



Security Council

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Letter dated 27 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefing provided by Mr. Nikolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, and statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, as well as a statement by the President of the Council in response to questions posed by some delegations, in connection with the video-teleconference on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” held on Tuesday, 25 August 2020.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the briefing and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dian Triansyah **Djani**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Statement by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Nickolay Mladenov**

I address the Security Council today following the agreement that was reached between Israel and the United Arab Emirates that stops Israeli annexation plans over parts of the occupied West Bank and includes the normalization of relations between the two countries. The Secretary-General has welcomed this agreement, hoping it will create an opportunity for Israeli and Palestinian leaders to re-engage.

Israel's commitment to suspending annexation removes an immediate threat that had the potential to upend the peace process and regional stability. The Secretary-General has consistently called for Israel to abandon these plans. Annexation would constitute a most serious violation of international law, effectively close the door to a renewal of negotiations and destroy the prospect of a viable Palestinian State and the two-State solution itself.

The Israel-United Arab Emirates deal also has the potential to change dynamics across the region. It creates new opportunities for cooperation at a time when the Middle East and the world face grave dangers from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and radicalization. It will create economic opportunities and opportunities for peace.

I hope it will also inspire leaders on all sides to re-engage constructively in meaningful negotiations to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The terms of reference for resolving the conflict have not changed — they are based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, bilateral agreements and international law. Only a two-State solution in which Israel and Palestine live side-by-side in peace, security and mutual recognition can lead to sustainable peace.

Today is not the time to despair about the Palestinian cause. Annexation plans have been stopped. In fact, today is the time to redouble efforts and reach out more actively than ever to leaders in the Middle East, and for the Palestinian and Israeli leadership to re-engage constructively. Regrettably, we continue to confront a series of multilayered challenges on the ground, as the resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic in the occupied Palestinian territory and in Israel continues to be a major concern. The United Nations and its partners have continued to support Palestinians in responding to the pandemic, including by addressing critical gaps in medical supplies and equipment.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian economy is in freefall. Now that the imminent threat of annexation has been removed, I hope that the Palestinian leadership will resume accepting its clearance revenues and provide some breathing space for the battered economy.

Recently, the security situation in Gaza has also deteriorated, which is a trend that soon may become irreversible. It is essential that the ceasefire agreement brokered by Egypt and the United Nations, which has proved effective since August 2018, be reaffirmed. Mediation efforts will continue; however, I am concerned that militant activity, incendiary balloons, rockets and a deteriorating humanitarian situation inside the Strip are rapidly eroding existing arrangements.

During the past months, Gaza's economy deteriorated dramatically. Compounding the impact of continued closures, intra-Palestinian division and more than a decade of Hamas rule, COVID-19-related restrictions have halted the crossing of workers and traders into Israel and inhibited revenue transfers to Gaza's exporters. The current absence of cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and Israel

has also slowed implementation of critical infrastructure projects, and jobs have been lost.

The Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process continues to work with the United Nations country team, donors and the parties to address the needs in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. On 28 July, the United Nations country team released its COVID-19 Development System Response Plan, outlining critical interventions that the United Nations will implement in the coming 12 to 18 months in support of the Palestinian Government. I encourage Member States also to support these efforts.

The United Nations is deeply engaged in efforts to mitigate the economic and humanitarian consequences of the Palestinian Authority's decision to halt all coordination with Israel in response to the threat of annexation. As reported last month, the United Nations reached agreements with the Palestinian Government to facilitate vital deliveries of humanitarian aid and related equipment. Agreements were also reached with Israel to streamline its administrative procedures for those imports in the light of the COVID-19 crisis.

I am pleased to report that coordination between the United Nations and all sides on the importation of humanitarian supplies is proceeding well. But coordination levels between Israel and the Palestinian Authority remain far below normal. This has impacted the delivery of assistance as well as the provision of services to the Palestinian population. Fortunately, after minor delays, a mechanism that supports the transfer of patients requiring medical treatment outside of Gaza has also been established.

Let me reiterate that any increased responsibilities for the United Nations should be limited and time-bound and not designed to replace the roles and responsibilities of the Palestinian Authority or the Government of Israel. I remain very concerned that the suspension of coordination — and in particular revenue transfers — cannot be sustained for much longer without severe humanitarian and economic consequences.

As I noted earlier, tensions in Gaza are rising again. Over the reporting period, militants fired some 20 rockets towards Israel and launched some 270 balloons carrying incendiary devices, causing hundreds of fires and forcing some civilians to be evacuated from their homes. Shrapnel from rockets intercepted by the Iron Dome system damaged a car and two houses in the Israeli town of Sderot. Six civilians were slightly injured while running for shelter.

Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) responded by striking Hamas targets and agricultural fields, firing some 80 missiles and shells, with five people reported injured, including four children and one woman. Following one of these strikes, an unexploded Israeli missile was found in a school run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in the Al-Shati refugee camp. The IDF classified this as an accident that is under review.

I reiterate that the indiscriminate launching of rockets and incendiary devices towards Israeli population centres violates international law and must cease immediately. Likewise, children and schools should never be targeted by any party, nor should children be exposed to violence.

In response to the sharp rise in the number of incendiary balloons, on 11 August Israel limited the transfer of some goods and halted the transfer of construction materials through the Kerem Shalom crossing into Gaza. On 12 August, Israeli authorities stopped all fuel deliveries until further notice, including donor-funded fuel. As a result, the Gaza power plant has shut down, sharply reducing electricity

provision to three hours per day. This is severely impacting critical infrastructure, including sewage treatment and the provision of clean drinking water. It is also affecting health facilities, schools and conditions at some of the quarantine centres that are critical to efforts to prevent an outbreak of the coronavirus disease in the Gaza Strip, particularly given reports yesterday of the first identified cases of COVID-19 outside quarantine centres in Gaza. In addition, on 16 August Israel completely closed the Gaza fishing zone. Yesterday, after hearing the news of the new COVID-19 cases in Gaza, the United Nations asked Israel to reinstate the delivery of Qatari-funded fuel for the Gaza Strip in order to help prevent a major health crisis.

This latest escalation has once again demonstrated the urgency of implementing long-term solutions for Gaza. The Israeli population in proximity to the Gaza Strip live in constant fear, watching their lands burn and their children run for shelter. The Palestinian population in Gaza endure unbearable economic conditions, no freedom of movement and political isolation. Closures and rounds of escalation have defined their lives for more than a decade. There is a moral imperative to end all militant activity in Gaza, restore Palestinian national unity and lift Israeli closures. But the political solutions that must be provided by leaders are nowhere in sight. Instead, we have a day-to-day, month-to-month, year-to-year patchwork of crucial humanitarian efforts to prevent war and to try and sustain the lives of 2 million desperate Palestinians in Gaza.

Turning to the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, three Palestinians, including one child and one woman, were killed and 47 injured, including two children and one woman, in clashes, attacks, search-and-arrest operations and other incidents. Seven Israelis, including two soldiers and one child, were injured during the reporting period. In one tragic incident, a 23-year-old Palestinian woman was killed by live fire in her home in Jenin during an operation by the Israeli security forces and ensuing clashes with local Palestinian residents. There are contradictory claims over responsibility for the shooting, with the Israeli security forces and local residents denying the use of live ammunition.

On 13 August, Israel's prosecution authorities filed an indictment against five border police officers on 14 counts of serious abuse, including assault and robbery. A videotape that was subsequently released showed unacceptable, vicious beatings and the humiliation of Palestinian detainees. On 16 August, an 18-year-old Palestinian was shot and injured by Israeli security forces while reportedly attempting to throw a Molotov cocktail at Rachel's Tomb near Bethlehem. The following day, another Palestinian man was shot and killed in Jerusalem's Old City while carrying out a stabbing attack against an Israeli border police officer, who was moderately injured.

In another unfortunate incident involving a disabled person, on 17 August Israeli security forces shot and injured a 60-year-old Palestinian man with hearing and speech impediments at the Qalandiya checkpoint when he did not respond to their calls to halt. On 20 August, a 16-year-old Palestinian boy died after reportedly being shot by Israeli security forces near the village of Deir Abu Mash'al, west of Ramallah. Two other Palestinians were reportedly injured. The Israeli security forces stated that the three were preparing to throw Molotov cocktails and set alight tyres to attack passing vehicles.

I reiterate that lethal force should be used only as a last resort, against an imminent threat of death or serious injury, and in accordance with the principle of proportionality. I call on the Israeli authorities to investigate these incidents.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, there has been a concerning increase in violent crime within Palestinian communities across the West Bank, including in East

Jerusalem, as well as violent incidents involving Palestinian security forces and civilians, with several people shot dead in recent weeks.

Meanwhile, Palestinian organizations focused on gender-based violence in the West Bank have also reported a sharp increase in femicides. I urge Palestinian authorities, in line with their obligations, to enhance the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence.

In addition, settlers perpetrated 20 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in four injuries and damage to property. On 12 August, settlers attacked Israeli security forces during an operation to demolish structures at an outpost near the settlement of Yitzhar. Palestinians carried out 27 attacks against Israeli settlers and other civilians in the West Bank, resulting in five injuries and property damage.

During the reporting period, Israeli authorities demolished 72 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and East Jerusalem, displacing 89 people, including 32 women and 40 children, and affecting 20 others. In addition, 11 Palestinians self-demolished their structures to avoid additional fines. On 10 August, Israel's High Court of Justice overturned an order to punitively demolish the home of a Palestinian accused of killing an Israeli soldier in May. The Court emphasized that the rights of the perpetrator's wife and children would be disproportionately harmed if the demolition were to proceed.

Briefly turning to the region, in Lebanon, over 180 people are dead following the explosion in Beirut port on 4 August, with 30 persons still missing and several thousands injured. Almost 300,000 people are in need of shelter. A Lebanese investigation into the explosion is ongoing, with the assistance of experts from France, Russia, Turkey and the United States. Following the 9 August international donors' conference co-convened by France and the United Nations, at which nearly \$300 million in aid was pledged, a United Nations flash appeal launched on 14 August raised another \$565 million to help address humanitarian and recovery needs.

Popular protests continued, while informal consultations on the formation of a new Government are ongoing, following the resignation of Prime Minister Hassan Diab's Government on 10 August. At the same time, the COVID-19 outbreak has worsened, prompting a nationwide lockdown in Lebanon. On 18 August, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon delivered its verdict in the *Ayyash et al* case, concerning the 2005 attack that killed former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 21 others, convicting Ayyash, while acquitting the three other defendants for lack of evidence.

While the situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has remained generally stable, tensions have been observed along the Blue Line, including a breach of the cessation of hostilities on 27 July. UNIFIL continues to maintain stability and defuse tensions, including through its liaison and coordination efforts with the parties.

Turning to the Golan, tensions between Israel and Syria heightened on 2 and 3 August. On 2 August, the IDF carried out a strike, killing four individuals from the Bravo side in the vicinity of the ceasefire line. The IDF informed the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) that they had carried out an attack on targets east of the Israeli technical fence to thwart an attempt to place explosives in that area. The following day, at the request of the Syrian authorities, UNDOF facilitated the retrieval by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Syria of the remains of the four individuals who had been killed. On 3 August, the IDF fired missiles from a helicopter across the ceasefire line onto the Bravo side, informing UNDOF that the IDF had struck Syrian armed forces targets in response to the attempted improvised explosive device attack the night before. UNDOF continues to

engage with both parties to prevent an escalation of the situation and to remind them of their obligation to respect the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

In conclusion, let me urge that we not lose sight of the deteriorating dynamics on the ground. Gaza is teetering on the brink of another major escalation with Israel. The occupied West Bank is fracturing under a multitude of economic and political pressures. Settlement expansion and demolitions are ongoing, and the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on Palestinian and Israeli societies.

This is the stark reality of the current situation. Without resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, regional peace will not be complete. The legitimate national aspiration of 5 million Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza cannot be ignored. It is well beyond time that we all work together with the parties for peace before it is too late. That is why every opening must be explored, every opportunity used and every idea discussed and debated if we are to get out of the cycle of statements, preventive diplomacy and conflict management and work towards a real solution that is sustainable and in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Annex II

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Philippe Kridelka

I thank the Special Coordinator, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, for his briefing, and I thank him and his team for their relentless efforts.

We welcome the recent announcement regarding the normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, and we acknowledge the constructive role played by the United States in that regard. The announcement of the suspension of plans to formalize the annexation of parts of the occupied Palestinian territory is clearly a step in the right direction. However, we urge Israel to abandon those plans once and for all. As we have stated before, any annexation, irrespective of its size and denomination, would constitute a grave breach of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. We will therefore not recognize any changes to the 1967 borders other than those agreed upon by the parties. Annexation would undoubtedly have consequences for security on the ground and in the wider region. But, most important, annexation would seriously undermine the viability of a two-State solution and close the door to future negotiations.

The normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates not only will benefit both countries but also constitutes an important building block for peace and stability in the wider region. There can be no peace in the Middle East without a permanent solution to the Palestinian question. We hope that the agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates will create opportunities for Israelis and Palestinians to re-engage. In that regard, we reiterate our call for intra-Palestinian reconciliation.

We remain committed to a negotiated and viable two-State solution built upon the internationally agreed parameters and international law. All parties should come to the negotiation table, without preconditions, and resume meaningful negotiations. Belgium encourages all international and multilateral efforts aimed at a meaningful resumption of talks provided that they are fully in line with international law and the internationally agreed parameters and that they equally take into account the legitimate aspirations of both sides. We fully support the efforts of the Middle East Quartet, of which the European Union is a member.

In the absence of a perspective on such a just and lasting peace, the humanitarian, socioeconomic and security situation on the ground continues to deteriorate. We are deeply concerned about the recent violent incidents in Gaza and the West Bank. We condemn the terror attacks and violence from all sides. International human rights law and international humanitarian law, including the principles of necessity, distinction and proportionality in the use of force, must be fully respected. We call for independent and thorough investigations into alleged violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Perpetrators of such acts must be held accountable.

Following the firing of rockets and the launching of incendiary balloons from Gaza into Israel, the Israeli authorities have halted the entry of most goods into Gaza, including fuel, and prevented access to the fishing area along Gaza's coast. We call on both sides to de-escalate tensions and exercise maximum restraint. We commend the efforts of the United Nations and Egypt in that regard.

These developments only further add to the hardship of the Palestinian people in Gaza. We call for an end to the closure and a full opening of the crossing points, while addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. Against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza is needed

more than ever. In that regard, I reiterate Belgium's unwavering support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

To conclude, I would like to voice Belgium's concern regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the occupied Palestinian territory, in particular on children. We call on all sides to immediately and unconditionally release all Palestinian children from detention and to put a moratorium on new admissions into detention facilities.

Second statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Philippe Kridelka

Let me first express my appreciation for the efforts of the Indonesian presidency during these difficult times. I want to assure you, Mr. President, of the full support of my delegation to you and your team.

Belgium deeply regrets the present situation, which could pose a threat to the proper functioning, authority and integrity of the Security Council. As already stated in the letter sent to you, Mr. President, Belgium does not recognize the legality of the purported notification by the United States. The United States ceased its participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on 8 May 2018, and is therefore no longer a JPCOA participant State.

Belgium firmly supports the ongoing efforts of the remaining JPCOA participant States to address issues concerning Iran's non-compliance with its JCPOA commitments within the framework of the Dispute Resolution Mechanism.

In the same vein, Belgium is of the view that the issue of the upcoming lifting of the conventional arms embargo should not jeopardize the nuclear agreement and its achievements. The JCPOA is crucial in order to effectively ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. This is a top priority for the region and for international security, as well as for the global non-proliferation architecture.

We must abide by the methods and decisions agreed upon by this body and by the international community, not undermine them. We must actively preserve the JCPOA, as well as the non-proliferation regime.

Let me express, therefore, the willingness of Belgium to engage constructively and work towards a solution along these lines.

Annex III**Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun**

I thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his briefing.

The issue of the Middle East, in particular the Palestinian question, has been on the agenda of the Security Council for many years. The international community has focused tremendous attention and energy on this specific issue. As a reliable friend of the Palestinian people, China has been making relentless and constructive efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question. President Xi Jinping has put forth a four-point proposal on this question.

As the Special Coordinator has pointed out, we are witnessing growing tensions between Palestine and Israel, which have put the peace process in jeopardy and heightened the risk of regional conflicts. Under such circumstances, the international community must step up its efforts on the Palestinian question and push forward the Middle East peace process with a sense of urgency.

The international community should firmly promote a peaceful settlement based on the two-State solution. Independent statehood is the inalienable national right of the Palestinian people, and it cannot be compromised or bargained away. We hope that relevant parties will take concrete action to advance the political process and pave the way for an early resumption of peace talks between Palestine and Israel on an equal footing. Relevant United Nations resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the two-State solution set out the overall direction of the final settlement. They are important parameters in the Middle East peace process and must be observed and reaffirmed.

The recent escalation of tension in the Gaza Strip is quite unsettling. We urge relevant parties to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from any hostile actions that may further aggravate the fragile security situation. The Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire should be heeded and truly followed.

We also note with concern the increased demolitions of Palestinian-owned structures in the West Bank, which lead to more and more displacement. Concrete efforts must be made to implement resolution 2334 (2016), including ceasing all settlement activities, stopping demolitions and preventing violence against civilians.

The international community should take a holistic approach and promote peace through development. We commend the United Nations agencies, including the World Health Organization and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), for lending a helping hand. We call for intensified international efforts to alleviate Palestine's economic and humanitarian difficulties, including through UNRWA. It is also imperative to end the blockade on the Gaza Strip and allow timely delivery of humanitarian assistance and services to people in need.

China firmly supports Palestine's just demands and all the efforts that are conducive to the settlement of the Palestinian question. We stand with Palestine with regard to the establishment of an independent State of Palestine that enjoys full sovereignty on the basis of the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We will continue to provide our support and assistance to the Palestinian people to the best of our ability, including in the fight against the coronavirus disease. We are also committed to working closely with the international community in the pursuit of comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

China attaches great importance to the Iranian nuclear issue. We are committed to upholding multilateralism, safeguarding the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and maintaining peace and stability in the Middle East.

It must be pointed out that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is now faced with severe challenges after the United States sent a letter (S/2020/815, annex) to you to unilaterally and illegally demand the invoking of a snapback mechanism. The United States is no longer a JCPOA participant. JCPOA participants and the overwhelming majority of Council members believe that the United States demand to restore United Nations sanctions on Iran has no legal grounding and goes against common views, and the snapback mechanism shall not be deemed as invoked.

China resolutely opposes the United States demand and holds the view that the United States letter (S/2020/815, annex) should not be identified as the notification specified in paragraph 11 of resolution 2231 (2015). China urges you, Mr. President, not to take any action on the United States demand. The Council should fully respect the views of the international community and the overwhelming majority of Council members, uphold its credibility and authority and fulfil its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. We stand ready to work with other parties to push forward the political settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue.

It is my strong wish that you, Sir, inform the Council members of your position on the United States letter and your plan to guide the discussion in the Council in that regard.

Second statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun

I will simply say that China supports the conclusion you have made, Sir, concerning the issue of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). That is really a step in the right direction.

Meanwhile, I also wish to point out that China rejects the accusations made by the representative of the United States against China. Once again, she is trying to turn black into white. And once again, I can assure you that her attempt will never succeed.

Regardless of what the United States says, China is determined to defend multilateralism, the JCPOA, the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and peace and security in the Middle East.

Annex IV

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations

At the outset, the Dominican Republic welcomes the agreement between the United States, the United Arab Emirates and Israel to, inter alia, halt the Israeli annexation of Palestinian lands. This move could create vast opportunities to bring about peace in the Middle East through dialogue, cooperation and stability. It should open new paths for Israeli and Palestinian leaders to re-engage in meaningful negotiations.

The Dominican Republic believes that this indeed significant diplomatic agreement needs to be a first step, perhaps a door-opener, towards a broader process that includes all Palestinian concerns, including the long-standing two-State solution, in line with United Nations resolutions.

We encourage parties to end any unilateral moves and provocative narratives in different forms that could obstruct the current peace prospects and violate mutual rights.

We invite them to engage with each other. For the sake of a common future of peace and stability, a broader dialogue, one that includes Palestinians, needs to follow this agreement.

Let us seize this opportunity. The Security Council must ensure that the Israel-Palestine situation be resolved within the framework of the internationally agreed standards.

We must convey a clear message of collective will to redirect the process towards a negotiated peace, on the basis of recognition and respect for mutual rights, including self-determination and independence. These principles need to remain at the core of any political process.

In this regard, we also recognize the importance of an intra-Palestinian reconciliation. This must be initiated to allow the necessary national consolidation to advance the legitimate aspirations of its people and ultimately lead to a process of political renewal, based on free and inclusive elections. We encourage Palestinian leaders and the international community to concentrate all their efforts on strengthening national unity and supporting the election process. The Palestinian Government is still very much in need of external support.

The humanitarian situation of the population in the West Bank remains dire. We encourage donor countries to continue to provide support with their contributions to allow the great basic needs of the Palestinian population living under occupation to be met.

The devastating public health and humanitarian implications of the coronavirus disease pandemic has had negative consequences for health, food security and the development of the country. This, coupled with widespread insecurity, the electricity crisis and the lack of opportunities for the young, is a great concern for the Dominican Republic. We therefore commend the indispensable work done on the ground by humanitarian organizations and United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, as well as the support of friendly countries, to alleviate suffering and bring about change.

Reports of daily violence developing throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continue. The Dominican Republic reiterates its condemnation of any act of violence or intimidation against areas with civilians, including women and children, and the excessive use of force and condemns the

indiscriminate launching of rockets and incendiary devices. There is no justification for carrying out such indiscriminate attacks, and it is imperative that every effort be made to achieve a complete and definitive de-escalation. We urge all parties to act with maximum restraint to ensure that the ceasefire is maintained and civilians are protected.

Finally, we call for strengthening the international consensus on this conflict, relying on peaceful conflict resolution, international law and multilateralism. And in recognition of the important mediation role of the United Nations, we are hopeful that together Israelis and Palestinians, with our help and support, will be able to build bridges across the vast spaces between them.

Annex V**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Gert Auväärt**

I would like to thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his briefing.

During the past months Estonia has repeatedly called for keeping alive the momentum towards peace between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Hopefully, the recent announcement of the normalization of bilateral relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates will contribute to that end. Estonia welcomes this historic announcement and the role played by the United States in this respect. We believe the normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates will contribute as well to the stability of the whole region.

It is positive that, along with this agreement, Israel is committing to suspending plans to unilaterally annex areas of the occupied Palestinian territory. We also join the Secretary-General in his hope that this will create an opportunity for Israeli and Palestinian leaders to re-engage in meaningful negotiations.

Estonia remains committed to a negotiated two-State solution, based on internationally agreed parameters and relevant United Nations resolutions, while taking into account the legitimate aspirations of both parties and Israeli security concerns. Only direct and meaningful negotiations between the parties can resolve the final-status issues and achieve a just and lasting peace.

As the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, a need for unity and solidarity is even more important, and we underline the continued importance of cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian authorities to tackle the pandemic.

Estonia strongly calls upon all parties to refrain from any unilateral steps that could undermine the viability of the two-State solution and increase instability in the region. This includes Israel's settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territories, including in East Jerusalem, which is illegal under international law.

We call on the Palestinian Authority to reconsider its announcement of suspending agreements with Israel, including in the area of security. This would be especially vital in the context of COVID-19.

We are deeply worried about the gradual increase in violence between Israel and Gaza after a relatively quiet summer. We condemn the firing of rockets from Gaza towards Israel, or any other form of violence targeting civilian population. We call on both parties to exercise maximum restraint to avoid escalation of violence, as it would further undermine the prospects for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

We encourage all Palestinian factions to work towards reconciliation, which would enable them to address common challenges and the needs and expectations of the Palestinian population and is essential in order to reach the two-State solution. We also encourage Palestinians to announce elections.

Second statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Gert Auväärt

We took note of the letter (S/2020/815, annex) sent by the United States notifying the Security Council of significant non-performance by Iran with regard to its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We also took note of the letters sent by other JCPOA participants who consider that the

United States is no longer a JCPOA participant, and therefore cannot initiate the snapback procedure.

Considering that there is no agreement among the JCPOA initial participants regarding the United States status as a JCPOA participant, we support the Security Council presidency in considering the notification as ineffective for the purposes of snapback.

However, the Security Council needs to address the concerns regarding the planned lifting of the conventional arms embargo in October 2020. We agree with the United States and with our European partners that the expiry of the arms embargo would have potentially serious consequences for the region and its security. Iran's destabilizing and malicious activities in the Middle East have been reckless and irresponsible and warrant the full attention of the Security Council. We are encouraged by the willingness of the JCPOA participants and other Security Council members to find a solution that could secure the support of the Council.

Annex VI

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Anne Gueguen

[Original: English and French]

I would like to thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, for his briefing. I would like to address four points today.

First of all, France welcomed the announcement of the normalization of relations between the United Arab Emirates and Israel, which are both its strategic partners. In a deteriorating regional context, this announcement shows that positive dynamics can be set in motion.

The decision taken in this framework by the Israeli authorities to suspend the annexation of Palestinian territories is a positive step, but it is imperative that this project be definitively and irrevocably abandoned. Indeed, this project would not only constitute a serious and flagrant violation of international law, but it would also be an irreversible blow to the peace process and the two-State solution.

In this regard, the continuation of settlement remains a major concern for France. The same is true of the demolition of homes and structures, as well as settler violence against Palestinians in Area C and East Jerusalem, as documented in a recent report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Secondly, I would like to reiterate France's call for the resumption of credible and ambitious negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians as the only method to achieve a just and lasting settlement of the conflict in accordance with international law, the resolutions of the Council and the agreed parameters. These parameters are known: two States living in peace and security, along secure and recognized borders, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States. This is not a mantra; it is the only horizon that will allow us to build a lasting and just peace by responding to the legitimate aspirations of the two peoples. While only the parties will be able to conclude such a peace, France stands ready to contribute to it alongside its European, Arab and international partners.

Thirdly, I would like to express France's concern over the renewed tensions between Gaza and Israel in recent weeks. This violence must stop before a new cycle of deadly violence begins. France calls for continued efforts to avoid any escalation, the primary victims of which would be the Israeli and Palestinian civilian populations. Beyond this critical security situation, it is absolutely crucial to respond to the humanitarian crisis, which can be addressed only through the lifting of the blockade on Gaza, accompanied by credible security guarantees for Israel. At the same time, progress is indispensable in intra-Palestinian reconciliation. This process requires the holding of national elections.

Fourthly, I want to say how disturbing we find the increase in the number of people affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The pandemic also is having considerable economic consequences for the region. The strengthening of cooperation among all actors — the Palestinian Authority and Israel, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and others — is imperative. In that regard, we call on the parties to implement such cooperation and ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance in accordance with their respective obligations.

France is taking part in the solidarity effort called for by the United Nations and the Palestinian Authority, in particular through the action of the Agence Française de Développement and our contributions to the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19.

I also recall the importance of the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in the service of Palestinian refugees, which enjoys France's unfailing support, as evidenced by our latest contribution of €20 million.

Second statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Anne Gueguen

[Original: English and French]

On the topic you just mentioned, Mr. President, and the question posed by the Russian Ambassador regarding the letter (S/2020/815, annex) sent by the United States on 20 August on resolution 2231 (2015), I would like to recall the view expressed very clearly by the three European members of the Security Council (E-3) in our letter circulated the same day:

“The United States is not a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) participant State under resolution 2231 (2015) anymore, and therefore [we] do not consider that the United States notification is effective”.

To be more precise,

“the purported notification under operative paragraph 11 of resolution 2231 (2015) is incapable of having legal effect and so cannot bring into effect the procedure foreseen under operative paragraph 11”,

that is, the snapback procedure.

We took note of the converging views expressed clearly by 13 of the 15 members of the Security Council on that matter. As a consequence, we firmly believe that no further steps can take place within the Security Council.

Let me also recall that as committed JCPOA participants, we, the E3, believe that we should continue to address the current issues arising from systematic Iranian non-compliance with its JCPOA commitments through continued dialogue among all remaining JCPOA participants, foremost within the Joint Commission and in the framework of discussions being engaged in under the Dispute Resolution Mechanism. We welcome the fact that the Joint Commission will convene in Vienna on 1 September and enable us to directly address these issues.

At the same time, we have serious concerns about the implications for regional security of the scheduled expiry of the United Nations conventional arms embargo, which were also raised by several countries from the region and other Security Council members. The E-3 are willing to pursue work with Council members and JCPOA participants to seek a realistic path forward that could secure the support of the Council. As a reminder, France abstained in the voting on the United States draft resolution (S/2020/797) on 14 August because it did not constitute an appropriate response to the challenges posed by the expiration of the embargo. The draft resolution could not gather enough support and was therefore not likely to advance security and stability in the region.

Annex VII

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Günter Sautter

I wish to thank Nickolay Mladenov very much for his briefing and excellent work. I would like to make several points.

The first one is on the normalization agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. Israel and the United Arab Emirates have come to a truly historic decision by agreeing to normalize their relations. This is truly good news, as it is an important step towards peace in the region. We trust that annexation plans are truly and indefinitely suspended and that this will also include restraint with regard to ongoing settlement expansion or plans to build new settlements.

We see with great concern the demolition of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem. This is particularly worrisome against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Confidence-building steps are needed instead. We believe that a halt to demolition of residential structures in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, as well as approving the construction of housing units for the Palestinian population in Area C, would send an encouraging signal in these times of hardship.

We support Israel's effort to expand regional cooperation and advance normalization with other Gulf States.

My second remark is on the agenda to revive the peace process. We should now use the momentum and the positive dynamics to revive the Middle East peace process and to restore a meaningful dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. We want to bring them back on a path towards a negotiated, peaceful settlement. Again, with annexation being off the table, we encourage the Palestinian side to re-engage and present its proposals in greater depth.

Germany remains convinced that a negotiated two-State solution based on international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the internationally agreed parameters is the only viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We keep repeating this message because it reflects our strong conviction and firm commitment to the rules-based international order, to the security of Israel as a Jewish and democratic State and to the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood.

I would like to propose four elements on how we can work together to seize the momentum and revive the peace process.

First, we need to find ways to resume direct negotiations between the parties. We continue to believe that reactivating the Middle East Quartet would be the best option to discuss the way forward. We reiterate our full support for the efforts of Special Coordinator Mladenov in that regard. Together with our European and Arab partners in the so-called Munich format, we stand ready to assist and offer our support in facilitating a path back to dialogue.

Secondly, we call on Israel to end the expansion of settlements. Israeli settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories are illegal under international law. They severely undermine the prospects for a two-State solution by eroding the possibility of establishing a contiguous, independent and sovereign Palestinian State.

Thirdly, we call on both sides to fully implement resolution 2334 (2016) with regard to settlement activities as well as all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terrorism, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. In that context,

we reiterate Germany's condemnation of all attacks and threats against Israel by Hamas and other terrorist groups, such as the recent rocket attacks and attacks via incendiary balloons.

Fourthly, we must keep stressing that intra-Palestinian reconciliation also remains key for achieving a negotiated two-State solution. Gaza and the occupied West Bank must be reunited under a single Government, the democratic legitimacy of Palestinian institutions must be renewed and governance and responsiveness to the needs of the Palestinian population must be strengthened.

Allow me a remark on COVID-19 in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. We are concerned about the state of the COVID-19 pandemic in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. We are convinced that now in particular, at this time of crisis, we need greater willingness to cooperate on both sides. We call on both parties to resume their coordination and cooperation in the fight against COVID-19. We commend the United Nations and its agencies, in particular the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, for their efforts to respond to the humanitarian implications of the COVID-19 pandemic in the occupied Palestinian territories.

I would like to say a word on the latest tensions in Gaza. We are concerned about the latest tensions in Gaza/southern Israel, and we welcome the mediation efforts by Egypt and the United Nations. It goes without saying that we condemn the attacks against Israeli civilians from Gaza. At the same time, the humanitarian situation in Gaza needs to be urgently improved. What we need now is prudence from all parties and willingness to de-escalate.

Second statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Günter Sautter

I wish to thank you very much, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to exchange views on this important matter. I fully subscribe to the remarks that Anne Gueguen just made on behalf of the French Republic.

We fully support the President's view that the purported United States notification is, in legal terms, null and void. As the three European members of the Security Council (E-3), we explained our position in a letter to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/839): the United States is no longer a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) participant, and therefore cannot activate the snapback mechanism. The status of the United States within operative paragraph 10 of resolution 2231 (2015) changed when the United States ceased to be a JCPOA participant in 2018.

Accordingly, the E-3 firmly believes that the purported notification under operative paragraph 11 of resolution 2231 (2015) is incapable of having legal effect, and so cannot bring into effect the procedure foreseen under operative paragraph 11. It flows from this that any decisions and actions that would be taken based on this procedure or on its possible outcome would also be devoid of any legal effect.

Let me add that we are firmly convinced that protecting the JCPOA is of crucial importance. The nuclear deal with Iran is not perfect, but it continues to be the international community's best tool to prevent a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. That is why we defend this agreement, and that is why we continue to demand that Iran return to full compliance with this agreement.

Annex VIII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani

Let me start by conveying my appreciation to Mr. Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process, for his insightful briefing.

As the Security Council, we have regularly met to discuss the situation in Palestine. But for Indonesia, Palestine is never just a regular meeting. The constant suffering and pain of Palestinians, caused by decades of illegal occupation, displacement, violence, conflict and blockades, are not things that one can treat as a regular matter. It is our solemn duty to find a solution and ensure that Palestinians achieve their inalienable right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and the right of return.

On that note, let me share my views on three key points.

First, concerning the status of the annexation plan, Indonesia expresses its concern about the statement made by Israel, as, instead of abandoning the annexation plan, it has merely suspended it. We need to be clear that any form of annexation — today or tomorrow — remains illegal. It is against international law and various United Nations resolutions, and a direct challenge to the Council and to the international order.

That suspension does not address the root causes of the conflict. We need to remind ourselves that the creeping annexation and illegal occupation were going on long before Israel decided to formally annex the West Bank.

Through its resolution 2334 (2016), the Council underlined, *inter alia*, that it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations. As such, we need to continue to reject the plan of annexation.

I should like to remind the Security Council that voices firmly expressing concern and rejection of annexation have been heard from various corners of the world, including national parliaments, civil society and The Elders.

Secondly, on the human aspects of the conflict, let me say that, beyond the politics, the conflict has a profound effect on the people on the ground. Decades of illegal occupation, expanding settlements and an increase in demolitions and displacement have resulted in a severe deterioration in the living conditions of millions of Palestinians, especially women and children. In an informal briefing by Palestinian children, we directly heard of their fears and sorrows in their daily efforts to pursue education and lead a normal life.

The drastic increase in the number of confirmed cases of the coronavirus disease in the occupied Palestinian territory over the past two months adds a significant burden to the already severe conditions facing Palestinians in their quest to meet their basic needs.

We need to strengthen our commitment in ensuring the needed humanitarian support, particularly through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which continues to strive to fulfil the basic needs of Palestinians, including by providing schools and health care.

Thirdly, we must ensure a comprehensive solution. The suspension of the Israeli annexation plan is merely a stop-gap response. What we need and what the Palestinians really need is a comprehensive solution that is just and sustainable.

Without addressing the root causes, we only prolong the suffering of millions of Palestinians, including refugees.

Indonesia therefore urges the relevant parties to commit to a credible multilateral peace process based on internationally agreed parameters, including the two-State solution, to find a fair and sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It is Indonesia's principled position that the settlement of the Palestinian question must be based on and fully respect all relevant United Nations resolutions and internationally agreed parameters. All efforts and initiatives should seek to ensure Palestinian rights and implement a two-State solution. We need to remain committed and stand united in our efforts against all illegal acts of the Israeli Government in order to end the occupation and the conflict in the Middle East.

I would like to say a few words about the President's response to questions posed by some delegations. With regard to the Russian Federation's question, as well as others, after having consulted with members and receiving letters from many member countries, it is clear to me that one member has a particular position on the issue, while a significant number of members have differing views. In my view, there is no consensus in the Council and the President is therefore not in the position to take further action.

Annex IX

Statement of the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry

At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Nickolay Mladenov for his detailed presentation describing the situation in the Middle East.

The Niger has followed with great interest the latest developments in the region, including the declaration of 13 August, which announced the resumption of relations between the United Arab Emirates and Israel. The agreement between the two countries promises, among other things, the establishment of diplomatic relations, the resumption of air links, the intensification of trade, cooperation in the military and health fields, as well as Israel's suspension of its project of annexation of territories in the West Bank.

If a rapprochement between Israel and the Arab countries contributes to easing tension and helps peace prevail, it will undoubtedly be welcomed with great enthusiasm as a long-awaited sign of hope for the Middle East.

In the past decade, we have witnessed a great many announcements described as historic and strategic turning points without the expected positive effects. From Palestine to Syria, from Iraq to Afghanistan and Yemen, many countries and peoples are still facing the torments of violence, desolation and despair. That observation should challenge us and encourage us to support every sign of hope on the road to peace, at the altar of which so many innocent lives have been sacrificed and in pursuit of which many initiatives have failed.

In the absence of Israel's official abandonment of its plan to annex the territories in the West Bank, the prospect of relaunching peace talks in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will unfortunately remain an illusion.

My country remains convinced that in order to achieve peace, which we have been seeking for nearly 70 years in the Middle East, the Palestinian cause cannot be circumvented. It stands out as a haunting reminder of the right of peoples to self-determination.

The Palestinian question remains a priority that cannot be subject to an agreement between Israel and another third State. A sustainable treatment of this question necessarily requires talks between Israel and Palestine based on just and unanimously accepted terms, that is to say a two-State solution for Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, in strict compliance with the 1967 borders. Now more than ever, it is time for us to give hope to this people, so long exposed to the torments of instability and violence.

The restraint shown by the Israeli authorities in not carrying out the threat of annexation, as well as the readiness expressed by the Palestinians to resume negotiations with Israel, are the signs of a new positive political momentum that the Security Council, the Middle East Quartet and the international community must do everything possible to maintain with a view to restarting Israeli-Palestinian peace talks and, thus, giving peace a chance. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's proposal of the creation of a platform among the countries of the region that will enable them, through peaceful means, to resolve any problems that may arise between them.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its great concern about the increase in the number of cases of coronavirus disease infections in Israel and the Palestinian territories. While two months ago the exemplary cooperation between the two authorities made it possible to manage the crisis effectively, today

an exacerbation of the pandemic could be particularly disastrous on both sides. It will certainly be more so in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially in Gaza, where several factors, such as poverty, food insecurity, overpopulation, and the precariousness of the health system, accentuated by an unacceptable embargo, contribute to making the population even more vulnerable.

In order to resolve this particularly worrisome situation, it is urgent that Israel, the occupying Power, take the effective measures required by international humanitarian law to ensure the well-being of the population in territories under its control. The international community must also support the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East on the ground, because millions of needy people depend on its action.

The Niger salutes the tireless efforts of Nickolay Mladenov and reaffirms its full commitment to supporting the efforts of the international community for a rapid settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has a definite impact on peace, stability and security in the entire Middle East.

Annex X**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

We thank Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov for his briefing.

The Palestinian problem has a regional dimension, as reflected in the Arab Peace Initiative endorsed by the world community. Without its settlement, as history proves, it is impossible to establish peace in the region. A settlement that is acceptable to both sides — Palestinians and Israelis — is the only guarantee of a lasting peace.

At all stages of work on the Middle East peace process, Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council and a member of the international Middle East Quartet of mediators, has always proceeded from the need to achieve a comprehensive settlement on the basis of the internationally recognized legal framework approved by the United Nations. It includes United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the fundamental principle of a two-State solution. This basis provides for the creation of an independent, sovereign and territorially contiguous Palestinian State within 1967 borders, with its capital in East Jerusalem, which would live in peace with Israel. Russia will adhere to those principles.

The entire range of final-status issues should be resolved in direct negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Those negotiations should be launched as soon as possible. We call on our partners in the Quartet — the United Nations, the European Union and the United States — to intensify cooperation to assist the parties. We are ready for dialogue with key regional players. In addition, Russia is actively engaged with various Palestinian representatives in order to overcome their differences, and is helping our Egyptian friends in that regard.

We reaffirm the call to abstain from provocative moves and unilateral steps. International cooperation and joint action must accompany the advancement of the Middle East peace process.

In that regard, we took note of the trilateral statement of the leaders of the United States, Israel and the United Arab Emirates. In accordance with that document, Israel will suspend the annexation of the occupied West Bank of the Jordan River. We consider that important since such plans were a key obstacle to the resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. Annexation would destroy the prospects for a viable, independent and territorially contiguous Palestinian State. The aforementioned trilateral statement also confirms that the parties will continue their efforts to achieve a just and sustainable settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

In that regard, we would like to recall that despite the existence of unilateral initiatives, the basis of such a settlement should remain the internationally recognized parameters. We emphasize that unilateral actions, including plans for annexation, which undermine the legal basis for a settlement, should be abandoned.

Looking at the situation on the ground, we call on all parties to refrain from violence, including threats of rocket launches on Israeli territory, and on Israel to stop its settlement activity, the demolition of Palestinian property and evictions. We are concerned with the recent escalation around Gaza. The coronavirus exacerbated the problems of the local population. We call on the parties concerned to cooperate and fight the pandemic together. We share the concerns voiced about the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

We are also concerned about the increased workload of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as well as the need for additional funding for the Agency to respond to new challenges,

including in countries hosting Palestinian refugees, primarily in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. We call on the international community to respond and to support UNRWA.

In conclusion, we would like to raise another important issue directly related to the situation in the Middle East that has clear implications for regional and international peace and security.

We all know that our United States colleagues, on 20 August, handed to the President of the Council a letter (S/2020/815) with a claim that Iran's actions allegedly trigger a snapback process, as foreseen in paragraph 11 of resolution 2231 (2015). Almost all Council members responded immediately with a letter to the President. As far as we can tell, an overwhelming majority of member States explicitly stated in those letters that the letter from the United States cannot be considered as a notification under paragraph 11 of resolution 2231 (2015), nor does it trigger the snapback procedure, since the United States has ceased its participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The United States is the only member of the Council that thinks otherwise.

We would therefore like to ask you a question, Mr. President. Could you inform us about the results of bilateral consultations with States member of the Council held after receiving the United States letter, and clarify your view on the United States claim? How will you proceed in this situation? In particular, do you intend to follow the procedures foreseen by operative paragraph 11 of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)?

Second statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia

Our position on this matter is very well known. It has been expressed consistently on many occasions, most recently in our communication to the President of the Security Council after the United States pointed out a snap-back that was allegedly triggered, which we challenged. That communication has been circulated as a Council document. I will not be repeating it.

Today's discussion clearly demonstrated where most Security Council members stand on this issue. They confirmed the paramount need to preserve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Preservation of the JCPOA is important for the whole international community, including for the United States. I hope that the United States will finally be able to realize it and not to pursue its current path, which is not only illegal, but will simply not lead to achievement of the result that the United States envisages.

My main point is to thank you, Mr. President, for the conclusion that you made in response to our question. I think it is a prudent step that you are taking given the positions of the member States of the Council on the matter that we raised.

Annex XI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King**

I would like to thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his briefing on the evolving situation in the Middle East and for his unwavering commitment to the Middle East peace process.

We meet again at a critical juncture. The Security Council must solemnly reaffirm our commitment to uphold the vital principles of international law. In particular, we must — by all appropriate means at our disposal — safeguard the territorial integrity of the State of Palestine and promote a peaceful settlement to the decades-long dispute.

We welcome the recent announcement by the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, to delay annexation activities in the occupied West Bank. Notwithstanding, we call on the Middle East Quartet to renew its efforts to help facilitate a peace agreement that is acceptable to both Israel and Palestine. It is a categorical imperative that the Quartet carefully examines and pursues all practical courses of action to lead the peace process to a successful conclusion.

We are all aware that annexation undermines international norms and constitutes a serious breach of international law. A continuation of such activities across the West Bank violates the terms of resolutions 465 (1980), 476 (1980), 478 (1980), and 2334 (2016), as well as the relevant Assembly resolutions. We therefore remain deeply concerned about the expansion of Israeli settlements and its associated infrastructure in the occupied Palestinian territories. Such settlements have no legal validity and undermine the peace process. As such, we reiterate the demands of resolution 2334 (2016) that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and to fully respect all of its legal obligations in that regard.

Turning to the humanitarian situation, the dire needs of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza demand urgent attention amidst the surge in coronavirus disease cases. The Palestinians cannot combat the pandemic alone. In that regard, we once again urge the international community to ensure that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has adequate, predictable and sustainable financing to respond to the urgent humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people. We also echo UNRWA's appeals that aid to Palestine refugees in Lebanon be built into the international community's immediate emergency response efforts and longer-term support plans following the horrific explosion in Beirut that claimed the lives of two Palestine refugees, among many others.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterates its firm commitment to the two-State solution. In that connection, we also reaffirm our long-held position to not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations. Only through a negotiated two-State solution that addresses the needs and concerns of both Israel and Palestine can we achieve our long-held dream of peace in the Middle East. As Coordinator Mladenov said earlier, "today is the day to redouble our efforts" before it is too late.

Second statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King

We thank the President for his update and assessment.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines takes this opportunity to reaffirm its strong support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and we reiterate that the agreement remains the only viable path to ensuring a peaceful, comprehensive and long-term solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. We wholeheartedly believe that a commitment to dialogue and negotiation will not only preserve the JCPOA but will go a long way towards resolving the current issues.

The preservation of the JCPOA is critical to safeguarding peace and stability in the region, and we once again urge all parties to commit fully to multilateralism and refrain from actions that are contradictory to the requirements and goals of resolution 2231 (2015) and the JCPOA. We maintain the position outlined in the 20 August 2020 joint letter of the three African members of the Security Council — the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, that

“[h]aving confirmed its withdrawal from the JCPOA and by not participating in any of the JCPOA structures or subsequent activities, the United States ceased to be a JCPOA participant and is, therefore, ineligible to submit a notification to the Security Council under the terms of resolution 2231 (2015)” (*S/2020/821, p. 1*).

Annex XII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Jerry Matjila

Let me begin by thanking Special Coordinator Mladenov for his useful and frank briefing on the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory.

South Africa has noted with concern developments of the past days in the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as in the Gaza Strip. In this regard, we support the call by the Special Coordinator Mladenov and the Secretary-General for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

The current precarious situation prevailing in Gaza is of particular concern to South Africa. The almost-daily attacks on Gaza and the use of warplanes, reportedly in retaliation for the launching of incendiary balloons, is not a proportional response and will instead serve to inflame tensions, endanger the lives of civilians and further degrade critical infrastructure.

Moreover, Israel's blockade on Gaza must end. The Israeli blockade has had a devastating impact on Palestinians living in Gaza and on their livelihood. Israel's latest ban on allowing fuel into Gaza has resulted in the shutdown of Gaza's only power station, plunging the Strip into darkness and jeopardizing the lives of civilians dependent on an already-strained health sector. These actions are inhumane and are causing serious bodily and mental harm to the people of Gaza, especially at a time when the world is in the grip of fighting a global pandemic. We call on Israel to respect and honour its obligations as an occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention and to put an end to its disproportionate and hostile actions.

The Palestinian people, especially those living in Gaza, cannot afford any more hurt, hardship or hostilities. We therefore call for the release of all detainees and political prisoners, especially women, children and the elderly. While all civilians everywhere are entitled to a fair and equal justice system, Palestinians living under illegal military occupation do not have access to one. In this regard, we have learned last week of yet another death of a Palestinian teenager who succumbed to his wounds in detention after being shot near Ramallah by Israeli soldiers.

These brutal actions by Israeli soldiers have to stop. Israel operates an unequal, two-tiered legal system, where Israelis are subject to a civilian criminal and legal system, while Palestinians, including children, living in the same area are subject to military law, making Israel the only country that applies military law to minors.

As we and many others have said before, the solution to this decades-long conflict is dialogue and negotiations culminating in a political agreement that results in an independent sovereign State of Palestine existing side by side in peace with Israel, as guided by United Nations resolutions, international law and internationally agreed parameters. Any viable peace plan must include the full participation of all parties as equal partners. In this regard, any initiative aimed at finding a lasting resolution to the conflict must take into account the needs and aspirations of the Palestinian people. For too long, the most basic rights, needs, hopes and aspirations of the Palestinians have been eroded and ignored.

South Africa strongly believes that any peace plan should not allow Palestinian statehood to devolve into an entity devoid of sovereignty, territorial contiguity and economic viability. In this regard, a solution must be premised on a just, rights-based settlement, with just laws, that facilitates equality and equity for all who have a right to live in the territories of Israel and Palestine. This includes the sovereign equality between States.

South Africa reiterates its call for the full implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). The ongoing and illegal settlement construction, seizure and demolition of Palestinian land and property must be addressed. Overt violations of Security Council resolutions usually provoke stricter countermeasures on the party responsible for the infringement. However, again, Palestine is deprived of its right to see the illegal actions of the Israeli occupation brought to justice. Many of us have called for those who violate international law to be held accountable for their actions. Israel must therefore be held accountable for its persistent violations of international law, including General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2334 (2016).

Allow me to make a few remarks on the matter of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The United States, of its own volition, unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA on 8 May 2018, reinstating unilateral sanctions against Iran, which is in violation of the JCPOA and resolution 2231 (2015). Having confirmed its withdrawal from the JCPOA and by not participating in any of the JCPOA structures or subsequent activities, the United States ceased to be a JCPOA participant and is therefore ineligible to submit a notification to the Security Council under the terms of resolution 2231 (2015). As resolution 2231 (2015) and the JCPOA are inextricably linked and are mutually contingent, any party that, of its own volition, withdraws from the JCPOA cannot be regarded as a JCPOA participant State and therefore would not be able to invoke the provisions of resolution 2231 (2015) as a participant State.

In conclusion, the future of the Middle East hangs in the balance and the current forms of aggression as seen in Gaza could give way to further instability and violence in the region.

Annex XIII

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations

At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing and valuable efforts.

The Security Council made it clear in its various previous resolutions that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity, constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and is a major obstacle to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. The Security Council and the international community have further unequivocally emphasized that no changes to the 4 June 1967 lines will be recognized, including with respect to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations.

In line with this longstanding and firm common position, over the last few months the international community has strongly rejected the illegal Israeli plans to annex parts of the Palestinian territory and reaffirmed once again that there is no alternative to the two-State solution, which, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the internationally endorsed terms of reference and parameters, remains the only viable solution to ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

In this context, Tunisia calls upon the Security Council and the entire international community to remain actively engaged against the looming threat of annexation.

We further underline the imperative to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by its obligations under international law and put an end to its long-lasting illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and aggressive policies and practices against the Palestinian people. Despite committing serious violations of international law, Israel has over the decades enjoyed impunity, which is one of the major reasons behind the country's continued challenge to the international community and the universal legal system.

Tunisia stresses the importance of providing international protection for the Palestinian people, lifting the unjust blockade imposed on Gaza and ending all other forms of discrimination and collective punishment. We call upon the international community to continue to support the Palestinian Authority's efforts to confront the growing economic, social and humanitarian challenges as a result of continued occupation as well as of the heavy impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

We highly value the efforts of the humanitarian community undertaken in support of the response by the Palestinian Authority to the pandemic and stress the necessity of enhanced international aid in this regard. We also call for broader mobilization to ensure the continuity of delivery of essential services by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to Palestinian refugees across all its fields of operation, thereby preserving its important role as a stabilizing factor in the region.

In closing, Tunisia reiterates its firm and principled support for the brotherly Palestinian people in its struggle to regain its legitimate rights, establish its independent and sovereign State on its land, within the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and resolve all final status issues on the basis of international legality resolutions, the two-State vision and the Arab Peace Initiative. Tunisia also reaffirms that the real problem and major cause of this long-lasting conflict, which has kept the region in a state of tension and instability, is indeed the occupation, which must be brought to an end. In this regard, we stress both that Palestinian rights are not time-bound and that Israeli actions and measures

affecting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are null and void and with no international legal effect.

It is a widely shared belief that the situation on the ground is no longer sustainable and that the negative trends must be reversed. We therefore underline the need for collective concerted action towards the re-engagement of the parties in negotiations based on the internationally endorsed terms of reference and parameters. In this regard, the Middle East Quartet must assume its share of responsibility for achieving a more stable and peaceful Middle East.

Annex XIV**Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, James Roscoe**

I thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing.

As others have done, I would like to say a few words about Lebanon. As Mr. Mladenov set out, the devastating explosion in Beirut has caused enormous suffering and damage. Our sympathies go out to all those who have been affected by this tragedy and who have lost loved ones. The United Kingdom stands with the Lebanese people in this hour of need. Our £25 million package of humanitarian support, as well as the deployment of our technical experts within days of the explosion, will help to address some of the critical needs of the most vulnerable in the country. Further, the deployment of one of our naval ships, the *HMS Enterprise*, on 10 August, complements these efforts. Our support for the Lebanese army as it endeavours to respond to the disaster is also critical.

Turning to the topic of today's discussion, I would like to start by welcoming the announcement on 13 August, as set out by Ambassador Kelly Craft of the United States of America, of the normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and, in particular, the suspension of Israel's plans to annex parts of the West Bank. As my Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have said, this is a historic step that contemplates the normalization of relations between two great friends of the United Kingdom.

The United Kingdom has consistently made clear in the Security Council its firm opposition to annexation, which would have been contrary to international law, counterproductive to securing peace in the region and a severe blow to the prospects of the two-State solution. We therefore profoundly hope that this moment can be used as a step towards direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians, as there can be no substitute for direct talks in trying to reach a two-State solution and lasting peace. My Foreign Secretary is in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories today, encouraging both leaders to push forward on the momentum created by this announcement. The United Kingdom stands ready to support this endeavour.

Despite this positive development, we are concerned by other negative trends on the ground. The number of coronavirus disease cases continues to rise across the region. Meanwhile, Hamas has been launching improvised explosive devices and firing rockets into Israel. Such actions by Hamas are unacceptable, and we call on it to cease them immediately.

The current situation continues to have a particularly devastating impact on the people living in Gaza. As ever, dialogue can be the only way to address the situation. We call on Israel to lift movement and access restrictions and allow fuel to enter the Strip, which is vital to power hospitals, water delivery and sewage treatment. More broadly, we encourage the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel to urgently resume cooperation across all files — security, economic and civil — at this critical time.

While the shadow of annexation appears to be lifted, we remain concerned about the potential for further settlement advancements, continued demolitions and evictions. We are also concerned by continued acts of violence and we were alarmed to hear of the shooting at the Qalandiya checkpoint on 17 August of a Palestinian who was unarmed and deaf. The use of lethal force should only be deployed as a last resort.

I would like to finish by reiterating the United Kingdom's long-standing position on the Middle East peace process. We support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian State based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both States, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees. The United Kingdom remains committed to supporting such efforts towards peace in the Middle East.

Second statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, James Roscoe

I thank the President on his brief update to the Security Council just now, with which the United Kingdom concurs.

I want to say a few other things. The first is that the United Kingdom remains resolutely committed to the full implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), through which the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was endorsed in 2015, with a view to preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, which is our priority. In order to preserve the JCPOA, Iran must return to nuclear compliance without delay.

Along with its E-3 partners, France and Germany, the United Kingdom urges Iran to engage urgently and constructively through the dispute resolution mechanism. As E-3 Foreign Ministers set out in their statements on 19 June and 20 August, we do not support a move to snapback at this time, which would be incompatible with our current efforts aimed at preserving the JCPOA.

With regard to the question of my Russian colleague on the letter set out by the United States on 20 August and your own summary, Mr President, I would like to align with the position expressed by France and Germany. It is the United Kingdom's opinion that the United States ceased to be a participant in the JCPOA following its withdrawal from the deal on 8 May 2018. Our position regarding the effectiveness of the United States' notification pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015) has been very clearly explained to the presidency and all Council members.

I would like to also make clear that we share the United States' concern about the expiry of the arms restrictions on Iran in October this year. As E-3 Foreign Ministers have said, the expiry of the restrictions could have serious implications for regional security, given Iran's continued destabilizing activities. The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/531), which the Council discussed back in June (see S/2020/644), detailed how Iran has continued to violate annex B of resolution 2231 (2015), including through illicit arms transfers in the region, ballistic missile proliferation and attacks on its neighbours.

The United Kingdom will continue to enforce remaining restrictions rigorously, including on the proliferation of arms to non-State actors covered by other Security Council resolutions, ballistic missile restrictions under annex B, and the European Union-United Kingdom arms embargoes that will remain in place until 2023. We continue to work with the remaining JCPOA participants and the Council to seek a path forward to address arms restriction expiry in October.

Annex XV**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America, Kelly Craft**

I thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing. As always, we appreciate his and his team's impartiality as they work to address this conflict. It is not often that I have the opportunity to discuss genuinely good news during these meetings, and I have the pleasure to do that today.

As many Council members know, on 13 August President Trump announced the Abraham accords, the most significant step towards peace in the Middle East in over 25 years. This historic agreement to normalize relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates advances peace in the Middle East. It is a testament to bold diplomacy and the courage of the United Arab Emirates and Israel to chart a new path that will unlock the great potential of the region.

The leadership and foresight of President Trump, as well as Prime Minister Netanyahu and Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Zayed made this momentous achievement possible. Opening direct ties between two of the Middle East's most dynamic societies and advanced economies will transform the region by spurring economic growth, enhancing technological innovation and forging closer people-to-people relations.

Direct military cooperation will benefit the entire region by countering the threat posed by Iran's destabilizing activities in the Middle East and beyond. For years and up to today, Iran has defied international law by breaking the United Nations own weapons ban, providing militias and terror groups with the firepower to kill and maim men, women and children across the Middle East. While members of the Council are so far unwilling to confront this daily threat to peace and security, the United States stands by the Arab world and Israel as we work to maintain an arms embargo on the murderous Iranian regime.

We believe that more Arab and Muslim countries will follow the United Arab Emirates' lead and normalize relations with Israel. And as we convene here today, Secretary Pompeo is in the region to promote further efforts towards peace, including discussions with Israeli and the Emirati leadership about building on this historic breakthrough.

I know the Palestinian leadership has been vocally opposed to this agreement, arguing that it neglects Palestinian rights." But let me be clear that by no means is the intention of this agreement to ignore the Palestinian people; in fact, it is just the opposite. We hope that this courageous step by the Emiratis will give the Palestinian leadership positive momentum to re-engage in negotiations with Israel to end their conflict. So much progress on defining the parameters of a settlement has been achieved in years past, as Israeli and Palestinian negotiators compromised with one another in pursuit of peace. The sides must continue in a spirit of good will, which has already yielded peace for millions of people in the Middle East.

Arab nations making peace with Israel does not diminish the need for peace with the Palestinians. America wants to see peace between the Israeli and the Palestinian people. The Trump Administration's blueprint for peace is a testament of earnest concern.

For too long, the approach towards Israeli-Palestinian peace has been to repeat tired talking points promoting unrealistic and outdated ideas about a solution to the crisis. And there is, of course, tangible outside interference, such as Iran, which supplies weapons and financial support to the terrorist organization Hamas that rules the Gaza Strip. Other nations also play a role in perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict. These activities sap the ability of the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank to properly care for the Palestinian people and damage the prospect of peace and future prosperity.

The international community must use the recent positive events to break out of this cycle and demand actionable change in the region. The lives and futures of Israelis and Palestinians alike depend on it.

I believe that the Palestinian leadership owes it to its people to look forward instead of looking back. Change is often difficult; however, things are only going to continue moving forward. And we hope that other Arab States can build on this agreement between the United Arab Emirates and Israel, and support the Palestinians to do the same.

In conclusion, I understand that many of our colleagues in the Council plan to raise the issue of the arms embargo on the Islamic Republic of Iran in their remarks today. If they do, I would strongly encourage all of them to explain to the Iranian people why they are empowering a regime that brutalizes them, the Iranian people, and crushes their freedoms and their aspirations. They should explain to their friends in the region why they are turning their backs on them and ignoring their well-founded concerns; explain to the Israelis and Palestinians, the Yemenis, the Lebanese, the Iraqis, the Syrians and all the citizens of the Middle East why they think it is a good idea to allow the world's largest State sponsor of terrorism to gain access to modern weapons systems; explain why they want to empower Iran to strengthen Hizbullah, strengthen the Houthis, strengthen the Al-Assad regime; explain to their own citizens why they opposed Council action in the form of a straight-forward resolution to stop Iran from buying and selling weapons — an action that makes us all less safe; explain to the world why they are lending support to Tehran to continue to sow violence and chaos across continents when Iran is clearly in violation of its commitments. I would be interested to know, and I am sure that those listening today would be interested as well.

Second statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft

On 20 August, the United States took the only reasonable and responsible action left to us, after the majority of this body surrendered to unthinkable inaction, abandoned the people of Iran and the Middle East, and invited an arms race that regional nations have begged to avoid.

For months and months, we told the Council that President Trump would never allow the world's largest State sponsor of terrorism to freely buy and sell planes, tanks, missiles, and other kinds of conventional weapons. The countries of the Middle East most familiar with Iran's terror pressed us to stay true to our commitment.

We reminded members of our right under resolution 2231 (2015) to trigger snapback and our firm intent to do so in the absence of courage and moral clarity by the Council. It can be no surprise that we have arrived here today. As Secretary Pompeo stated from United Nations grounds last week with absolute clarity:

“America will not join in this failure of leadership. America will not appease. America will lead. The leadership begins with recognizing the Islamic Republic of Iran for what it truly is: a theocratic, revolutionary, brutish regime that will not voluntarily seek peace or make life better for the Iranian people.”

Iran has defied the Council's arms embargo, fomenting conflict and murder throughout the world as it supplies weapons to proxy militias and terrorist groups. History is replete with tragedies of appeasing regimes such as this one, which for decades has kept its own people under its thumb.

However, there can be no mistaking where we are today. Put simply, it is Russia and China that revel in the Council's dysfunction and failure.

It is Iran that celebrates its newfound leverage over the free nations of the world.

It is Hezbollah that welcomes the possibility of new, more powerful weapons to fuel its campaign of terror.

It is the Maduro regime that has already expressed glee at the prospect of additional Iranian support.

It is the Houthi rebels who see new life in their already brutal assaults on the Yemeni people.

It is our European colleagues on the Council that have expressed privately their concerns about lifting sanctions on Iran but have taken no actions to address that concern.

Let me just make it really, really clear. The Trump Administration has no fear of standing in limited company on this matter, in light of the unmistakable truth guiding our actions. I only regret that other members of the Council have lost their way and now find themselves standing in the company of terrorists.

Annex XVI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam, Dang Dinh Quy**

I would like to thank Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his briefing.

We remain deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza and other occupied Palestinian territories. The number of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) infections increased by approximately 40 per cent in the first two weeks of August. The Palestinian health-care system has been overstretched since the outbreak of the pandemic. The lack of freedom of movement of patients, medical equipment and health-care personnel has impeded the proper functioning of local health services. The shortage of electricity has made the situation even worse. Last week, the only power plant in Gaza had to shut down after running out of fuel.

In this context, we urgently call upon the international community to step up support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in order to provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. All parties should work closely with one another, coordinate with international relief efforts to slow down the infections and control the spread of the COVID-19.

Yet this is not the only concern. We are also alarmed by the escalation of tension in Gaza in the last month. Civilians, including women and children, continue to be killed. The tragedies of the past are likely to be repeated if this cycle of violence is not stopped before it is too late. Meanwhile, in the West Bank, the houses of Palestinian people continued to be demolished. Attacks by Israeli settlers continued to cause dozens of casualties and remained a major security concern.

Therefore, we reiterate our calls on all parties to refrain from acts of violence. We call on Israel to lift its closure of the Gaza Strip as an initial step of goodwill to reduce the ongoing tensions. We urge Israel to stop the expansion of settlements, stop the demolitions and seizures of Palestinian property and allow Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, to develop their communities. These actions should be undertaken in line with obligations under international humanitarian law and relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016).

Viet Nam welcomes efforts that contribute to enhancing regional peace, security and stability, including those to promote dialogue and relations among countries in the region. We believe that a fair and sustainable solution to the Middle East peace process can be achieved only through peace talks and dialogue among the concerned parties on the basis of international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

In this connection, we would like to reaffirm our solidarity and consistent support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people for their inalienable rights, as well as the two State solution for the establishment of an independent State of Palestine that coexists in peace with the State of Israel along the pre-1967 lines and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Second statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam, Dang Dinh Quy

I take the floor to reaffirm our full support for your leadership, Mr. President.

As to the issue currently under discussion, our position is clearly expressed in my letter to the President of the Council. Here, I would like to reiterate the following points.

The Charter of the United Nations and international law shall be strictly adhered to. The correlation between the enjoyment of rights and the fulfilment of obligations is fundamental in giving effect to international agreements.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) constitutes an integral part of resolution 2231 (2015). As such, the invocation of processes and procedures under resolution 2231 (2015) shall follow the implementation of the JCPOA.

Viet Nam's consistent position is to support the full implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) and the JCPOA. We call on relevant parties to continue dialogue and negotiations to find solutions to resolve differences, including by utilizing existing processes and procedures under resolution 2231 (2015) and the JCPOA, and to exercise restraint and refrain from actions that could exacerbate the situation, erode trust and escalate tensions.

On our part, Viet Nam is ready to work with Member States to foster an environment conducive to dialogue and cooperation within and beyond the Security Council for peace, stability and development in the Middle East.
