians.

The continuation of sheer misery cannot — and must not — be the fate of the Palestinians. Their suffering must end. They need to see the seeds of peace being planted by the Council. They need to see that the Security Council is giving peace a chance. That hope was dashed today, but it has not been eclipsed. Guyana will continue to work with fellow Council members

to try to achieve tomorrow what we could not achieve today. Not trying is simply not an option.

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

I would like to start by thanking Guyana and the 10 elected Member States of the Security Council for their tireless work on draft resolution S/2024/835.

The United Kingdom voted in favour of this draft resolution as an expression of its determination to end this war, stop the suffering in Gaza and secure the immediate release of the hostages. The United Kingdom remains resolute in its call for an immediate ceasefire, the immediate release of all the hostages cruelly held by Hamas since 7 October 2023 and urgent action to address the humanitarian crisis.

The deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza is catastrophic and unacceptable. All of Gaza is at the risk of famine, and in some areas it is likely to be imminent. Yet the aid reaching civilians remains entirely insufficient to mitigate this unfolding disaster. The unthinkable hardship that civilians are already facing in Gaza is set to get even worse as winter approaches. Israel must take urgent action to alleviate this crisis. International humanitarian law must be respected by all sides.

We regret that the Council was unable to reach a consensus on this issue. But we remain committed to the vision of the text of the draft resolution. And we will keep striving, alongside our partners, to bring this war to a close, secure the release of the hostages, secure a huge scale-up in aid and to protect civilians.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor. I just need to respond very briefly to some comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation. Let me just say, as I have said many times, that Russia is in no position to single out any State for being responsible for the deaths and killings of civilians, when every day it is raining down hundreds of missiles, bombs and unmanned aerial vehicles on the people of Ukraine, conducting some of the most savage and barbaric attacks seen in Europe since the Second World War. We will continue to remind the world of

that barbarity carried out by a permanent member of the Security Council, in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. I would therefore say to my Russian colleague that he should think twice before accusing anyone of hypocrisy.

**The President:** The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will be brief. I want to ask the representative of the United States a rhetorical question — he does not have to answer it. Does he have any other narrative other than the one he has delivered today? When we listen to what he is saying, we get the impression that we are watching the movie *Groundhog Day*.

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

**Mr. Bamyia** (Palestine): There is no right to the mass killing of civilians. There is no right to starve an entire civilian population. There is no right to forcibly displace a people. And there is no right to annexation. Yet that is what Israel is doing in Gaza. Those are its war objectives. That is what the absence of a ceasefire is allowing it to continue doing. The full-fledged Israeli assault against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian land is about everything except the hostages. If the families of the hostages can see that, how can anyone in this Chamber claim otherwise?

A ceasefire will enable us to save lives — all lives. That was true a year ago, and it is even more true today. A ceasefire does not resolve everything, but it is the first step towards resolving anything. And what is the answer of those who are still unwilling now, after all this death and destruction, to call for an unconditional ceasefire? Is it to accept that the killing should continue until we resolve everything, while we watch as we are resolving nothing?

We have heard over and over again statements in this Chamber by all members, without distinction, about the protection of civilians, about rejecting the forcible displacement and starvation of the Palestinian population, and about rejecting annexation, wanton destruction and regional escalation. Everyone around this table has agreed on those objectives. Yet here we are, with 44,000 Palestinians killed — and that is those who are accounted for. Many more are not accounted for. One day, we will retrieve them in mass graves under



the rubble and discover the real numbers of that horror, and there will be many that we will never retrieve.

Famine that is looming all over Gaza, and it is a reality in northern Gaza. Two million people have been displaced — still hunted even when they are in tents. Gaza — and all the requirements for life in it — has been totally destroyed. There is also an ongoing war on Lebanon, its people and its sovereignty.

What does it mean for Council members to proclaim all these principles, reiterate their rejection of Israel's actions and then shield Israel from the consequences of its actions, thereby allowing it to do exactly what we are asking it to stop doing?

The world should not grow accustomed to the death of Palestinians, seeing Palestinian children starving and seeing mothers carrying their children from one place to another, forcibly displaced. We should not get accustomed to seeing journalists and humanitarians killed. And we should not get accustomed to seeing Palestinians detained, abducted and carried on trucks to be tortured, sexually abused and raped. The fact we are Palestinians does not make that less shocking or outrageous. Maybe for some, we have the wrong nationality, the wrong faith or the wrong skin colour. But we are humans — and we should be treated as such.

Is there a Charter of the United Nations for Israel that is different from the Charter the rest of us have? Tell us: is there an international law for them and an international law for us? Do they have the right to kill, and the only right that we have is to die?

What the hell more does Israel need to do for the Council to act under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations? Or will the Council be the last place on Earth that cannot recognize a threat to peace when it sees it, when it is so glaring and so undeniable? The Council is witnessing the attempt to annihilate a nation, to destroy a nation. It is not even hidden; it is in plain sight. And yet the very tools designed to respond to these situations are not being used. So which one is it? Are Palestinian lives not worth saving, or does Israel have a license to kill? Can the Council only adopt resolutions to then witness their blatant breach? This self-inflicted powerlessness has to stop. Like the representative of Algeria, we repeat that the resolutions of the Council are binding. Their role is to be enforced. Their role is to change reality, not to record violations for history's purposes and then allow them to continue.

Had diplomatic efforts succeeded, we would not be here. We recognize all the efforts that were undertaken

and all the diplomatic efforts that were conducted. And yet we have to recognize that children are still starving in Gaza. Families are being killed. Communities are being obliterated. Had those efforts succeeded, we would not be here. But what we cannot accept is that Israel has a veto that blocks any attempts to put an end to this war, especially when we know what its true intentions are.

Many people and many Governments around the world are saying the right things and trying to do the right things. And here we must express our gratitude to the 10 elected members of the Council (E10) for their relentless efforts for over a year now and in the present month. We were all hoping that resolution 2735 (2024) would lead to a ceasefire. And we can discuss who is responsible for that ceasefire not occurring. For us, it is pretty clear that Israel never had the intention of accepting a ceasefire and that it has found every reason not to have a ceasefire. We thank Guyana for its efforts in coordinating the E10 initiative. We thank all of those who voted in favour of the draft resolution. And we agree with the representatives of Malta and Algeria that it is the bare minimum that morality, humanity and legality call for. And even that bare minimum was vetoed.

I truly do not understand. They say, “we cannot be for an unconditional ceasefire”. What that means now, in effect, is “we are for a war”. They are saying, “we cannot be for an unconditional ceasefire that does not release the hostages”. Is this war releasing the hostages? Is it even trying to release the hostages? So what does that mean: “we accept this war that is killing hostages and that is killing, maiming, terrorizing and destroying an entire nation”? When is it enough? When do we reach the point at which we say, “no, we mean a ceasefire now”; “we will not allow you to not listen to us, to ignore us, to insult us, to play games with us”? This draft resolution is trying to restore life, to save lives. It is not a dangerous message. This veto is a dangerous message — to Israel that it can continue executing its plans, the very plans they oppose. And the messages we send do matter. And that is the wrong message, at the worst possible time.

Israel is responsible for the Palestinian civilians it kills. It cannot be absolved of that responsibility. It is killing them purposefully, deliberately, repeatedly and massively. It is starving them on purpose. Nobody can deny it. We have sat in this Chamber and heard every United Nations agency, every testimony, every non-governmental organization — Palestinian, Israeli and international — saying the same thing: this is by design.

What does it mean that the release of the hostages should be unconditional? That is what the Council has



said repeatedly now for a year: the release of hostages should be unconditional. But is stopping the killing of Palestinians conditional? Are there acceptable conditions to stop the mass killing of Palestinians? There are 100 Israeli hostages, and there are 2 million Palestinians in Gaza. They deserve better. They deserve respect for their lives, for their suffering. Israel will always claim that conditions have not been met, because its plans require it to continue this war, to annex the land and to destroy the people. And therefore we can no longer accept its conditions. Fourteen months have passed, and we are still debating if a genocide must be stopped. There is no justification whatsoever for vetoing a draft resolution that is trying to stop atrocities. There is no justification for that.

One day someone will dig up the records of these meetings and will see us pleading for the lives of our people over and over and over and over again. And they will try to understand why our calls were not heeded. They will look at the people who sat around this table and spoke and addressed the Council, from all over the world, to call on the Council to take action. They will read what everybody here has said. And then they will wonder how a genocide displayed on television and known to the whole world was able to continue for this long. They will wonder how, if the whole world was against the mass killing, against the displacement, against the starvation and against the annexation, it all occurred. It is because we are allowed to speak about the rules, but not to enforce them — because we can regret and reject, but not act.

There are many States stepping up now to change this reality. We call on all States and all peoples to stand for life, for freedom and for peace. We are out of time. We repeat that we are against harming any civilians. And we have more than enough of our share of grievances. We could have sat here and tried to justify harming civilians. We never did, not for one day. And we are still sitting here, after tens of thousands of our people have been killed, many have been detained and all have been traumatized and displaced. We have many reasons to say otherwise, and yet we remain steadfast: there is no reason to harm civilians, regardless of their nationality, their origin or the circumstances. But our civilians? What about our civilians? They are worthy of protection. Their lives should be saved. People cannot sit and demand Palestinian pacifism under all circumstances and enable Israeli militarism. That cannot be done. Either you believe that violence is an impasse and that there are no military solutions, and then you act for peaceful ones and reject military ones, or you let it be military. We are for a peaceful path, even after all that has happened. Help us

shout it, do not block it. Stop them. Help us. The Council would be helping Palestinians and Israelis and our region and the world.

There is a world out there where Palestinian children are able to grow. We are not born to be occupied and killed and displaced. That is not our destiny. That is not our fate. There is a world where we could live and grow and see our children grow, with no occupation, no bombs, no tents, no settlements, no walls, no military checkpoints, no prisons, no constant humiliation, no oppression, no houses demolished, no amputations, no pain and no agony. That world could exist today, if we were to act. And the fact we are not means that many, many more Palestinians will suffer — and others will suffer. We are trying to get there. We are trying to find a path that leads us there — to freedom, to life and to peace. That should be our common objective.

There is a world where there is no war in the Middle East; where Palestinians and Israeli civilians go about their lives; where maybe they can look confidently towards the future and even envisage more bridges between them; and where our region unleashes its true and full potential for the benefit of all States and all peoples. It is that future that is being destroyed before our very eyes, and the entire Palestinian civilian population is the primary victim.

We call on the General Assembly to uphold the responsibilities that the Council has failed to uphold owing to the veto cast by the United States. We call on all States to use all available tools to stop the massacres. The draft resolution was calling for an unconditional end to massacres, and that is always worth supporting.

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

**Mr. Danon (Israel):** Before I begin, I listened to the statement of the observer of the Observer State of Palestine very carefully. He mentioned a future with no pain and no suffering, but there was one word he did not mention during his statement — and I listened very carefully. What about Hamas? He must include in his statement that a future for Gaza is a future without Hamas. One cannot describe a world or a reality without mentioning the reason that we are sitting in this Chamber today, namely, the brutality of Hamas and the pain that the people of Gaza are suffering because of Hamas.

Today most of the members of the Council failed. They betrayed their own principles, their responsibilities to the innocent and their duty to uphold justice. The draft resolution brought before this Chamber (S/2024/835) was not a path to peace; it was a road map to more terror,

more suffering and more bloodshed. Many Council members attempted to adopt that injustice. We thank the United States for exercising its veto, for standing on the side of morality and justice and for refusing to abandon the hostages and their families.

The text ignored the suffering of the 101 innocent hostages still held by Hamas in Gaza. Had it been adopted today, the Council would have sent a message to the world that terrorists can act with impunity and that the United Nations will shield and surrender to murderers, rapists and kidnappers rather than holding them accountable.

Last week, Sasha Trufanov should have celebrated his twenty-ninth birthday surrounded by friends and family. Instead, he is being held by terrorist monsters who recently released a video showcasing his torture. Sasha has been starved. His face is bruised, and his spirit is crushed. Hamas does not just imprison; it torments and dehumanizes. It rejoices in its cruelty. And now it knows that the Council will do nothing to stop it. I would like to remind Ambassador Nebenzia that Sasha is a Russian citizen. He is a citizen of one of the 29 nations with citizens held hostage by Hamas, including Russia.

Naama Levy, a bright young woman who was just 19 years old, was taken and dragged into hell. Naama volunteered at a kindergarten for refugees, bringing light and love to children in need. We have seen the horrible images of her ankles cut and her sweatpants soaked in blood. Naama's innocence, humanity and dreams were all stolen by Hamas. Today some members of the Council told her family that her life is not worth enough to demand her freedom.

Those who supported the draft resolution have announced to the world that the lives of Sasha, Naama and 99 other innocent people are not valuable enough to be a condition for a ceasefire. Today the United Nations celebrates World Children's Day. Rather than demanding that little children like Ariel and Kfir Bibas be released immediately after 411 days in captivity, the Council is attempting to adopt a draft resolution declaring that their precious lives are not worth our time.

That is not diplomacy; it is appeasement. It is the abandonment of the very idea that the Council claims to defend. The world should be clear-eyed about what that

text truly represents: it rewards Hamas for its barbarity. It validates Hamas' strategy of using human shields, targeting civilians and tormenting hostages in its terror dungeons. It would have set a horrifying precedent that terrorism pays and that violence is met not with condemnation, but with concessions.

Why could the Council not agree on a condemnation of Hamas? Members mentioned that they worked tirelessly to draft the draft resolution. Could the 14 countries that voted in favour of the draft not sit down and agree to condemn, in one line, the atrocities of Hamas? Was that so difficult? The Council has already adopted four resolutions demanding the release of the hostages. Hamas has ignored every one of them. Why would it not? It has faced no consequences for its crimes, no repercussions for its atrocities and no accountability for its barbarity.

The loss of civilian life in Gaza is a tragedy, but it is a tragedy authored by Hamas. Hamas started the war. It has to be said that Hamas started the war on 7 October. We are not here because we want to be here. Hamas has held innocent Israelis hostage for over 400 days, with no sign of life or humanitarian access. It uses Palestinian civilians as human shields. If the Council fails to place the blame on the terrorists, it only emboldens them further.

Israel will continue to defend itself. We will never abandon our hostages, and the Council must understand that. Members must consider their own values and understand why we will never forget them and never stop fighting for their freedom. If Hamas were to release the hostages and surrender its weapons, not one more shot would need to be fired. But until that day comes, Israel will do whatever it takes to protect its people and bring our loved ones home.

Today the Council had the opportunity to stand on the side of justice, decency and humanity. If not for the United States, it would have chosen appeasement to reward terror and abandon the innocent. History will remember today's vote. It will remember who stood with the hostages, the victims and the principles of peace, and who betrayed them to shield terrorists.

*The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.*