



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

9174th meeting

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New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Biang	(Gabon)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Ghana	Ms. Oppong-Ntiri
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland	Ms. Moran
	Kenya	Ms. Nthoki
	Mexico	Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Alhefeiti
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Türkiye, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

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

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Olof Skoog, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; His Excellency Mr. Maged Abdelfattah Abdelaziz, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations; and His Excellency Mr. Neville Gertze, Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Wennesland.

Mr. Wennesland: I brief the Security Council today as the security situation in the occupied West Bank is caught in a downward spiral. Too many people, overwhelmingly Palestinians, were killed or injured in daily violence. Mounting hopelessness, anger and tension

once again erupted into a deadly cycle of violence that is increasingly difficult to contain. Decades of violence and its toll on both Israelis and Palestinians, as well as a prolonged absence of meaningful negotiations and a failure to resolve the key issues fuelling the conflict, created fertile ground for that dynamic.

In recent weeks, I have had discussions with Palestinian officials and factions across the West Bank and in Gaza and a range of Israeli officials and members of the international community to address the volatile situation. My message has been clear. The immediate priority is to work to calm the situation and reverse the negative trends on the ground. That will require determined actions by both parties, supported by the international community.

However, that cannot be a goal in itself. Efforts are also urgently needed to empower and strengthen the Palestinian Authority and build towards a return to a political process. The failure to implement strategies to address both the symptoms and the root causes of violent escalations will only worsen an already explosive situation.

Let me describe to the Council the current dynamic in the occupied Palestinian territory. In total, 32 Palestinians, including six children, were killed by Israeli security forces during demonstrations, clashes, search-and-arrest operations, attacks and alleged attacks against Israelis and other incidents, and 311 Palestinians, including one woman and eight children, were injured. Israeli settlers or other civilians perpetrated 106 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in 63 injuries and/or damage to property.

In all, two Israeli security forces personnel were killed, and 25 Israeli civilians, including five women and three children, and 13 Israeli security forces personnel were injured by Palestinians in shooting and ramming attacks, clashes, the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails and other incidents. In total, Palestinians perpetrated 115 attacks against Israeli civilians, 100 of which were stone-throwing incidents, resulting in injuries and damage to Israeli property.

In the reporting period, we saw a spike in fatal violence across the occupied West Bank. So far, 2022 is on course to be the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank since the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs began systematically tracking Palestinian fatalities in 2005.

The violence was particularly intense in Jenin and Nablus governorates, in the northern part of the West Bank. In Jenin, 10 Palestinians, including two children, were killed by Israeli security forces, while in Nablus eight Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces. Most of those fatalities occurred during military operations to arrest individuals Israeli authorities said were Palestinians suspected of involvement in attacks or planned attacks against Israelis and during related armed clashes.

In one such incident, on 28 September, Israeli security forces killed five Palestinians during an operation in the Jenin refugee camp, which involved an exchange of fire with armed Palestinians. Among those killed was a bystander and a 12-year-old boy.

Amid a spate of Palestinian shooting attacks against Israelis in the occupied West Bank, Palestinians shot and killed two Israeli soldiers at the checkpoint at the Shu'fat refugee camp, near Jerusalem, on 8 October and in a drive-by shooting near Nablus on 11 October. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade claimed the 8 October attacker as a member, and the Lions' Den Brigades, a newly formed group of armed Palestinians based in Nablus, claimed responsibility for the attack on 11 October. Amid search operations for the perpetrators, the Israeli authorities imposed strict restrictions on movement. Entry to the Shu'fat refugee camp was severely restricted for six days, while in Nablus, strict restrictions were in place from 11 October until yesterday, 27 October, affecting the delivery of basic services and economic activity.

Demonstrations and protests spread from Shu'fat to East Jerusalem and led to clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces. Tensions persisted when, on 13 October, a right-wing Israeli member of the Knesset led a group through the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, at one point brandishing a weapon and making violent threats.

On 25 October, Israeli security forces shot and killed five Palestinians during a military operation in the Old City of Nablus. The Israeli authorities said that they were targeting an explosives workshop belonging to the Lions' Den Brigades and that a senior member of the group was among those killed. Thousands of Palestinians subsequently demonstrated in Nablus, with protests spreading across the occupied West Bank.

Amid the heightened tensions, Palestinians conducted general strikes and five days of civil

disobedience campaigns across the West Bank, with further clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces.

Settler-related violence and provocations also significantly increased during the reporting period, contributing to the dynamic of escalating violence in the occupied West Bank. Throughout the reporting period, settlers held numerous demonstrations across the West Bank, with protesters on multiple occasions blocking main roads, throwing stones and impeding the movement of Palestinian residents.

Tensions were particularly high around Nablus, where settlers obstructed main routes for Palestinian residents and, on several occasions, groups of Israeli settlers entered the Palestinian town of Huwwara, south of Nablus, damaging Palestinian property and prompting clashes with residents, in some cases in the presence of Israeli security forces.

On 4 October, three Palestinians, including two children, were injured after Israeli settlers attacked a school with rocks and sticks. On 14 October, 15 Palestinians were injured, including two with live ammunition, in clashes with Israeli settlers and the Israeli security forces who accompanied them. On 20 October, two members of the Israeli security forces were injured after they were attacked by a group of settlers south of Huwwara, prompting condemnation from senior Israeli officials.

During the reporting period, the Israel Defense Forces announced that it had opened investigations into two separate cases, in which soldiers were documented violently assaulting Palestinians or shooting towards Palestinian homes.

I am alarmed by the intensity of violence in the occupied West Bank, including the high number of Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces, numerous armed attacks by Palestinians against Israelis, including killings, and settler violence. I reiterate that perpetrators of all acts of violence must be held accountable and that security forces must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life. I am appalled that children continue to be the victims of violence. Children must never be the targets of violence or put in harm's way.

During the reporting period, Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced owners to demolish 38 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and three in

Jerusalem, displacing 81 Palestinians. The demolitions were carried out owing to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain. On 3 October, with regard to the status of Khan Al-Ahmar, the High Court of Justice granted the State of Israel a postponement until February 2023 for its response to a petition that seeks to compel Israeli authorities to evacuate the Bedouin village in Area C. I call on the Israeli authorities to end the displacement and eviction of Palestinians and approve additional plans that would enable Palestinians to build legally and address their development needs.

Despite the overall deterioration of the situation, there were some positive developments during the reporting period. On 13 October, following an inter-factional dialogue hosted by the Government of Algeria, 14 Palestinian factions, including Fatah and Hamas, signed the Algiers declaration. In the declaration, the factions agreed, inter alia, to recognize the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and to hold elections for the presidency of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Legislative Council and the Palestinian National Council. I echo the Secretary-General in welcoming the agreement and underscore the importance of Palestinian reconciliation for a viable independent Palestinian State.

With regard to the Gaza Strip, Israel increased by 1,300 the issuance of permits for Palestinians from Gaza to work and conduct business in Israel, bringing the total number to more than 16,000. The reporting period saw the highest volume of imports from Egypt via the Salah ad-Din gate since it began its operations in February 2018, largely owing to Egyptian-funded construction projects, with more than 5,000 trucks entering Gaza during the period. Exports from Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing to Israel increased by 26 per cent, as compared to the previous period. Notably, the transport of fish to the West Bank resumed. Meanwhile, imports to Gaza through Kerem Shalom decreased slightly, with a daily average of 192 trucks, as compared to 223 last month.

Delays in the implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects, such as the Gaza Central Desalination Plant, have resulted from delays in Israeli approvals of entry for materials under the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism. Ensuring the timely approval for the entry of such materials is essential to

moving important development projects forward and sustaining vital donor support for such projects.

In the West Bank, on 20 October, Israeli authorities began implementing a pilot phase of new regulations governing the entry of certain foreign passport holders into the West Bank. The new regulations were issued in the context of a petition submitted to the High Court of Justice and are far more detailed and specific than those used in the past.

Unfortunately, the humanitarian response across the occupied Palestinian territory continues to face chronic funding gaps. As of October, only 57 per cent of the requirements of the humanitarian response plan had been met, as Palestinians across the occupied Palestinian territory face additional economic pressures and the risk of food insecurity due to the cost of living.

With regard to the region, in the Golan, the ceasefire between Israel and Syria was generally maintained despite several violations of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement of Forces by both parties, including the Israel Defense Forces firing across the ceasefire line into the area of separation and Syrian armed forces maintaining a presence in the area of separation. I remind the parties of the need to abide by the terms of the Agreement and prevent risks of escalation.

I welcome the 27 October signing by the Governments of Lebanon and Israel of an agreement that settles their maritime boundary dispute, mediated by the United States. That is an important and encouraging development, and I hope that it will promote increased stability in the region. I underscore the importance of Lebanon's forming a new Government and electing a new President, pursuant to the country's constitutional framework.

Lastly, let me turn back to where I started. Concrete steps by all sides are urgently needed to address the situation on the ground. I call on the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to recognize what is at stake and to take the necessary steps to restore calm. Let me repeat that such efforts need the full support of the international community. However, unless the core political issues are addressed, the deep-rooted mistrust and hostility will continue to grow. I clearly see the mounting frustration and anger of Palestinians in the face of decades of Israeli occupation. The Palestinian Authority urgently needs the economic support and political space to fully exercise its authority, including security in areas under its control. The United Nations

remains actively engaged with all relevant parties and is committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict by ending the occupation and realizing a two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 lines, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Wennesland for his briefing.

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

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): At the outset, allow me to commend the brotherly nation of Gabon for its able leadership of the Security Council and for convening this open debate. We listened to Mr. Wennesland's briefing.

Our people, our children and our youth are being killed. They will not die in silence, and they will not die in vain. What happens next is the responsibility of the Security Council. We have tried everything. We have knocked on every door, have searched for any avenue leading to freedom and dignity; justice and redress; and shared peace and security. Who thinks it is wise to shut every door in our face? Have they not wondered what would happen if we reached a dead end? We are sparing no effort to demonstrate that there is a peaceful path forward. Who would it serve to prove us wrong? How can we explain to our people that 75 years after the Nakbah they still need to wait for their turn to be free?

Every liberation movement that we have fought side by side with is now an independent State. Our oppressor, Israel, became the fifty-ninth State Member of the United Nations in 1949; 73 years and 134 Member States later, the State of Palestine has yet to become a Member State of the United Nations.

What does it mean to be in favour of the two-State solution and then allow the occupying Power the right of veto over our right to self-determination, over recognition of our State and over our membership of the Organization? Recognizing Palestine is not a card to be played at the right time. Even if it were, look around. There is no time left. It is the correct political, legal and moral step to be taken.

Imagine if Europe had decided not to recognize the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) until Israel did. Who would that have served? No one. It would have been morally unjust and politically unjustifiable. The European and American recognition of the PLO contributed decisively to Israel eventually having to

recognize the PLO. Israel is trying to destroy the State of Palestine. The role of the international community is to protect it, or it would be effectively abandoning the two-State solution altogether.

We did not come here month after month or go from capital to capital to demand offensive weapons or even defensive weapons. We came asking for international protection for our people — a protection they are entitled to. If that protection is not afforded and if the aggression against our people continues, what is the expected result? Israel kills, maims, displaces, demolishes, humiliates and then wonders how young Palestinians turned into lions.

The Israeli representative keeps asking everyone to put themselves in Israel's shoes, or should I say Israel's military boots? He asks what they would do "if". Well I am asking everyone to put themselves in our shoes, in our ripped shoes and our tired feet from our long march to freedom. Let me ask everyone here what they would do if their country were occupied, their land stolen and their people oppressed — or better yet, what did they do when they were? I ask everyone to revisit their own history — what did they do?

Long ago, we said it was time to live and let live. Either we live side by side or, I fear, we might die side by side. Help us to live. This is the Security Council. Endorse that option. Is security best served by occupying a land and transferring 700,000 Israeli settlers to colonize it? Is it best served by blockades or by the killing of innocent Palestinian civilians, of children? Is it best served by spreading despair like wildfire?

I have to ask, where does Israel's right to security end? Israel claims it in our cities and villages, in our schools and our universities, in our mosques and our churches and in our own homes. And where does our right to security start? Where? What does Israel need to do to finally be called what it truly is, the aggressor? And while every people on Earth have a right to defend themselves, that right belongs to us, not to those colonizing our land.

We chose the path of peace, and Israel responded with more violence, colonialism, annexation and aggression. But I am not here to talk about Israel. Israel is a colonial Power acting as such, unlawfully grabbing our land and persecuting our people. I am here to ask the international community what it is doing about it and what it is waiting for.

We are drifting away from every determination the Council has made and from our common objective. The international community invested so much time and effort and so many resources to advance the two-State solution. Will it stand idly by while Israel destroys it? I ask the international community to not pretend that it cannot see what the alternative to the two-State solution is. Do not fear the word apartheid, fear what that reality means for Palestinians today and for everyone else tomorrow. So many say it behind closed doors and deny it in public. If the international community cannot even say it, how can it fight it?

The role of the Council is not only to determine the way forward; it is to make sure that States embark on it and keep moving forward until they reach the destination. It is not to adopt resolutions and allow them to be breached over decades. It is not to only state the law but also, and more important, to uphold it. If the Council is unable or unwilling to do so, it is the responsibility of the General Assembly to determine what actions need to be undertaken in support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and just and lasting peace.

Our international law-based order never envisaged a situation of perpetual occupation. That is why the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions have reaffirmed the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. That is why annexation is rejected. That is why international humanitarian law has considered all manifestations of colonialism as grave breaches, and why criminal law has determined them to be war crimes. That is why aggression is deemed the supreme international crime and the most unlawful form of the use of force. Well, Israel is committing such actions in broad daylight and in defiance of the world and of the law.

If anyone here feels confident that Israel is not committing such acts, let us not continue debating. Let us instead ask the most authoritative organ in the world to make a determination. Let us go to the International Court of Justice and let it make a factual and legal determination in that regard. Is this a temporary occupation or a disguise for permanent annexation? Is it lawful or is it the most abject manifestation of the acquisition of territory by force? Is it discriminatory in nature and by design or not? If anyone here honestly thinks that that is not the case, let us ask the Court.

Oppressed peoples do not just surrender. Neither do they wait for their oppressor to one day finally decide to do the right thing, especially when everything around them confirms that their oppressor has no intention to change course. Our people look around and see more settlements and settlers. They see walls and blockades, homes demolished and families displaced. Everywhere they look, they see annexation — the annexation Israel announced in Jerusalem 40 years ago and the annexation it has enacted in the rest of the West Bank. It is untamed, undeniable and unacceptable annexation.

We know that the world recognizes our rights — we know the Council does. But standing by us also needs to mean standing up to occupation. Does the mighty Security Council have the spine to stand up to occupation? If there is anything more that can be done — and members of the Council know there is much more — they should do it. And they should do it now. What are they waiting for? Nearly 75 years have passed since the Nakbah. Nearly 55 years have passed since the occupation began. What are they waiting for? They need to do it — to light a candle now, before darkness takes over.

Trust a man who has been here for a long while: we are at the end of the road. Once we cross this threshold, there is no turning back. It is a leap into the unknown, except for one fact — more bloodshed awaits us until we find ourselves once again in a position to figure out a way forward, maybe decades from now. Our people will not despair. They will not renege on their national identity or accept subjugation. The Palestinian people will be free. One day or another. One way or another. We chose the way the world told us was best — the way the Council told us was best. I urge the members of the Council to not let Israel prove them wrong, for our sake and theirs.

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

Mr. Erdan (Israel): We just heard from the Palestinian representative. We all read his letters — all the hundreds of them. We heard President Abbas speak from the rostrum of the General Assembly just a month ago (see A/77/PV.10). The message is the same. It has not changed. It is a message of false victimhood, lies of oppression and fictions of aggression. Here at the United Nations, the Palestinians paint a picture that is completely detached from reality. Yet many in the international community choose to believe it. All

anyone needs to do in order to see past the Palestinians' falsehoods is to poke their heads outside the walls of this institution. All anyone needs to do is look at the facts on the ground.

Today once again, we are hearing blatant lies. The Palestinian representative calls Israel a colonial State. But Jews have been living in Judea and Samaria for thousands of years. One cannot colonize their own home. If what the Palestinian representative is saying about Israel is true, how can it be that Israel has signed six peace agreements with our regional neighbours? No — Israel is in the midst of a terror wave. Since the start of this year alone, there have been more than 4,000 Palestinian terror attacks perpetrated against Israelis. Car ramming, rock throwing, fire bombing, stabbings, shootings, rockets and many other acts of Palestinian violence have become a fact of life for millions of Israelis. That reality of Palestinian terror has existed for decades, even well before Israel's establishment.

We are soon approaching the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations partition plan to create a Jewish State along alongside an Arab State — what my friend here called the Nakbah — a United Nations decision. That plan was rejected outright by the Palestinians, and since then their terror against Israelis has grown exponentially. I often ask myself if, here at the United Nations, we all remember the historic decision to establish a Jewish State and an Arab State. Do members of the Security Council remember who it was that accepted the plan and who rejected it and started a war? The extent and threat of Palestinian terrorism did not simply grow on its own. It is the direct result of decades of incitement and hate. That is the part that the Palestinian representative always forgets to mention.

Rather than investing all of its resources into bettering the lives of its people, the Palestinian Authority prefers to foster a culture of hate and promote violence. Generations of refusals to merely recognize the right of a Jewish State to exist is what really prevents any progress, in addition to the fact that the Palestinians are divided and President Abbas does not even represent all of the Palestinian people and does not control Gaza.

The Palestinian Authority may play the victim here at the Council. Yet on the streets of Nablus and Jenin, they praise terrorists. Just last week, Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh visited the families of terrorists in Jenin, encouraging violence and furthering

incitement. Just a couple of days ago, Palestinian Health Minister Mai Al-Kaila expressed her praise for and respect to the members of the Lion's Den terror organization. But that should not come as a surprise. After all, their President, President Abbas — just like his predecessor Yasser Arafat — has made his opinions on terror and incitement very clear. From funding terrorists through his twisted pay-for-slay policy to frequently praising martyrs, the Palestinian culture of hate truly stems from the top. And when that incitement trickles down to the bottom, innocent Israelis are the ones who pay the ultimate price.

The Palestinian leadership has spent many years repeating its baseless allegations here on the international stage. Yet at the same time, they consistently refuse to sit down at the negotiating table with Israel and have rejected every peace plan placed before them, whether by Israel or by American Presidents, from both sides of the political aisle.

Peace can be achieved only through direct negotiations and mutual — I repeat — mutual concessions. But that is a fact that the Palestinians refuse to accept. We all heard President Abbas when he spoke in the General Assembly last month, launching once again unilateral campaigns for full membership status or de facto statehood while bypassing the negotiating table. That is not the path to peace. It only makes matters worse. Nevertheless, this institution refuses to see those facts. The United Nations and its bodies prefer to stay tangled in the Palestinians' web of lies. But what is worse is that this institution has adopted the Palestinians' dangerous, one-sided approach. The United Nations, its bodies and many Member States prefer to demonize Israel, blaming only one side for every aspect of the conflict. The biased Human Rights Council, for example, focuses absurdly disproportionate resources on condemning only Israel. Israel was even devoted a permanent item on the Human Rights Council's agenda, ensuring that each of its sessions provides a chance to bash the Jewish State.

The report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (see A/77/328), which was presented in the Third Committee yesterday, is yet further proof of the anti-Israel prejudice and antisemitism of the Human Rights Council. Over the next couple of weeks, nearly every United Nations Committee will vote on one-sided anti-Israel draft resolutions. That package of draft resolutions, the

Palestinian package, virtually takes every issue that this institution deals with and finds a way to condemn Israel on the topic. Shockingly, each year those biased draft resolutions, filled with lies, are adopted with widespread support. The list of anti-Israel United Nations practices is truly endless.

This institution's obsession on focusing all of the condemnation on one side — on Israel — is not only part of the problem, it is the problem. The biased approach of exclusively blaming the Jewish State sends the message that the Palestinians do not have to make a single concession. If Israel is always at fault, then why should they give up a single demand? That is not the way to achieve peace. In fact, it makes peace impossible. By continuing along the Palestinian-biased unilateral path, the United Nations, its bodies and many Member States directly perpetuate the conflict. The only way forward is to stop blaming Israel for all the region's problems. By exclusively blaming Israel, the Palestinians are rewarded for their incitement and terrorism, and chances for peace decrease.

While the disproportionate focus of this institution serves only to perpetuate the conflict, it also takes the focus away from the most significant threat to the Middle East, and even the world. For years, Israel has said that Iran is the most critical danger to the Middle East. Yet it seems that our warnings fell mostly on deaf ears. Today the Iranian threat could not be clearer, but we still sit here in this debate focused on the Palestinians' falsehoods and condemnations.

Iran may publicly threaten Israel with annihilation, yet those who suffer the most from the Ayatollahs' ruthlessness and terror are the people of Iran. Over the past couple of weeks, the murderous Iranian regime has not been able to hide its true colours. Its real face has been exposed for the entire world to see, and its inhumanity is truly undeniable. The regime oppresses women, while murdering them for not wearing headscarves properly. When the Iranian people peacefully protest that brutality, they are suppressed by live ammunition. Hundreds of protesters have been killed, among them children, and thousands have been arrested. How many more innocent Iranians must die at the hands of the Ayatollahs before action is taken?

The regime allows its own people to die of thirst in Isfahan, while it funds terrorism around the world. Iran executes thousands of its citizens, and those who are not executed, killed by the police, tortured, imprisoned

or beaten are robbed of their most basic rights. It is no surprise that economic sanctions — I repeat, economic sanctions — do not deter such cruel and bloodthirsty dictators. We can all see how vicious the Ayatollahs are to their own people, but their tentacles of terror reach far beyond the borders of Iran. They endanger us all.

Aside from the constant threat that Iran poses to maritime trade and shipping routes — we all remember the 2021 attack on the oil tanker *Mercer Street*, in which British and Romanian crew members were killed — Iran is also the number one global sponsor of terrorism. The regime pours billions of dollars into their terrorist proxies, which are spread across the region and beyond.

Between Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza and Hizbullah in Lebanon, thanks to Iranian funding, hundreds of thousands of rockets are currently pointed at Israeli towns and cities. Their sponsorship and weapons-smuggling to the Houthis in Yemen pose a threat both to critical infrastructure and innocent civilians across the Gulf States. But Iran does not only use its terrorist proxies to cause destruction. It also directly uses its own military. The Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps recently launched an attack against Kurds in Iraq, killing or injuring dozens of civilians. The most significant threat is that Iran is galloping at full speed towards nuclear weapons.

Ever since negotiations began to renew the nuclear deal, it was clear that Iran's goal was to drag its feet while continuing to advance its military nuclear capabilities. Between its increasingly advanced centrifuges and its growing stockpiles of highly enriched uranium, Iran is closer than ever to acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Let us just imagine how much more emboldened Iran's terrorist proxies will be when they can operate freely under the Ayatollahs' nuclear umbrella.

However, Iran's aggression extends far beyond the Middle East. Merely being the source of all regional evil is not enough; Iran has much higher aspirations. Iran's recent audacious attack against Albania's cyberinfrastructure is further proof that nobody is safe from the Ayatollahs' destructive impact. The rogue terrorist regime wishes to export its radical Shiite revolution all around the globe. Now, it is also causing carnage in Ukraine.

Today it should be clear to all members that not a single word the bloodthirsty Iranian dictators say

can be trusted. As we speak, Iranian attack drones are flying in the skies above Europe, wreaking havoc. Just this week, on a visit to the United States, the President of Israel shared irrefutable proof with President Biden that the drones operating in Ukraine are of Iranian origin. There is no longer a sliver of a doubt that Iranian weapons are now being used in Europe. Yet the Ayatollahs continue to blatantly deny the truth. They simply lie directly to our faces.

That should be a cause for serious concern, especially for those who think that rejoining the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is still a good idea. If Iranians continue to lie about their drones, I can assure the Council that they are also lying about their nuclear programme and its goals. Where is the logic in negotiating a nuclear deal, or anything else, with pathological liars, especially when it is such a short-sighted deal that will expire in mere years? But let me be clear, deal or no deal, the Iranian regime will continue with its deadly nuclear ambitions.

There is only one way to convince the regime to abandon the race to an atomic bomb — a credible military threat. It worked in 2003 and it will work again today. Only a credible military threat that endangers the Ayatollahs' reign will prevent the critical danger we will face if Iran becomes a nuclear-threshold State.

Only when the ruthless and dangerous extremist forces in our region are deterred will we have peace. Sadly, in the Middle East, peace is achieved through strength. The day that the Council understands and internalizes that valuable lesson will be the day that peace finally spreads across the region. As these monthly debates prove, sadly, arguing over trivial disputes in Israel does not bring reconciliation any closer. Let us look at the bigger and broader picture. The time has come to brush away all the lies and distortions that consume so much of the Council's time and to focus on the pressing issues at hand. That is the only way to ensure a future of peace and stability for the Middle East and for the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank Special Coordinator Wennesland for his briefing.

First and foremost, I would like to raise our deep concern about the security situation in the West Bank. This year is on track to be the deadliest for Palestinians in the West Bank since 2006. We have seen an incredibly worrisome spike in violence in several West Bank cities and a sharp increase in both Palestinian and Israeli deaths and injuries, including among children. In the past month alone, at least 23 Palestinians and four Israelis were killed, and attacks by violent extremists are on the rise.

We call on the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to do everything in their power to prevent such violence. That means security forces on both sides must refrain from taking uncoordinated actions that degrade the cooperation that has already endured difficult times. As President Biden has made clear, Israelis and Palestinians equally deserve to live safely and securely. Both peoples deserve to enjoy equal measures of freedom, dignity and justice.

Just as we have called on the Palestinian Authority to do more to prevent attacks, we also call on Israel to apply equal resources and vigour to prevent and investigate all violent attacks against Palestinians. All perpetrators must be held accountable for their outrageous attacks. The world must see that arrests, convictions and punishments are carried out without bias.

As we head into the height of committee season, we are once again facing a disproportionate number of draft resolutions with an unfair focus on Israel. Those one-sided draft resolutions and activities are a distraction and do nothing to improve the situation on the ground. Those outdated texts do not reflect the changing realities on the ground, with the new possibilities for cooperation ushered in through the Abraham Accords and other normalization agreements.

At the same time, we understand that the Palestinian people need and deserve a political horizon and something to hope for. Rather than simply rubber-stamping those General Assembly resolutions, we should all be thinking about how to collectively advance the cause of peace.

Despite our deep concerns about the security situation on the ground, we also feel that it is important to highlight real progress. On 11 October, after months of mediation by the United States, the Governments of Israel and Lebanon reached a deal to formally end their maritime boundary dispute and establish a permanent

maritime boundary between them. That deal secures the interests of both countries and sets the stage for a more stable and prosperous region. The United States applauds the work of Israel and Lebanon to reach that historic deal.

The agreement underscores President Biden's vision for the Middle East: a region that is more secure, integrated and prosperous, achieved through diplomacy and cooperation. The Negev Forum Working Group presents a similar opportunity for countries in the region to set aside their differences and work towards shared security and prosperity.

Let me be clear: while those regional peace agreements are not a substitute for Israeli-Palestinian peace, we believe that the momentum of those opportunities can be leveraged to advance progress towards a negotiated two-State solution. Both Israelis and Palestinians must remain committed to the idea that all peoples deserve security, justice, dignity and democracy. It is incumbent on both parties to work in good faith towards the vision of two States for two peoples. In that vein, we believe it is critical that Israel and the Palestinian Authority refrain from unilateral actions that undercut that vision.

Progress will not be easy. Setting aside decades of grievances takes courage and patience, but it is the only way forward. There is no shortcut to peace.

Ms. Oppong-Ntiri (Ghana): I would like to begin by thanking Special Coordinator Tor Wennesland for his briefing and for the work being done to ensure an amicable resolution of the dispute in the Middle East as it relates to the question of Palestine.

Ghana takes note of the positive and bold diplomatic attempts by Israel in recent times to improve ties with its neighbours and other countries in the Middle East region. We welcome yesterday's historic agreement with Lebanon to demarcate and regulate their rights to gas reserves on their joint maritime border. It is our expectation and hope that the rapprochement will mark the commencement of initiatives by both sides that will lead to the normalization of bilateral relations between the two countries.

We applaud the efforts of the Government of the United States of America, which helped to broker that landmark agreement. We believe that it takes bold leadership to invest in peace and encourage the two countries and all neighbours to work towards good-

neighbourliness and the sustenance of the goodwill that has been generated in the Middle East — a region with strategic geopolitical and economic importance for its States and for the world at large.

It is regrettable that the security situation in the Middle East has not seen much improvement since our previous meeting (see S/PV.9139). Rather, there has been an intensification of violence between Israelis and Palestinians in the northern West Bank in the past month. The period has been marked by near-daily Israeli operations to root out militants following a wave of deadly attacks against Israelis. There has also been a spike in the number of raids and arrests, concentrated in Nablus and the Jenin refugee camp.

As we have stated in the past, we condemn all incidents of violence, the use of force and unilateral action on both sides. We do not believe that violence can help in resolving the Middle East conflict and urge all militant groups to channel their energies towards a robust political process that can deliver much-needed peace — a precondition for regional prosperity and stability.

We call on both sides and all stakeholders to take immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and destruction, killings and human rights abuses, in violation of international humanitarian law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

As we are all aware, the State of Israel will hold its fifth election in three and a half years in a few days' time. We trust that the vision of the two-State solution, which has been widely recognized and generally accepted as a panacea to the protracted conflict, will continue to be upheld as the consensus of the international community.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate our strong conviction that the growing insecurity in the Middle East region does not augur well for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. We call on both sides to show maximum restraint and refrain from unilateral actions that could escalate tensions and prejudice the peace and mutual trust that are urgently needed to stabilize the situation and reverse negative trends on the ground.

We urge the Council and the wider international community to be constructive by sustaining the engagement of the parties, whose efforts in good faith are required to resolve the decades-long conflict.

Ms. Moran (Ireland): I thank Special Coordinator Wennesland for his briefing and assure him of Ireland's strong support for his work, and I stress the importance of the continued facilitation by all parties of his efforts.

As Special Coordinator Wennesland outlined, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory is extremely grave. Today I want to focus on three issues: the need for de-escalation and the protection of civilians; the need to halt Israeli settlements and settler violence; and the need for accountability.

As the Special Coordinator said, this year is on course to be the deadliest year for Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory since the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs began documenting in 2005. The impact on children is particularly disturbing. The security situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has deteriorated sharply. We are concerned that confrontations between Israeli forces and Palestinians often arise in response to attacks by settlers or incursions into Palestinian villages by the Israeli security forces. In some recent instances, reports suggest that those killed did not appear to pose a concrete or imminent threat to justify the use of lethal force. That raises serious concerns about the excessive use of force.

We are troubled by the restrictions on movement imposed by Israeli security forces. While such restrictions have largely been lifted in the Shu'fat refugee camp and, more recently, in Nablus, in both cases they remained in place for long periods of time. The restrictions severely and adversely affect access by entire populations to basic services, such as health care, education, food supplies and waste collection—200,000 people in the case of Nablus.

We are also very concerned at the recent entry into force of new rules governing entry procedures for foreigners into the West Bank, which may be incompatible with Israel's responsibilities as an occupying Power under international law.

We welcome the Israeli Prime Minister's support for a two-State solution at the General Assembly last month (see A/77/PV.8). We urge the Israeli Government to take concrete action to support that aspiration.

Israel's continued support for, and expansion of, settlements undermines the recognized parameters for a two-State solution. Ireland reiterates its call on Israel to cease all settlement activities. They are illegal

under international law and flagrantly violate Security Council resolutions. We are particularly concerned about the sharp increase in coordinated and armed settler violence in parts of the West Bank, especially in the town of Huwvara and parts of Nablus.

As the olive harvest gets under way, Ireland calls on the Israeli authorities to act urgently to ensure that Palestinians living and farming in the occupied West Bank are able to go about their daily lives without fear of violence and intimidation.

Turning to the Gaza Strip, it is positive that Israel increased the number of work-related permits from 15,000 to 16,000 per day, but we note that that leaves the vast majority of people in the Gaza Strip ineligible to apply for Israeli exit permits.

Reconciliation among the Palestinian factions is critical. The recent signing of the Algiers declaration of national reconciliation is a positive step. We call on the Palestinian Authority to follow through with inclusive elections, which are vital to democratic renewal and legitimacy. We also call on the Israeli authorities to uphold their obligation to facilitate in full a democratic process, including in East Jerusalem.

Ireland condemns the killing of two Israeli soldiers at checkpoints in Nablus and East Jerusalem earlier this month and the stabbing of two Israeli citizens earlier this week. We especially deplore attacks against any innocent civilians in Israel or the occupied Palestinian territory.

Ireland calls for accountability in respect of all civilian deaths and, in particular, for an independent investigation into the killing of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh.

Ireland remains committed to a two-State solution as the only sustainable prospect that will enable Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace. In that context, Ireland highlights the need for the preservation of the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem, and we acknowledge the custodial role played by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in that regard.

In addition, a just and lasting solution must be found for Palestine refugees across the region. Ireland and the European Union continue to support the vital work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which is essential to stability across the region.

In conclusion, I thank the Special Coordinator for his update on the wider region. Ireland welcomes the announcement that the Governments of Lebanon and Israel have agreed to settle their maritime boundary dispute, and we commend the role played by the United States and France. As a long-standing troop contributor to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, Ireland believes that that development can contribute positively to stability and prosperity for the Lebanese and Israeli peoples. It demonstrates that the resolution of difficult issues is possible. Ireland hopes that such progress will also encourage the formation of a Government in Lebanon and the election of a new President.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Tor Wennesland for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in the Middle East region in the context of a Middle East settlement.

We just listened to the emotional statement of the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, Mr. Riyad Mansour, which could not fail to move anyone who really cares about the fate of the Palestinian people and wants peaceful coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli States.

The Security Council is truly indebted to the Palestinians. The resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly have not been implemented for decades. I wonder why that has not been reported by those that effectively sabotaged them. We believe that the time has indeed come for the Council to take steps to rectify that unacceptable situation.

Today's open debate on the situation in the Middle East is taking place against the backdrop of yet another escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli confrontation in the occupied Palestinian territories — the West Bank of the Jordan River, including East Jerusalem — and around the Gaza Strip, which resulted in bloody clashes and numerous casualties.

There are almost daily news reports of civilian deaths in the context of Israel's so-called anti-terrorist raids. There are also casualties among the Israeli military. That development is of the greatest concern. We call on everyone to show restraint and immediately refrain from violence and provocative actions.

This is not the first time that such outbreaks of violence have occurred. The trigger for the resurgence of violence may be the ongoing unilateral steps, primarily by Israel, to create irreversible facts on the ground,

such as the construction of settlements in the occupied territory, the eviction of Palestinians, the destruction of their homes, the expropriation of property, arbitrary arrests and the de facto *carte blanche* of the Israeli military to use force.

The current situation is the result of many years of stagnation regarding the Middle East settlement. The United States of America and the European Union bear a large share of the responsibility for that tragic state of affairs. By declaring the need to prioritize other crises, Washington and Brussels are trying to distract the attention of the international community from acute regional conflicts, including the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which is key to the Middle East. Cooperation within the Middle East Quartet of international mediators, a unique diplomatic mechanism endorsed by Security Council resolutions, has collapsed. We note that it is not the first time that that has happened. Our colleagues always have excuses as to why they are once again not ready to work seriously towards achieving peace between the Palestinians and Israelis.

Russia's position remains consistent and unchanged: a reliable and long-term solution to the Palestinian question is possible only on the basis of the two-State solution endorsed by the United Nations — Palestine and Israel coexisting in peace and security on the basis of the 1967 borders. At the same time, Israel's security concerns must be taken into account.

We oppose attempts to move away from that principle or replace it with all sorts of dubious options, such as an alternative homeland or economic peace for the Palestinians. Such ideas are promoted by those that harbour plans to plunge the Middle East into chaos so as to disrupt the increasing momentum in the region for resolving long-standing issues through dialogue.

The many years of stagnation in the political settlement have been actively exploited by the opponents of the peace process, which use the current status quo to create unilateral irreversible realities on the ground. The violence, coupled with the settlement policies and attempts to unilaterally change the status of Jerusalem's holy sites, further aggravates the situation. That undermines the prospects for the establishment of an independent, viable and contiguous Palestinian State.

We see a way out of that vicious cycle in the immediate resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, which we have long urged, and in the restoration of international cooperation. Other final-status issues, including

refugees and water resources, should also be resolved during direct negotiations between the parties. On a positive note, we acknowledge the recent decision of the Palestinian factions that met in Algiers to continue moving towards national unity. We believe that to be an important step and confirmation of the Palestinians' desire to engage in negotiations from a common position. We are ready to assist the Palestinians and regional actors in that regard.

In principle, we remain committed to collective efforts. At the same time, in our national capacity, we are determined to build on our extensive relations with the parties and all countries of the region in order to improve the situation in the Middle East and resolve regional problems, including the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

We were surprised today to hear the categorical assertions by the Permanent Representative of Israel about the allegedly confirmed use of Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles in Ukraine. We see that as an attempt to pressure the Security Council and the Secretariat and impose its view on the international community as the final verdict. We have already rejected, and again categorically reject, such allegations.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): As we heard from Special Coordinator Wennesland, there is an increasing worrisome deterioration of the security situation in the West Bank. It is crucial that all parties take urgent steps to reduce tensions, condemn incitement and avoid further escalation of violence. The cycle of violence continues to take many lives. We are alarmed by the number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, by Israeli security forces, including six minors this month. Investigations should be transparent and comprehensive. Where there has been an excessive use of force, those responsible must be held to account.

We are also concerned about the increase in Palestinian violence, as a result of which two Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers sadly lost their lives this month after being shot by Palestinians. We repeat our call on all parties to take immediate steps to reduce tensions.

We also stress the importance of ensuring access for humanitarian and development organizations, including in Palestinian refugee camps, even during periods of instability.

More action also needs to be taken to tackle settler violence, which has affected IDF soldiers. But it also affects Palestinians on a daily basis across the West Bank, especially during the olive harvest. The Israeli Government needs to end the culture of impunity and bring those responsible to justice.

As we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the International Day of the Girl Child this month, we should all be reminded of the vital role that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) plays in the region, including in providing education and health services to women and girls. But, while girls in the occupied Palestinian territories outperform boys at school and represent around 60 per cent of Palestinian graduates, the fact that employment rates remain low, with only 13 per cent of women over 25 employed, needs urgent and meaningful attention. The United Kingdom remains a firm supporter of UNRWA and values its importance as a vital humanitarian and stabilizing force. We encourage efforts to improve UNRWA's serious financial situation, which will threaten its ability to deliver vital services later this year if action is not taken.

The need for the parties to engage in meaningful dialogue and collaborate to address the escalating situation in the West Bank is urgent. We are working closely with the parties to that end, and we welcome the efforts of the Special Coordinator to support de-escalation and encourage further work to reverse negative trends on the ground.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I thank Special Coordinator Wennesland for his account of most recent developments on the ground.

We remain deeply worried about the deterioration of security in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The escalation of tensions and outbursts of violence causing destruction and victims, especially among innocent civilians, always brings pain and desperation, which is just the opposite of what people need and what we expect. Violence and its consequences remain one of the serious threats to the prospect of peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. That is why it is paramount to support every effort, avoid any further escalation and help restore a political horizon for peace talks to create the conditions for just and sustainable peace.

A political horizon is a requisite for hope. Without hope, we are condemned to watch the spiral of violence move the Israelis and the Palestinians further apart and

make it even harder to build trust and work for peace and coexistence among both peoples. We call on both sides to step back from taking unilateral actions that exacerbate tension and commit themselves to de-escalation. Ensuring rights for everyone and the protection of civilians must be a priority in all circumstances. The commitment of the leadership of Israel and Palestine to work towards a two-State solution is very encouraging. We reiterate our support for the two-States solution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem serving as the future capital of both States.

We are firm in our support for all genuine initiatives that put parties on the right track towards the fulfilment of the aspirations of the Israelis to live free of terror and in security, and of the Palestinians to live in their own State. In that respect, reconciliation and unity among Palestinian factions in clear support of the two-State solution, through peace and negotiations, not violence, may help move forward on the path to provide for an equal measure of peace, prosperity and rights for both nations and for a just and lasting outcome.

Violence breeds further violence, which leads to a dead-end. We have seen that many times. The endless deadly cycle must be broken, and we can stop violence through negotiations, dialogue and diplomacy, as well as through and with a perspective. The maritime agreement between Israel and Lebanon, mediated by the United States, is a clear example of diplomacy delivering results. Diplomacy keeps the guns away. With diplomacy and dialogue, there are always only winners, no losers. Therefore, nothing will ever replace dialogue as the best means to achieve stability and prosperity across the region.

While we support dialogue, understanding and every step that leads to an improved situation in the region, we must make sure not to tolerate transgressive behaviours. The indiscriminate launching of rockets by Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other terrorist groups into Israel are unacceptable and should be firmly condemned by all. But we must also expose and condemn those who help them in such behaviours. We condemn in the strongest terms the destabilizing role that Iran plays in the region and beyond. Iranian money and support continue to fuel violence through proxies in the region. Now, as we know, in a clear breach of resolution 2231 (2015), illegally transferred Iranian drones are killing civilians and destroying civilian

infrastructure in Ukraine. And when Iran does not send killer drones, they resort to massive cyberattacks against critical infrastructure in peaceful nations.

We condemn in the strongest terms the particularly repressive actions of the Iranian regime against its own people. It is not the first time. Every time Iranians ask for more freedom and rights, they are met with brutal repression. But this time, the genie is out of the bottle. The repressive regime will not be able to kill all those women who are just asking to live their lives with dignity, and the many more who support them. If anything, history teaches us that, despite everything, freedom ends by winning, and Iran will never be an exception. While the regime is immured in the past and obscurantism, its population, the Iranian people, in particular youth and women, are already in the future.

Coming from a country where multi-religious harmony is an institution, I cannot avoid reiterating the importance of maintaining the peaceful coexistence of all religions and their worshippers. In that regard, we reiterate our call for upholding the status quo of the holy sites and praise Jordan's special role in this respect.

Let me conclude by deploring the sharp rise of hate speech and other forms of incitement of violence, in particular one of the most despicable forms of it — antisemitism. We must stand up. We would be making a terrible mistake if we were to allow antisemitism to become trivial. I end by reiterating what Albanian Prime Minister Rama said in his recent visit to the Middle East:

“Antisemitism is a cause for everyone, not just for Israel and for Jewish people. This is why being against antisemitism is not about keeping the flag of Israel, but holding the flag of humanity”.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Coordinator Wennesland for his briefing and welcome the representatives of Palestine and Israel to the meeting today.

I wish to emphasize the following three points.

First, the current situation has once again highlighted the importance of achieving common security. The recent period has seen a continuation of the volatile security situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The search-and-arrest operations carried out by Israeli security forces in the West Bank have resulted in a large number of Palestinian casualties. At the same time, Israelis have also been killed in attacks.

The escalating violence has given rise to fear and hatred and intensified conflict and turmoil, and the situation could spiral out of control. That development is deeply unsettling for China.

Israel and Palestine will remain neighbours, with interdependent and indivisible security. We call on all parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint, refrain from any unilateral action that could lead to miscalculation or an escalation of tensions and make every effort to reverse the negative trends on the ground and to de-escalate the situation as soon as possible. The occupying Power should earnestly fulfil its obligations under international law to ensure the safety and security of the people in the occupied territory. The international community should attach equal importance to the security concerns of both Palestine and Israel and encourage both sides to find the greatest common ground through dialogue and cooperation in order to achieve common security. We support the efforts of Special Coordinator Wennesland to that end.

Secondly, the current situation once again highlights the need to implement the international consensus. In the West Bank, more than 1,200 Palestinians in the Masafer Yatta area are at risk of eviction. Many who are reluctant to leave their homes, where they have lived for generations, are living in caves in difficult conditions. Eighteen per cent of Area C of the West Bank has been designated as military zone for training, with some 50 per cent more designated for other purposes, effectively closing it off to Palestinian construction, economic activity and development.

The continued expansion of settlement activities encroaches on Palestinian land, expropriates Palestinian resources and violates the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, thereby making a contiguous, independent and sovereign Palestinian State even more elusive. We call on Israel to cease all settlement activities and to create conditions for the development of Palestinian communities in the West Bank, as called for in resolution 2334 (2016).

Thirdly, the current situation has once again highlighted the urgency of advancing the two-State solution. The Palestinian question remains unresolved after more than 70 years, the flare-ups of violent conflicts, the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the spreading hopelessness are constant reminders that the status quo in the occupied Palestinian territory is unsustainable. The international community cannot

replace a comprehensive and just solution with piecemeal crisis management, and neither can it make up for what is overdue on political and security fronts with limited economic and humanitarian measures.

The international community should facilitate the resumption of peace talks between the two sides as soon as possible, steer the Middle East peace process back on track and seek a long-term settlement on the basis of the two-State solution. In that regard, the Security Council is duty-bound to take active and robust actions in order to support the efforts of Palestinian people to restore and exercise their inalienable rights, and it must live up to the expectations of generations of Palestinians of fairness and justice.

Intra-Palestinian reconciliation is crucial to the cause of independent Palestinian statehood. China welcomes the internal reconciliation agreement reached by the Palestinian political factions in Algiers this month and commends the positive role played by Algeria in that regard. We believe that it will be conducive to enhancing intra-Palestinian unity and promoting peace talks between the two sides.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate China's support for the establishment of an independent State of Palestine that enjoys full sovereignty on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, the peaceful coexistence of Palestine and Israel and the common development of the Arab and Jewish peoples. China will continue to work relentlessly alongside the international community in pursuit of a comprehensive, just solution to the Palestinian question.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Coordinator for his presentation.

France is very concerned about the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, particularly in East Jerusalem. The figures speak for themselves. Since the beginning of the year, more than 120 Palestinians from the West Bank and Jerusalem and 20 Israelis have been killed, and many others have been injured. The extremely high level of tension and the risk of further escalation of violence require all parties to consider the consequences of their future actions. In the interest of all, France calls on them to refrain from any provocation or unilateral action.

France will never compromise on Israel's security and condemns any attack targeting its territory or

its nationals. It reiterates the imperative need to respect international law, particularly international humanitarian law.

As we know, one of the root causes of this resurgence of violence is the continuation of the settlement policy, which is illegal under international law, hampers any political settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and jeopardizes the possibility of a two-State solution. The increasing violence of the settlers must stop, and those responsible must be held accountable before the relevant authorities. France strongly condemns the advancement of plans to expand and create settlements, particularly in Area E-1. Furthermore, we condemn the evictions of Palestinian families and the demolitions. We are also very concerned about the latest developments in Masafer Yatta. We call for a halt to the evictions and demolitions, which are violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Another reason for the rising tensions is the growing restrictions of movement and access for Palestinians in the occupied territories. Those restrictions, which now also apply to foreigners in the West Bank, are unacceptable.

The increase in tension and violence in the West Bank and Jerusalem described by the Special Coordinator also illustrates the urgency of resuming direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. France continues to support the two-State solution, with Jerusalem as capital of both States. We are determined to work towards the implementation of that solution within the framework defined by international law, the resolutions of the Council and the internationally agreed parameters. That is the only solution that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples for peace and security.

In view of the urgency and gravity of the situation in the West Bank, the Council must act by unanimously calling for de-escalation in order to avoid any further spiral of violence. For that to happen, a credible political horizon must be restored to defuse the tensions. France therefore calls on all members of the Council to contribute actively to the resumption of the peace process and stands ready to contribute to those efforts alongside its partners, as it has reaffirmed on several occasions, including to President Abbas and Prime Minister Lapid.

Mrs. Alhefeiti (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank Mr. Tor Wennesland for

his detailed briefing and for his efforts and attempts to calm the escalating situation in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Despite the repeated appeals by the members of the Security Council over the past months to defuse tensions, we regret the continued trend towards a dangerous escalation. The recent period has witnessed a worrisome upsurge in confrontations on the ground between Palestinians and Israelis. Undoubtedly, the lack of negotiations between the two parties is one of the causes of that escalation. The absence of prospects for a political solution has also led recently to a state of frustration, fear and feelings of anger over the situation on the ground.

As for the Security Council, instead of proactively taking measures to prevent the situation from worsening, we have reached a stage at which the conflict seems to control our responses to the ongoing developments. What we need today is an urgent diplomatic action that restores confidence between the parties and encourages them to return to genuine and serious negotiations. We would like to recall that escalation would not be in the interest of any party. A political solution is the only way to end this conflict and establish an independent and sovereign Palestinian State, based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel in peace, security and mutual recognition.

It is imperative in the current situation to stop all illegal practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, especially those that increase the likelihood of further confrontations. That includes the repeated incursions into the cities and villages of the West Bank, mainly in Nablus, as well as the restrictions on the movement of residents. The situation is further exacerbated by continued settler violence, which increased recently and must stop. In that context, we reiterate that the construction and expansion of settlements constitutes a violation of international law, undermines the two-State solution and hinders peace efforts. Considering the recent increase in the number of casualties, we remind all the parties to abide by their responsibilities under international law and international humanitarian law, particularly regarding the protection of civilians, especially children. In that regard, we support Mr. Wennesland's statement on the need to protect children from harm following the death of a young child, Rayan.

In addition, in the light of the recent incursions into the Ibrahimi Mosque in the city of Hebron and holy places in the Holy City of Jerusalem, we affirm that any unilateral or provocative action in holy places must also stop. It is imperative to preserve the status quo in the holy city, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 478 (1980). We also highlight the important role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as Custodian of the Holy Sites and religious endowments under international law and the historical status quo, without prejudice to the powers and competencies of the Administration Department of Awqaf and Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs. We appreciate the efforts of the Al-Quds Committee, under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI of the Kingdom of Morocco, in protecting the city.

The Palestinian people continue to face difficult humanitarian conditions. According to United Nations reports, 36 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line, and the Gaza Strip has one of the world's highest rates of unemployment. We stress that responding to the fragile humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory requires intensifying cooperation between the Palestinian and Israeli authorities and United Nations agencies, as well as increased international support for the Palestinian people.

For its part, the United Arab Emirates signed a cooperation agreement this month with the World Health Organization to provide \$25 million in support to Makassed Hospital in East Jerusalem, as well as medicines, medical supplies and equipment.

As we highlight the need to support the Palestinian people, we appreciate the efforts of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria in facilitating the recent consultations that resulted in the Algiers declaration on Palestinian reconciliation. We also commend the historical role of the Arab Republic of Egypt in that regard.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I thank Special Coordinator Wennesland for his briefing. We share his concern about the deteriorating security situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. His efforts and those of his team towards de-escalating the situation are crucial. We urge all actors to engage with the Special Coordinator, to whom we assure our support.

Norway also echoes the Special Coordinator's concern that mounting violence is fuelling a climate

of fear, hatred and anger. That cycle of violence has the potential to spin out of control. Such a development would be detrimental to the security of both Israelis and Palestinians. We urge all actors to refrain from actions and rhetoric that could contribute to further escalation.

We are particularly worried about the increased use of live ammunition. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than 100 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces this year, making 2022 the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank since 2006.

Settler violence also remains a major concern. Norway condemns all violence against civilians, including all acts of terrorism. We urge the parties to do their utmost to protect civilians, especially children, exercise the utmost restraint when the use of force is considered necessary and to ensure that any force used is proportional to the threat faced. We denounce any use of force that results in the killing or injury of civilians. Such incidents should be subject to an independent investigation, in line with international standards.

We are also concerned about the reported increase in the number of children detained, as well as the physical violence being inflicted on children during detention. We call on the Israeli authorities to uphold international law and adhere to juvenile justice standards, including by resorting to the use of detention only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest period of time possible.

Movement restrictions have a significant impact on access to education and health care in the occupied West Bank. We welcome Israel's decision today to lift some of the closures that had been put in place around Nablus earlier this month. Norway calls on the Israeli authorities to continue easing movement restrictions in Nablus and other places in the West Bank.

We call on Palestinian factions to come together under a unified leadership with a commitment to the two-State solution and peace. Palestinian unity and elections are key to ensuring the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority and its institutions. We welcome the sentiments expressed by Palestinian factions in Algiers earlier this month, and we urge Palestinian factions and key regional actors to continue consultations to advance national reconciliation.

Norway is deeply concerned about the recurrent critical financial situation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near

East (UNRWA). It is time to act on the Secretary-General's recommendation to increase UNRWA's funding from the United Nations assessed budget, and we call on all to support initiatives to that end.

We have seen a significant positive achievement in the region recently. We welcome the historic agreement establishing a permanent maritime boundary between Israel and Lebanon. We commend Israel and Lebanon, as well as the United States, for their efforts to reach that agreement.

Let me therefore conclude by offering one clear message. Cycles of violence and conflict are not inevitable. They can be reversed through re-establishing a political horizon and returning to the negotiating table. Norway continues to support the two-State solution and will continue to work towards that goal.

Ms. Nthoki (Kenya): I welcome Special Coordinator Tor Wennesland's briefing on the recent developments on the ground, particularly given the trajectory of events in recent weeks. I welcome the participation of the representatives of Israel and the Observer State of Palestine in today's open debate.

We meet once again against the backdrop of recurring and escalating violence, as well as fatalities among both Jewish and Palestinian civilians, including children. The recent unrest, militia activity and shootings in Nablus and Jenin, including in the refugee camps, are concerning. The heightened tensions and increasing military search-and-arrest operations and movement restrictions in the West Bank signal a deteriorating security situation that we have not witnessed in decades. Beyond security concerns, the current situation continues to have implications on the economy and humanitarian aid assistance in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza.

My delegation has regularly taken note of the progress made on cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians at all levels, including in security and economy matters. As such, it is critical that the evolving situation, including the underlying issues fuelling the instability, be urgently addressed before it reverberates in other areas. The mediating and de-escalating role of religious and community leaders from both sides remains critical. Kenya welcomes the Special Coordinator's continual engagement with key figures from both parties and at all levels, including the recent meetings in Nablus and Jenin. Compliance

with obligations, including the protection of the civilian populations, remains critical.

For years, month after month, the Council has heard alarming reports of incidents, acts of violence and fatalities, including clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinians; settler-related violence, demolitions and forced and potential evictions in East Jerusalem; and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. As a Council we continue to strongly, and rightly, condemn the terrorist attacks and indiscriminate launches of rockets and mortars by Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and affiliated militant groups targeting civilian-populated centres. But now more than ever there is an urgent need to shift from an approach that depicts such incidents as isolated in specific cities or moments in time. In our view, the Council has to move beyond the existing cyclical, and in many ways stagnant, state of engagement with the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. Kenya has repeatedly called for enhanced analysis and contextualization of reports, to be provided by the good offices of the Secretary-General, to enable us to better appreciate the implications of those incidents in the maintenance of peace and security in the region. Discussions can and should continue, but they should be embodied in preventive diplomacy and characterized by Council action. The discussions and actions should also be commensurate with actual happenings and risks and a proper reading of the situation on the ground.

The actualization of the long-held goal of a region where two democratic States — Israel and Palestine — live side by side in peace and within secure and recognized borders based on the 1967 lines will demand greater urgency. It will also demand more meaningful commitment to the peace process by both parties in alignment with international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the Council's resolutions and regional peace initiatives and frameworks, both existing and new. The commitment to an independent, sovereign, viable and contiguous Palestinian State also means an immediate and complete cessation of Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, as demanded by the comprehensive pillars of resolution 2334 (2016) and the provisions of resolution 1860 (2009).

It is our hope that the Algiers declaration signed on 13 October by 14 Palestinian factions can translate into actual reconciliation and pave the way for elections to establish a Government of national unity. Kenya

welcomes these high-level outreach and mediation efforts by Algeria and others by neighbouring States, including Jordan, Egypt and Qatar. Let me reaffirm that Kenya's interest continues to be supporting an end to the protracted conflict. My delegation further reaffirms that peace efforts, both at the official and grass-roots levels, that comprehensively integrate the socioeconomic development of all sectors of society are and will be critical to the stability and peace of the region in the interim and for the long term.

We join other delegations in recognizing the important role played by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, including the call for reinforced funding for the Agency. The important work of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force also remains vital to the stability of the subregion. As I conclude, we urge both parties to avoid unilateral steps that stand in the way of a resumption of a political process and of ensuring the peace and stability of the region.

Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation thanks Special Coordinator Wennesland for his briefing and welcomes the delegations of Israel and Palestine. The Special Coordinator has once again provided a clear picture of an extremely fragile security and humanitarian situation.

First of all, my delegation notes with great concern the volatility in the West Bank and the high risk of a major conflagration with repercussions in Gaza and throughout the region. As we have heard, and as the entire Council has reiterated, this has been the most violent year since 2006, with a tragic toll of more than 100 Palestinian fatalities, including 26 children, as well as 20 Israeli victims. We deplore the escalation of violence in the West Bank, particularly in Nablus, which continues to result in deaths, injuries and property damage. The restrictions on access to that city have seriously disrupted the daily lives of more than 200,000 people with consequent economic, humanitarian and psychosocial impacts. In the circumstances, it is urgent to ensure the immediate and unimpeded entry of humanitarian personnel and assistance to facilitate the provision of basic services to the population. On top of that, settler incitement around Nablus is creating an atmosphere marked by constant fear and uncertainty, which could lead to protests and further confrontation. We urge social leaders to refrain from provocations

and the Israeli authorities to bring those responsible for attacks on civilians to justice.

Mexico has always recognized Israel's right to legitimate self-defence in accordance with the rules of international humanitarian law. We therefore renew our call for Israeli security forces to observe the principles of necessity, proportionality and distinction at all times when they exercise the right to self-defence. At the same time, we take note of reports issued last month by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (see A/77/356) and by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel (see A/77/328). We call for the visits of those mechanisms to Israel and Palestine to be facilitated so that they can discharge their mandate.

Mexico reiterates its support for a political process leading to a two-State solution, with East Jerusalem as the future capital of both States, in accordance with United Nations resolutions. That is the only way it will be possible to put an end to the spiral of violence and lay the foundations for future reconciliation. We support the good offices of Special Coordinator Tor Wennesland in maintaining contacts and dialogue at the highest level. The international community and the Council must prioritize an immediate détente to avoid an escalation that would have greater and even more unacceptable human and material costs.

In view of the complex humanitarian situation, Mexico supports the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. My country plans to make a voluntary financial contribution to the Agency again this year. We also call on all Palestinian political factions to continue working to overcome their differences and focus on meeting the basic needs of the Palestinian people. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the Algiers declaration signed by 14 Palestinian factions, which is a step towards intra-Palestinian reconciliation. We hope that the commitment to holding presidential and legislative elections will be met without delay.

Finally, we welcome the agreement between Israel and Lebanon on the delineation of their maritime border, signed following the successful mediation efforts led by the United States, which is undoubtedly an encouraging message for the entire region and the world. We hope it

can lay a foundation for promoting a sustainable peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): Brazil remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating security situation on the ground, especially in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. We thank the Special Coordinator for his engagement with various stakeholders with the aim of reducing tensions. We join his calls for political and community leaders on all sides to act in good faith through dialogue to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control. We agree that the fragility of the situation underscores the urgency of changing the current dynamics while addressing the underlying causes of instability. We cannot risk further escalation.

We call on all parties to exercise restraint. At this point, it should not be necessary to remind all parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law or of the importance of ensuring accountability and preserving the status quo of the holy sites or of the role the Waqf Council plays in that regard. Confidence-building measures are especially needed in this time of acute crisis.

Brazil welcomes the signing of the Algiers declaration on 13 October by 14 distinct Palestinian political groups and thanks Algeria, and notably President Tebboune, for the successful mediation efforts. We echo the Secretary-General's words of encouragement to all factions to overcome their differences through dialogue and to follow through with the commitments contained in the declaration, including the holding of elections.

We underscore that Palestinian reconciliation can meaningfully contribute to achieving a durable solution to the conflict. Intra-Palestinian reconciliation, alongside the improvement of living conditions in the West Bank and Gaza, which will only be possible with sustainable economic growth, are important steps towards peace. One must not forget the role played by poverty, food insecurity and lack of hope in providing the grounds on which extremist forces flourish.

Low levels of funding to United Nations appeals signal the fatigue of the international community in terms of its capacity for assistance, with crises on several fronts. The humanitarian situation of Palestinian refugees remains nonetheless critical. Numerous capabilities must be restored so that the United Nations can continue providing its indispensable

work of assistance, which is necessary for maintaining stability. The civilian population, including children, must not continue to pay the price for the failure to move forward towards a viable political solution to this long-standing conflict.

Brazil reaffirms its firm belief in the need for a two-State solution, within the framework of international law and the resolutions of the Council, as the way to meet the aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians and to ensure the security of all.

I would like to conclude on a positive note. The announcement that Lebanese and Israeli negotiators have agreed, with the mediation of the United States, to delineate their maritime boundary permanently is indeed a historic breakthrough and a very concrete development that will, hopefully, benefit both countries and contribute to the security and stability of the region. The successful conclusion of those negotiations demonstrate that, with a political vision in pursuit of a common goal, significant progress can be achieved.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): I thank Special Coordinator Tor Wennesland for his briefing.

India welcomes the recent agreement between Israel and Lebanon on delineating their maritime boundary. That is a positive step towards achieving peace and stability in the region. We acknowledge the constructive role of the United States and France in bringing the negotiations to fruition.

India has consistently supported peace, stability and prosperity in West Asia, which is our extended neighbourhood. Last month marked two years since the signing of the Abraham Accords. During the first leaders' summit of the I2U2 group, held in July, the Prime Minister of India, the Prime Minister of Israel, the President of the United Arab Emirates and the President of the United States agreed to increase joint investment in six key areas — water, energy, transport, space, health and food security. Since then, we are moving forward on projects that aim to bring energy security, food security and economic growth to West and South Asia. In that context, we also welcomed the full normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Bahrain and the Sudan.

We hope that those regional developments give impetus to the Middle East peace process. Accordingly, we encourage Israel and Palestine to take concrete steps

to resolve the conflict peacefully and to re-engage in meaningful negotiations on all final-status issues.

The only way to achieve lasting peace is a two-State solution achieved through direct negotiations, taking into account the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians for statehood and Israel's legitimate security concerns. We urge the United Nations and the international community to play an important role in the efforts towards resuming those negotiations. There is no alternative to the two-State solution.

Turning to the situation on the ground, we are deeply concerned about the escalation of violence in Israel, the West Bank and Jerusalem. We condemn all acts of violence and attacks against civilians, including acts of terror, provocation, incitement and demolition. Violence begets violence, and we urge both sides to break the current cycle of violence before it spirals out of control.

I will conclude by reaffirming India's unwavering commitment to the establishment of an independent, viable and democratic State of Palestine, while taking into account Israel's legitimate security needs. India remains convinced that to achieve long-lasting peace and stability in the region, there must be a just, sustainable and comprehensive solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Gabon.

I thank Special Coordinator Tor Wennesland for his inspiring briefing. We are concerned about the deteriorating situation he described.

The past few weeks have been marked by a familiar cycle of daily violence in the occupied Palestinian territories and in Israel. The recent Israeli raids, which have caused numerous casualties, particularly among young people in the West Bank, on the one hand, and the attacks claimed by the Lions' Den armed group against Israeli troops and civilians, on the other, reflect an unacceptable deadly violence on a daily basis. Continuing settlement activities, settlement expansions, evictions and demolitions of Palestinian homes exacerbate the frustrations and tensions on the ground.

We call for restraint and de-escalation, and stress the need to respect international law, in particular international humanitarian law, and to ensure the

protection of the rights of the Palestinian people, while guaranteeing the security of Israel. That is what is needed to achieve the peace we all seek.

The deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in which youth represent the largest part of Palestinian society, is alarming. The population of Gaza is facing a severe shortage of basic necessities and drinking water, as well as many restrictions that contribute to food insecurity.

We reiterate our call for funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to ensure the Agency can continue its work at a time when it most needs to restore its operational capacity. Without that financial support, vulnerable civilian populations risk losing access to health-care services, education and food as a result of the deteriorating security environment. That would dramatically increase social unrest on the ground and exacerbate poverty and violence.

We call for the full lifting of the blockade of Gaza, in accordance with resolution 1860 (2009), in order to facilitate unimpeded access for humanitarian aid.

On the thorny issue of the return of human remains to the families, we call on the parties to prioritize a solution that will generate a climate of trust for a lasting peace.

Gabon reaffirms its commitment to the two-State solution — a Palestinian State coexisting with the State of Israel, living in peace and security within secure and recognized borders based on the 1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital.

We urge the parties to refrain from any belligerent rhetoric or provocative acts that could fuel violence, of which women and children would be the first victims, with an increased risk of destabilizing the region.

We call on the parties to resume negotiations in good faith, with a view to restoring trust and enabling the aspirations of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples to live in peace. To that end, the role of the countries of the region and those with influence on the parties is crucial to the resumption of peace talks and removal of the obstacles that stand in the way of the two-State solution.

The recent remarks by Israeli Prime Minister at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly regarding the two-State solution (see A/77/PV.8) are part of a momentum that must be sustained.

With regard to the intra-Palestinian talks, we welcome the signing on 13 October of the Algiers declaration by 14 Palestinian factions. Palestinian unity is essential, both politically and in terms of the economy, in the context of the two-State solution called for by all.

We would also like to reiterate our support for the King of Morocco, Chair of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, in preserving the special status of the Holy City as a symbol of the common heritage of humankind and of the three monotheistic religions and as a place of dialogue and mutual respect. Respect for the status quo of the holy sites is also a requirement for the peaceful coexistence of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

In conclusion, we reiterate our full support to the Special Coordinator, Mr. Tor Wennesland, for his tireless efforts for peace in the Middle East. Diplomatic efforts must continue for the revival of a process aimed at lasting peace.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

Mr. Szijjártó (Hungary): We appreciate this opportunity to address this very important matter, as the world has been faced with a set of multiple parallel crises since the war broke out in Ukraine in February. I am representing a neighbouring country of Ukraine, Hungary. The impacts of the war on us are therefore immediate and very severe. Member States know that living next door to the war makes us extremely interested in peace being made as soon as possible, and we are very aware of the significance and importance of achieving conclusive peace as soon as possible.

The war in Ukraine is a regional war. But, in that context, I want to make the remark that it is absolutely certain that the more regional conflicts that exist, the greater the chance that they will all result in a global war, a world war, which, I believe, is something that none of us would like to experience.

The war in Ukraine highlights the importance of putting an end to and resolving the greatest possible number of — and preferably all — regional armed conflicts that are currently taking place in the world. The Middle East has always been a source of serious security risks in recent decades. The security situation

in the Middle East undeniably has a direct impact on the security situation of Europe, because the consequence of unrest in the Middle East is the increasing threat of terror, as well as additional massive illegal waves of migration. Those both pose a serious security-related risk to Europe. Particularly at this time, Europe does not need — and, I would say, would not be able to handle — another security-related challenge. For us Europeans, it is therefore of the utmost importance that there be huge steps made in the Middle East towards peace.

If we look back at the recent decades, there have been many failed attempts to bring about peace, or to come closer to peace, in the Middle East. The first successful initiative was the Abraham Accords, which was the first process to offer a realistic hope for peace in the region. In that regard, I believe that we must recognize the role of President Donald Trump and Jared Kushner, who facilitated the cooperation and the discussion between Israel and the Arab countries that was needed in order to reach a peaceful and reorganized relationship.

From the perspective of the current situation in the eastern part of Europe in particular, the methodology for concluding the Abraham Accords was very enlightening and telling. We can draw conclusions from that methodology regarding the situation in Ukraine, since what was necessary for the Abraham Accords was the presence of a true leader who was brave and strong enough to open — or, let us say, reopen — the communication channels between the parties, which have been in deep conflict with each other. The Abraham Accords brought about a very positive development for the region, which, realistically speaking, was completely unexpected,

If it was possible for President Trump to make peace between Israel and some Arab countries and reorganize the relationship between Israel and the Arab countries, it must also be possible to create peace in Ukraine, because there we need the same methodology: dialogue and the reopening of communication channels.

In conclusion, let me put it this way: we must look at the example of the Abraham Accords when it comes to the current security-related challenges. If there are no negotiations, there will be no peace. If there are negotiations and discussion, there is hope for peace. I therefore hope that, even in this Organization, the rhetoric of war will be replaced by the rhetoric of peace. We should continue the method put forward by

President Trump in the Middle East and maintain the dialogue between Israel and the Arab countries and their counterparts. We must also apply that method in and with regard to Ukraine. We must reopen the communication channels, and there must be a dialogue in order to resolve that very serious security-related challenge in Europe as well.

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

Ms. Mrad (Lebanon): I thank you, Sir, for organizing today's open debate. We are grateful for the efforts of Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, as he resolutely and ably fulfils his mission in such a complex region as ours.

I do not want to sound pessimistic; however, every month we see that it becomes harder and harder to achieve the long-desired peace in the Middle East. Israel's policies and practices of expanding the building of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, uprooting Palestinians from their homes and lands and dividing their cities, particularly in East Jerusalem, generate hatred, aggravate the deadlock that has stymied the peace process and undermine all efforts to achieve a two-State solution.

Only a comprehensive and just solution based on resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 2334 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 194 (III), among other resolutions, can provide the basis for a political settlement that gives the Palestinians their long-overdue political rights and right to self-determination.

Nevertheless, we have no choice but to call on the Security Council — and through it the international community — to put pressure on the unyielding party to the conflict, Israel, to engage in a robust peace process. The efforts of the Middle East Quartet are urgently needed to convince the parties to return to the negotiating table in a constructive spirit and embark on a peace process with the aim of achieving a two-State solution. We also note with concern that not all situations of conflict receive the same attention. It is necessary that we devote equal attention to the long-standing conflicts in which the Charter of the United Nations and human rights are being violated.

The lack of long-term funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) risks the suspension of the essential services that it provides

to millions of Palestinian refugees, including those living in Lebanon. UNRWA's services are essential for giving their recipients the dignified lives they deserve to enjoy. They are also a pillar of stability for the whole region. That is why we urge the Security Council and all peace-loving nations to guarantee the predictable and sustained funding of UNRWA by providing regular and multi-year contributions and allocating funds to cover its operational costs from the regular budget of the United Nations in order to secure adequate capacity to ensure the continued delivery of its mandate, which is expected to be renewed for three years in December.

Lebanon greatly values the important role that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) plays in the maintenance of peace and security in south Lebanon, and we are grateful to the troop-contributing countries for their decades-long commitment to peacekeeping in Lebanon. Israel's daily violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, which contravene resolution 1701 (2006), increase tensions in the area and represent a threat to peace and security. However, the presence of UNIFIL and its role in de-escalation and reducing tensions is essential for creating an environment conducive to enabling stability.

The Lebanese Government remains committed to implementing resolution 1701 (2006), which we consider to be the overarching resolution that established the UNIFIL mandate. We call on the Council to compel Israel to refrain from committing further airspace violations and acts of aggression in the territory of Lebanon, as well as any acts of escalation that could jeopardize the full implementation of the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006).

Lebanon reaffirms the importance of coordinating the activities of UNIFIL with those of the Lebanese Government, as stipulated in the UNIFIL status-of-forces agreement, with the aim of implementing resolution 1701 (2006) in full.

Yesterday, Thursday, 27 October, Lebanon signed an agreement to delineate its southern maritime border at an event hosted by the United Nations. We thank all the parties that facilitated that agreement under the auspices of the United Nations and hope that it will bring stability and prosperity to the people of Lebanon. We also hope to be able to capitalize on that momentum to explore tangible avenues for seeking viable solutions of other current issues.

As outbreaks of turmoil continue to occur on every continent, allow me to end on a positive note, with a quote from the President of the Lebanese Republic, General Michel Aoun,

“As my mandate as President is about to expire, my gift to the Lebanese people is the demarcation of the maritime borders. Now that the borders in the south are stable, there will be no war or instability.”

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

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express to you, Mr. President, our appreciation for your wise leadership of the Security Council’s work this month. I also thank Mr. Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing.

Egypt associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of Arab States, as well as that to be delivered on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Although Egypt and several other Member States spoke at the open debate held in July (see S/PV.9099) on the deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, today we witness a surge in violence perpetrated by the occupying forces and settlers. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has reaffirmed that 2022 has been the bloodiest year in the occupied Palestinian territory since 2006.

Other violations also continue, including the demolition of Palestinian homes and facilities, the expansion of settlements and administrative detentions and the continuing blockade of the Gaza Strip. All those violations have been documented in United Nations reports, the most recent of which is the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

Egypt continues its efforts to contain any further escalation of the conflict in the occupied Palestinian territory in order to protect the lives of the brotherly Palestinian people. However, if the current escalation continues, it could lead once again to an increase of violence that could spiral out of control, bringing to mind previous cycles of violence that claimed the lives of innocent Palestinians. That is why all unilateral measures and acts of violence, whether by the occupying forces or the settlers, must end.

There is also a need to provide international protection for the Palestinian people and start implementing the recommendations of the ministerial meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of International Assistance to Palestinians held in September, at which Egypt expressed the need for ending the Palestinian economy’s reliance on the Israeli side and providing it with all the means needed for it to prosper naturally. It is also important that the UNRWA mandate be renewed in December, without any modification or change of its mandate, and that support be provided to proposals for increasing its funding through the regular budget of the United Nations.

Egypt reiterates that it will not be possible to achieve security and stability in the Middle East without granting the Palestinian people their legitimate rights, especially their right to self-determination and to establish an independent State within the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in addition to the liberation of all the Arab territories occupied since 1967.

With regard to the developments concerning the situation in brotherly Libya, we welcome the appointment of Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya. In that regard, we stress that, as we are about to adopt a draft resolution to renew the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, the ongoing efforts to hold simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections, building on the constitutional basis that Egypt has staunchly supported and facilitated, must be intensified.

We remind all stakeholders of the need for consistency with regard to the international community’s approach to the agreed terms of reference. A Government whose mandate has expired and has ceased to have any legal validity must not be allowed to continue in power, as that would undermine the prospects for achieving stability in Libya and have a negative impact on the economic potential of our brother people of Libya.

With regard to the situation in our brother nation of Yemen, Egypt reiterates its support for all efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive settlement of the crisis. We continue to support the efforts of the Special Envoy for Yemen and his consultations with all the parties to achieve a settlement through a political solution that guarantees the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Yemen in line with the agreed terms

of reference for resolving the crisis. We hope that the Yemeni stakeholders will agree to renew the truce, which will help to achieve a successful conclusion of the transitional phase, the restoration of security and stability, an end to the Yemeni people's humanitarian plight and an intra-Yemeni consensus on reaching a comprehensive settlement of the crisis.

In conclusion, Egypt joins all the members of the Security Council and a majority of the international community in welcoming the delineation of maritime borders between Lebanon and Israel, which represents a serious step towards establishing rights, peace and security in the Middle East.

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

Mrs. Al-halique (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Sir, we would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for your efforts in presiding over the work of the Security Council this month. We also thank Mr. Wennesland for his briefing.

Major regional and international developments continue to affect the present and future of our peoples. Those crises demand that we work together to confront them and mitigate their effects. The large number of crises around the world tends to shift the international community's attention and effort from one crisis to another, a problem that reinforces the importance of prioritizing and settling issues that have gone unresolved for decades, particularly when that is directly tied to the realization of the rights of peoples in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law. What unites us under the umbrella of the United Nations are our common goals of maintaining international peace and security and promoting constructive relations among nations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and the right to self-determination of all peoples, including the Palestinian people.

For Jordan, the Palestinian question is the primary and central issue, as it will never be possible to achieve a comprehensive and just peace or security and stability in the region and beyond without establishing an independent sovereign Palestinian State based on the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international law and the relevant international terms of reference, including the resolutions of the Security Council and the Arab Peace Initiative. Concerted efforts must be made at the

international level to find a genuine political horizon that will enable a return to serious and effective negotiations for achieving peace in the region on the basis of a two-State solution.

Israel continues its unilateral, provocative and escalatory actions in the occupied Palestinian territories. We condemn its ongoing incursions into Palestinian cities and repeated attacks on them, most recently in its aggression against the cities of Nablus and Ramallah at dawn on 25 October. Its escalatory military campaign threatens a new spiral of violence for which we will all pay a heavy price. In that regard, we must warn that violence can only generate more violence and that actions that perpetuate the occupation, combined with the total stalemate in the peace process, will lead to a dangerous escalation that threatens security and stability. Israel bears responsibility in that connection, as such actions could undermine any remaining chances of achieving a just peace, as well as the viability of the peace process.

We also want to warn the world that Israel's continuation of its steps aimed at changing the legal and historical status quo of Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif and imposing a temporal and spatial division of it represent a serious escalation and an unacceptable violation of international law and of Israel's responsibilities as the occupying Power. Based on the Hashemite custodianship of the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, which is held by His Majesty King Abdullah II, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan affirms that it will continue its efforts to protect the holy sites and preserve their historical and legal status quo. We stress how important it is that Israel respect the fact that Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, in its entirety of 144,000 square metres, is a place of worship exclusively for Muslims, and that Jordan's Department of the Jerusalem Awqaf and Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs is the only entity authorized to manage all affairs related to Al-Aqsa Mosque and regulate access to the site.

With regard to the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), we emphasize the Agency's pivotal role in promoting regional stability and as an important stabilizing factor in the region. Jordan calls on all Member States to support the renewal of UNRWA's mandate during the current session of the General Assembly and to support proposals aimed at increasing its funding from the general budget of

United Nations so that it can continue to provide vital services to refugees.

In conclusion, Jordan calls on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility for ensuring that Israel ceases its continuing violations of international law and the Charter, as well as all unilateral provocations in the occupied territories, because the consequences of such acts will be catastrophic for all of us. We also urge the Council and the international community to take effective steps at the international level to provide the Palestinian people with protection and launch genuine efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region so as to maintain international peace and security.

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

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): First of all, let me congratulate you, Sir, and the delegation of Gabon on a very successful presidency of the Security Council this month.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The constantly deteriorating and extremely volatile situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, is getting even worse as a result of Israel's escalation of its human rights violations, breaches of international humanitarian law and recurrent brutal and criminal assaults, which have claimed scores of innocent lives and left hundreds of Palestinian civilians wounded, including children and women.

The situation in East Jerusalem in particular remains of deep concern, due to the repeated violations and daily incursions by Israeli extremist settler groups and occupation forces into the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, along with their ongoing attempts to impose a spatial and temporal division of that holy Islamic shrine. Such acts are in contravention of international law and the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 2334 (2016), and constitute violations of the historic and legal status quo at the holy sites. Furthermore, those violations are provocative and hurt the feelings of all Muslims across the globe, threatening to ignite a dangerous religious conflict that would gravely

jeopardize stability and fuel violence in the region and beyond.

The OIC commends the continued efforts of His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco, as Chair of the Al-Quds Committee, to protect the Islamic holy sites in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and stand up to the Israeli occupation authorities' measures aimed at Judaizing the holy city. We also praise the concrete role played by the Al-Quds Committee's Bayt Mal Al-Quds Agency in carrying out projects and activities building development and steadfastness for the holy city's inhabitants.

We welcomed the signing of a declaration in Algiers emanating from the Unification Conference to Achieve Palestinian National Unity, held in Algeria between 11 and 13 October, and in that regard we highly commend the efforts of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of Algeria and his personal commitment to achieving intra-Palestinian reconciliation, which is vital to a politically stable, economically viable, sovereign and independent State of Palestine.

The OIC reiterates the call for full respect for the historical and legal status quo of Jerusalem and its holy sites and for the historical Hashemite custodianship over the Christian and Muslim holy sites in the city. In that regard, the OIC stresses that the Jordanian administration of the Jerusalem Awqaf and Al-Aqsa Mosque affairs is the only entity authorized under the provisions of international humanitarian law to manage all the affairs of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in the entirety of its 144,000 square metres. It also stresses that maintaining comprehensive calm requires Israel to respect the legal and historical status quo of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Al-Haram Al-Sharif and to find a real political horizon that guarantees the fulfilment of all legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, on the basis of a two-State solution.

In that regard, the OIC reaffirms that the historical and legal status quo of the holy sites in East Jerusalem must be maintained and respected. We call upon international actors and bodies, including the Security Council, to take urgent action to stop the assaults, ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory and guarantee accountability and justice for the horrific crimes being committed by the Israeli occupation forces.

We express our deep concern about the critical situation of the approximately 50 Palestinian political prisoners who last month started a mass hunger strike to protest Israeli administrative detention abuses, as well as the inhumane and oppressive treatment they experience in violation of their most basic human rights. The OIC stresses that Israel's law-breaking record must be urgently checked, in line with its obligations under all relevant international instruments, and that it must be held fully accountable for its treatment of all Palestinian prisoners who it illegally holds captive in its prisons and detention centres, including women and children and ill persons.

In the same vein, Israel's continued and extensive land appropriation, colonial settlement construction and facilitation, accompaniment of settlers' acts of provocation, violence and terrorism against the Palestinian civilians, raids of their towns and vandalism of their properties and agricultural fields continue unabated, in grave breach of international law, in particular international criminal law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

In that regard, we stress that such illegal acts, if left unchecked, will further embolden Israel, the occupying Power, to continue those recurrent crimes and violations. It is time for accountability measures to be pursued, in accordance with international law, including the many relevant United Nations resolutions calling for a complete end to Israel's illegal settlement activities. We urge the Security Council to uphold its resolutions in that regard and work to implement them forthwith as a vital contribution to bringing those crimes to a halt.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that peace and justice require accountability for the human rights violations and heinous crimes that we have witnessed for too long in occupied Palestine. There cannot be peace without justice. Ultimately, the constructive and effective role of key international actors in reviving hopes and prospects for peace requires urgent efforts to de-escalate the situation and advance justice.

To that end, this organ is urged to engage in and promote a multilaterally sponsored peace process aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace that will end the Israeli occupation and ensure the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including Palestinian refugees, and lead to the long-delayed independence and sovereignty of the State of Palestine,

within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

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

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): We have seen many events unfold recently in the Middle East. On a positive note, Japan commends the achievement of an agreement on the Israel-Lebanon maritime boundary, as well as the mediation efforts of the United States, as significant and meaningful steps that will contribute to confidence-building, reduced tensions, and stability in the region. We are very hopeful for the constructive engagement of the parties concerned in the implementation of that historic agreement.

It is true, however, that the region is still faced with a number of challenges, including the Palestinian issue, among others. Japan reaffirms its support for the two-State solution based on the relevant Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters. We are pleased to hear that the leaders of both Israel and Palestine voiced support for the two-State solution at last month's general debate of the General Assembly (see A/77/PV.8 and A/77/PV.10). We are also closely monitoring the implementation of the Algiers declaration on the unification of Palestinians, which was signed by the Palestinian factions, including Fatah and Hamas, on 13 October. We hope that those efforts will pave the way to Palestinian national reconciliation and the holding of elections in Palestinian territories.

Japan is deeply concerned about the deteriorating security situation and the growing number of casualties in parts of the West Bank. Any further escalation of the situation must be avoided. Japan calls on the parties concerned to refrain from taking any provocative actions or unilateral measures that could undermine the prospect for a two-State solution, including Israeli settlement activities, demolitions and evictions, which constitute violations of international law and must end immediately.

At a recent meeting held by Foreign Minister Hayashi with 16 Arab Ambassadors to Japan, we emphasized the need for the international community to continue its support for Middle East peace so that hope is not lost in the face of the stalled peace process.

Japan is concerned that soaring global food and fuel prices are making life even more difficult for

Palestinian refugees. We greatly value the indispensable work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in support of the Palestinian people. Japan has contributed approximately \$30 million to UNRWA this year, including \$6.8 million in food assistance. We maintain our close coordination with UNRWA, including its Commissioner-General, Mr. Lazzarini.

Let me conclude by expressing Japan's unwavering determination to contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East.

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

Mr. Gaouaoui (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I congratulate Gabon on its presidency of the Security Council during October.

We meet today at the usual quarterly open debate to discuss the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The dire situation remains unchanged. More acts of aggression are being perpetrated by occupation forces and settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank. The sanctity of the holy sites in Al-Quds Al-Sharif is being violated. The unjust and inhumane blockade on Gaza Strip remains in place.

That is emblematic of the plight of the Palestinian people, who continue to languish under the occupation without any sign of improvement or resolution of the crisis, as the international community, including the Security Council, remains unable to implement international resolutions and assume full legal and moral responsibility to maintain international peace and security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, while failing to propose any new initiative that might break the stalemate and paralysis blocking the path leading towards a political settlement.

The continued apartheid policy and expansion of settlements on Palestinian territories constitute a clear and explicit violation of resolution 2334 (2016), which unequivocally states that the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories is illegal. Furthermore, the continued unilateral decisions adopted by the occupying Power to systematically impose a policy of *fait accompli* on the ground and change the historical and legal situation of the sacred Al-Aqsa Mosque, while attempting to Judaize the holy sites in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, contravene international law and undermine any hope of achieving a just and

comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question, in line with resolutions of international legitimacy.

As recent events have shown, those practices are exacerbating the situation on a daily basis, which raises legitimate questions about the importance of providing international protection to the Palestinians, especially in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Jerusalem. Those events undeniably demonstrate that there is a need for concerted efforts by all stakeholders to end the practices of the occupier, thereby providing the necessary environment and conditions for resuming peace negotiations and working to address the root causes of the conflict by ending the occupation of all Palestinian territories.

As our country believes that a comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian question will come about only as a result of a comprehensive political settlement, Algeria, under the direct personal supervision of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, has hosted reconciliation talks among Palestinian factions, which culminated in the adoption of the Algiers declaration, which was endorsed by the Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and a number of countries.

In that regard, the Algiers declaration stresses the importance of holding elections within one year of its signing and of Palestinian unity under the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The declaration ensures Palestinians' unity on the internationally recognized terms of reference to enable our Palestinian brothers to engage in any future negotiating process according to a clear and shared vision.

Algeria stresses once again its firm position and unconditional support for the brotherly Palestinian people in their quest to enjoy their inalienable rights, first and foremost among them the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent, sovereign State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, together with a resolution of the issue of Palestinian refugees. We also stress the need to preserve the legal and historical status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its holy sites, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

In that context, we would like to emphasize that the Arab Peace Initiative remains one of the terms of reference for a political solution to the Palestinian question and represents a common position to be

emphasized during the upcoming Arab Summit, hosted by Algeria next week. That will contribute to restoring momentum to the Palestinian question, as it is a core and central issue for Arab countries. In addition, Algeria supports Palestine's request for full membership in the United Nations, which would accelerate the process of reaching a political settlement acceptable to all parties in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the Palestinian question holds special meaning for the peoples of the region and that its prolonged stalemate could make the region particularly volatile and pose

a threat to international peace and security. That is why we must address the root causes of the conflict by ending the occupation of the Palestinian territories and enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and to establish their independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are still a number of speakers on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I intend to suspend this meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.05 p.m.